



# CAPELLA

CAMBRIDGE ASTRONOMICAL ASSOCIATION

[www.caa-cya.org](http://www.caa-cya.org)

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Comet ISON – July 2021

*by Paul Fellows*

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## **Chairman's report**

As we begin 2020 it is now 22 months since we were able to meet in person at all and with the latest omicron variant running rampant I suspect there is a way to go yet before we are going to be allowed to do so. However, at least for some, Zoom has provided a lifeline to keep the club in business and churning out speaker meetings and events on line, and we shall continue to do so as long as we have no other options. It has been interesting to hear your feedback, and the many positive comments are most welcome. One interesting comment was from one of our most senior members who said "These on line events have enabled me to re-establish my connection with the club as I had not been able to get to any meetings for a while, as I no longer feel safe driving after dark". This really made me think that perhaps once we get back to in-person meetings at the IoA, we will need to consider how to make them available on-line as well. I also thought that perhaps we should look at other opportunities for day time events. Perhaps a summer Sun-day with solar observing and picnics on the lawn as we have done before... Something to look forward to.

Use of Zoom has also lead to a collection of on-line videos of many of our events where the speaker has been kind enough to allow it. They can be viewed via the "catchup" service on our website

<http://www.caa-cya.org/catchup.php>

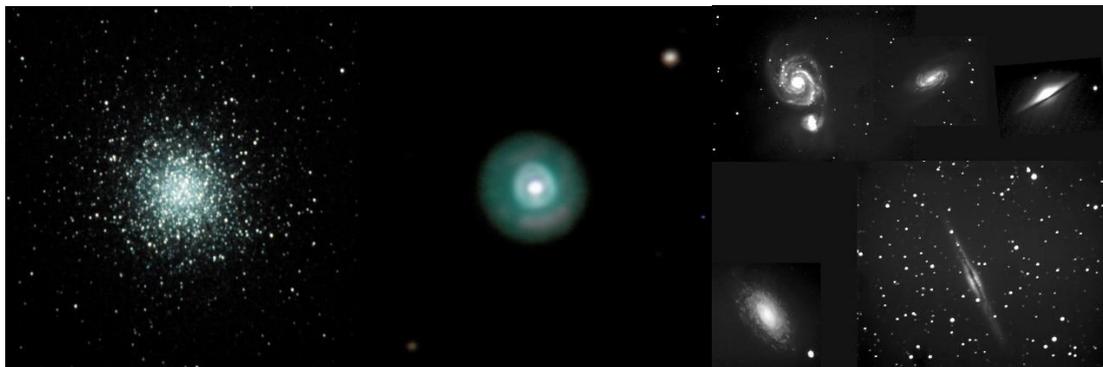
There are well over 100 of them to choose from, so you can sit back and enjoy them, or share the link with others – hopefully they might like what they see and join the Association.

## Public Observing

We have also been keeping the ball rolling with the regular Wednesday-night observing evenings by Zoom-casting them from my home observatory and that of a couple of others (My thanks go out especially to Mick Jenkins and David Davies who have supported me and turned out each week often dodging the clouds in a desperate attempt to image things live) with expert commentary from Brian, (sat at home indoors in the warm you lucky chap.) The first two terms of this were quite successful, and relayed out through the IoA's YouTubeLive channel they were recording several hundreds of people each time. This culminated in our observing of the partial solar eclipse in the summer where the weather was kind to us, and also assisted by Jonathan Clough from his garden, and Robin Catchpole from the IoA we put on an excellent showing, and by virtue of a hole in the cloud that came over Cambridge while the rest of the country was clouded out, we had the whole country tuned in to our feed. I even had a phone call from the international news agency Reuters asking to use our images. Overall there were more than 41,000 people watching our show. No pressure! It was rather all downhill after that, the Autumn term of 2021 gave us just two clear nights, and one of them was iffy! Anyway we will be back at it in the term ahead and see if we can up our batting average again.



*The Sun, taken during the partial solar eclipse of 2021.  
Using a Coronado 60mm solar telescope and a QHY132 planetary imager. Paul Fellows*



*A few of the other objects from our successful observing evenings...*

*M13, The Eskimo Nebula, and some galaxies! Can you identify them!*

## Speaker meetings

We now have most of the slots for the year filled and are still working on finding interesting speakers and topics for those that remain. The details for those that are fully confirmed are on our website and more will appear as we nail down the details. For the present they will remain all on Zoom, and this may mean we have to change things at short notice.

The next three Friday Speaker Meetings as currently scheduled are as below, but I suspect we will defer Lord Rees if we cannot get it to be in-person!

<u>Friday 18th January</u>	20:00	Speaker Meeting	Oxygen from Moonrock	Mark Symes
<u>Friday 18th February</u>	20:00	Speaker Meeting	Mega-Constellations: What is all the fuss about?	Tereza Pultarova
<u>Friday 18th March</u>	20:00	Speaker Meeting	Mars to the Multiverse	Lord Rees

## Cambridge Young Astronomers



The Young Astronomers programme is in serious trouble. Attendances has dwindled during the pandemic, to the point that we usually have more adult presenters than kids and were down to just one child in an event recently. This is a consequence of the lack of a physical meeting, and the fun and diversity that goes with that, and the fact that it is just yet another on screen session. With the kids at home on their screen devices it makes it just like school, just like everything else, and we struggle to compete for their attention it is clear. We have also missed-out on two and are likely to miss a third of the IoA open days (end of March). These are our prime recruiting ground for the 7-11 year olds.

If you think about it, CYA 7-11 covers five yearly cohorts. Each year the top cohort moves on, so we lose 20% of the group, and need to refill it with youngsters each year. So, I want to appeal to everyone, to take action and to advertise the existence of CYA (a) to anyone you know with kids of the right sort of age and interest and (b) to everyone in your local area. Please grab the info from the CYA section on the website and post something about the up-coming event on facebook, if there is a suitable group such as a local area notice board for where you live, put it on there. We need a recruiting drive, and we need it right now.

## Cambridge Astro Plus

The same goes for the 11+ group, which we now call CAP – Cambridge Astro Plus – and we allow adults to join this too, which is great, but they now outnumber the youngsters by 10:1 on it.



Budding Astronomers aged 11-18  
– the CAP Needs You

Please also try to put the word out of the existence of these sessions, and let's see what we can do to turn things around.

## Capella

This is the first edition of Capella since March/April of 2021, and I apologise for the gap. Our lovely editor Richard White developed a serious medical problem with his eyesight in the summer and was unable to complete the edition he had been working on. Covid surges then imposed several delays and cancellations of appointments with the specialist he was due to see and get treatment from, so the publication date kept sliding. When he finally got in to see the medics, they were able to diagnose and prescribe to help him and there was a period of improvement, but he was only allowed to use a screen for an hour a day so as not to strain his eyes. He was very much more up-beat about things in November and said that the new edition would be along soon, and asked for my opening words etc. Sadly, and somewhat shockingly, then next I heard was on Christmas Eve, with the very sad news that he had passed away that day. I have been in touch with the family and passed on condolences on behalf of the association and my own.



Richard was a great friend and always a smiling face at our events – and of course a real stalwart of the club. We shall miss him greatly.

### Paul Fellows

#### Committee

Chairman: Paul Fellows  
[paul.fellows@ntlworld.com](mailto:paul.fellows@ntlworld.com) 01954 202785  
Vice Chairman: Brian Lister  
[btlister@btinternet.com](mailto:btlister@btinternet.com) 01223 420954  
Treasurer: Mickey Pallett  
[mickeypallett@gmail.com](mailto:mickeypallett@gmail.com) 01480 493045  
Secretary: Clive Gilchrist  
[clive.gilchrist@gmail.com](mailto:clive.gilchrist@gmail.com)

Committee Members : Dave Allen, Kevin Black, Paul Drake, Barry Warman

#### Capella Newsletter

Members should send stories for inclusion where possible by email to Paul Fellows

**Please make sure that article text contributions are sent as standard Word files and images as .jpg's wherever possible.**

#### Librarian

Kevin Black  
[kmb252@ntlworld.com](mailto:kmb252@ntlworld.com) 01223 473121

#### Webmaster

Paul Fellows  
[paul.fellows@ntlworld.com](mailto:paul.fellows@ntlworld.com) 01954 202785