

A slightly different talk to the usual for November's meeting. Adrian Denning spurned the use of Powerpoint and even the projector to demonstrate how he builds his portable setups ready for observation. The first is a relatively small refractor system on an alt-az mount which is ideal for a quick grab-and-go session. He showed how the mount comes together, how the Optical Telescope Assembly (OTA) is installed with its finder and how the eyepiece is located in the telescope.

He then moved on to his bigger 10" Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope. A 10" SCT is just about as big as you can get away with for a portable rig. A 12" is just too big and heavy really (as I know from experience :-). Again, he showed how the tripod is set up, how the scope and mount are installed on the tripod and then how the finders are installed. With this rig, he has a Telrad finder to get close to the target and a "proper" finder to get accurately located. Adrian is exclusively a visual observer so he doesn't use an equatorial wedge to follow the stars – the telescope mount has enough intelligence to move the altitude and azimuth motors to compensate for the rotation of the Earth.

All this needs power, though, and Adrian showed the batteries that he uses to keep it all going. The modern Lithium Iron batteries are powerful enough to keep everything going all night and will even power up dew heaters.

It was interesting to see two very different systems put together and we hope that it has inspired some of the audience to get some kit and try it out for themselves.

After the break, Terry did his usual Upcoming Events and showed some "holiday snaps" from his recent trip to Rapa Nui (aka Easter Island) to see the annular eclipse. Quite different to the total eclipse in April and it was nice to be able to observe the eclipse from a beautiful tropical island!

Upcoming Events

Planets

Venus is starting to come out of the evening twilight and might be visible in the NW by mid November

Mercury might just be visible low down in the west around 15th November

Saturn's rings are now nearly edge on. It means that its moons are in line as well

Mars is now up by midnight (BST) and near Castor & Pollux

Jupiter is approaching opposition (December 4th) so is now moving west to east from night to night. It continues to be at the horn end of Taurus

Uranus near the Pleiades

Neptune west of Saturn in Pisces

Comets

Comet 2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan-ATLAS) had a good (though low) apparition in the morning sky in the southern hemisphere and is now an evening object in the northern hemisphere. All we need is some clear weather!

Upcoming Meetings

Nov 20 Brian Fraser Unmanned Lunar Landings

Dec 18 Christmas Social and members' short talks

Telescope for Sale

Having seen your website and close proximity to me i wondered if you could find a good home for a telescope belonging to my late husband. It is a Bresser Classic telescope .

Steph Coombs