

Annual Report for the Solar Section, Period 2023 / 2024

Dear Counsel Members and Stakeholders of the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA),

I am delighted to present the Annual Report of the ASSA Solar Section for the 2023/2024 period. This year has been exceptionally productive and transformative for our Solar Section, marked by significant achievements and impactful outreach efforts.

Re-birth of the ASSA Solar Section:

In June 2023, the ASSA Solar Section underwent a revitalization, reaffirming my commitment to advancing solar astronomy and education across Southern Africa and beyond.

Key Developments:

1. Solar Bulletin: I am happy to announce the successful launch of the ASSA Solar Bulletin. This monthly publication has become a cornerstone for circulating the latest solar observations, to our members and the wider astronomy community.

2. Solar Section Website: To enhance accessibility and engagement, I have re-viewed and upgraded the ASSA Solar Section website with the help of the ASSA webmaster. This platform serves as a centralized hub for solar enthusiasts, providing resources, updates on solar events, and opportunities for collaboration.

3. Collaboration with MSAS and BAA: Our strategic partnerships with the Mexborough and Swinton Astronomical Society (MSAS) and the British Astronomy Association (BAA) have flourished throughout the year. These collaborations have facilitated knowledge exchange, joint solar observations and imaging initiatives, and strengthened our collective efforts in promoting solar astronomy. Two members are participating in the solar section observations and imaging namely Mick Nicholls from the UK and Andrew Devey from the UK living in Spain.

4. ASSA/MSAS/BAA WhatsApp Group: To foster real-time communication and collaboration among members and partners, we established the ASSA/MSAS/BAA WhatsApp group. This platform has proven instrumental in coordinating activities, sharing observations, and fostering a sense of community among solar enthusiasts.

Outreach Activities:

In 2023/2024, the ASSA Solar Section engaged in a series of impactful outreach initiatives aimed at promoting awareness and understanding of solar observations and solar activities:

- **Online Presentations:**
 - Two MS PowerPoint presentations, "Sunspot Observations" and "Solar Activities and the Earth Connection," were delivered online to ASSA Centres and two universities in India. These presentations facilitated interactive discussions and knowledge-sharing on key solar topics.

- **Local Presentations:**
 - "Solar Activities and the Earth Connection" was presented at Boyden Observatory in Bloemfontein, reaching several group gatherings.
 - On Invitation the opportunity was given to present the "Solar Activities and the Earth connection" to first-year students at the Physics Department of the University of the Free State.
 - "Solar Activities and the Earth Connection" was presented to the public, participating in the Star Snooze at the Naval Hill Planetarium.

- **Solar Observations:**
 - Solar observations through telescopes were conducted during the Star Snooze event at the Naval Hill Planetarium. These hands-on experiences allowed participants to directly observe and appreciate the Sun's features under expert guidance.

Outlook and Future Directions:

Looking ahead, the ASSA Solar Section is committed to building upon the achievements in 2023/2024. I will continue to expand our membership base, innovate in solar research and education, and strengthen partnerships with local and international astronomical organizations.

Acknowledgements:

In closing, I wish to express my appreciation to ASSA Counsel for their support and trust in my management of the solar section.

I extend a special acknowledgment and thanks to Lerika Cross for her invaluable assistance with administrative matters.

I am grateful to John Gill for his support in developing the Solar section website and updating monthly the publishing of the solar bulletin.

My thanks go to Martin Heigan for his efforts in establishing the Flickr solar section gallery and his commitment to publish images send.

I also appreciate Tim Cooper's involvement in the establishment of the collaboration between the MSAS and BAA astronomy societies in the UK.

I would like to thank Mick Nicholls and Andrew Devey from MSAS and BAA for regularly contributing on H-Alpha solar observation recordings and solar images to the ASSA solar section as well as exchanging their knowledge on solar observations during 2023/2024.

Together, we will continue to explore, educate, and inspire through the wonders of solar astronomy.

Sincerely,

Jacques van Delft
Director, ASSA Solar Section
