



Community Observatory St.Martins on Scilly

## Newsletter – Winter 2020

**Seasons Greetings! Hello and welcome to what is, this year, an annual and very brief newsletter from COSMOS.**

This has felt like a very long year with very little stargazing. We have unfortunately been unable to open the Observatory to the public in 2020 due to the many restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 virus.

It certainly wasn't the second year the observatory's team here on St Martin's expected, but we can't imagine we were alone in that! We made the hard but necessary decision to remain closed for the season, as we couldn't be certain that we could ensure a safe experience. As we've explained many times to many different people this year – and as those of you who've spent time with us at the observatory know – astronomy using a telescope is a close-proximity activity. Perhaps if we were more established (and with a bigger pool of volunteers to help out running sessions), we could have managed it, somehow. Ultimately the risks outweighed the opportunity; everything this year has been hard to predict. We sorely missed not just using the observatory ourselves as a group, but also showing others around. Sharing our love of astronomy is, after all, our observatory's raison d'être.



James Falconbridge's stunning photo of Comet Neowise 'erupting' from the Daymark, earlier this year.

To quote the great Stephen Hawking, 'where there is life, there is hope'. As we look towards 2021, we must be hopeful that normal life will return to the observatory next April!

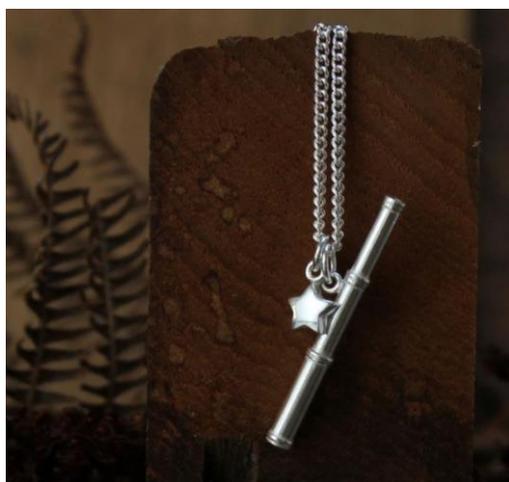
Our small team of volunteers has kept the site well maintained and we, all hope, ready for use in 2021. The dry room has been reorganised with better storage and media facilities and astro-turf has been laid on all the outside concreted areas around the domes – it looks so much more welcoming! This was achieved due to the funds we raised in our first season. We are grateful for everyone that visited and we can't wait to welcome visitors back.

We continue to be featured in several publications, which keep us on the map, and we hope to join a national monitoring network to detect and track meteors, led by the University of Manchester. This will help contribute to one of our aims to become a national centre of excellence. That said, our primary aim is to welcome anyone who shares in our passion for astronomy, and we hope to welcome you back next year.

We sincerely hope you have remained healthy during these difficult times; we have been incredibly lucky on the Islands with so much space to enjoy! However you choose to celebrate this year, we hope you have a fantastic time and the stars shine brightly for you! Thank you for all your support this year and we wish you a Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year. Keep looking up!

All the best,

**Val, Charlie, Terry, Terry, Anna, Robin & Cheryl**  
*The COSMOS Committee*



★ Scilly Dark Skies Week ★  
2-9 October 2021...we hope!

We took the decision to postpone our inaugural Dark Skies Week in 2020 – it didn't feel like the right moment to be welcoming new visitors to St Martin's at what was already a challenging and uncertain time. But fear not: Scilly Dark Skies Week 2021 is in the calendar. We had such a groundswell of support for the event, so we are very excited to run it next year. It will take place on St Martin's between 2-9 October 2021. We will confirm more details in the New Year.

[cosmossilly.co.uk/dark-skies-week](http://cosmossilly.co.uk/dark-skies-week)

★ Fay Page Dark Skies Collection ★

If you are still looking for a Christmas (or New Year) present for that stargazer in your life, then there's one telescope we recommend this year! Island jeweller Fay Page has designed stunning telescope and star charms, available in silver or gold, which celebrate the work of COSMOS. £5 from every purchase will go towards the observatory, and will hopefully help us ensure we have everything in place to open, safely, however it may be, next year.

[www.faypage.co.uk/collections/dark-skies](http://www.faypage.co.uk/collections/dark-skies)