



GUIDE TO USING THE CARDIFF ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY'S OBSERVATORY AT DYFFRYN GARDENS

- ACCESS AND LEAVING

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Introduction

1. Use of the Observatory is restricted to paid-up members of the Cardiff Astronomical Society (CAS). The Observatory is situated in the grounds of the National Trust's Dyffryn Gardens (Duffryn Lane, St Nicholas, Vale of Glamorgan, CF5 6SU).
2. Activities at the Observatory outside normal garden hours can only be conducted when a minimum of two competent Society members are present with at least one of them having been instructed on how to open and close the Observatory roof and operate the Society's main telescope.
3. Smoking (including vaping) in or close to the Observatory is forbidden, as is the consumption of alcohol. Any serious misconduct could lead to the termination of membership of the Society in accordance with the CAS Constitution.

Access to Dyffryn Gardens and the Observatory

4. Any CAS members wishing to use the CAS Observatory must, make the following notifications:
 - The Society's Observatory Manager. This post is currently (with effect from 1 July 2019) vacant. Pending the filling of that post, telephone calls should be made to 07546 107 657 and emails sent to: Director.of.Observations@cardiff-astronomical-society.co.uk Such calls and emails will be answered. [A minimum of 7 days (ideally more) in advance of access requirement to allow time for key transfer arrangements to be made].
 - Dyffryn Gardens by telephone on 029 2059 3328 [24 hours in advance of access requirement].
5. The Observatory is generally available for use on a 24/7 basis. However, access arrangements depend upon the time of use. **If any member cancels their plans**

to use the Observatory, both Dyffryn Gardens and the Observatory Manager (see previous paragraph) should be advised without undue delay.

6. Members arriving and leaving Dyffryn Gardens during normal garden hours may proceed without notice to the Observatory or Storage Shed (but not the Gardens).
7. If arrival at Dyffryn Gardens is intended to take place after 18.00, Dyffryn Gardens staff should be telephoned (on 029 2059 3328) before 15.00 on that day in order to confirm that the planned visit is to go ahead. A key will be required to open the main gate, which can be obtained from the Observatory Manager (see paragraph 4 above). Dyffryn Gardens have issued the Society with only one key and this **MUST NOT** under any circumstances be copied!
8. At all times of the day, access to the Observatory site is through a second gate controlled by an access security code (which is changed on a regular basis). Any member who is not sure that they have the current security code should ensure that they obtain this in advance from the Observatory Manager (see paragraph 4 above).
9. All cars must be parked in the designated places in the car park and NOT adjacent to the Observatory. Parking on the grass is strictly forbidden. All visitors to Dyffryn Gardens should behave in an appropriate manner with due respect and attention paid to other visitors to Dyffryn Gardens.
10. Immediately upon entry into the Observatory, the logbook should be signed, and the condition of the Observatory noted in the book.
11. In the event of an emergency, please phone 999 to contact the emergency services (police, fire or ambulance). Dyffryn Gardens staff should also be contacted to ensure that the entrance gates are open to enable access by the emergency services. For non-emergencies, the local (Wenvoe) Police Station can be contacted by dialling 101. If using the observatory mobile phone for this, please note that if asked, the number is shown on the reverse of the phone and also on the wall by the phone.
12. It is important that care is taken of the Observatory and the equipment it contains at all times. In wet weather the roof of the Observatory must be closed. Any damage to the Observatory or other defects should be reported promptly to the Observatory Manager (see paragraph 4 above). No items should be taken from the Observatory without the prior permission of the Observatory Manager. The Society's binoculars should not be removed from Dyffryn Gardens. No repair or maintenance of Society telescopes (including the eyepieces) should be undertaken without the authority of the Observatory Manager. Any approved equipment removal, repairs or maintenance that is carried out must be recorded in the Observatory's Maintenance Log.
13. The fitting of a camera (DSLR / CCD) should only be made at the rear of the tube i.e. the star diagonal / lens end following the manufacturers' guidance in the Instruction Manual. On no account should the "Secondary Mirror" be removed since this leads to the scope having to be recollimated afterwards for optical observations. Collimating is not a straightforward task needing time, suitable conditions and equipment to achieve; not something done in 5 minutes.

Keys to the Main Gate

14. Keys to the main gate (at Duffryn Lane) are held by the Observatory Manager, who can be contacted as set out in paragraph 4 above.

Keys to the Observatory

15. Keys to the Observatory are held by several keyholders whose identities are known to the Observatory Manager (see paragraph 4 above). Currently they are:

- Bob Biss (Director of Observations)
- Edward Cooper (UKMON Co-ordinator)
- Phill Wallace (Chair)
- Bob Love
- Alan Stephens
- Gordon Harries

16. Any member who wishes to visit the Observatory will need to borrow a set of keys from the Observatory Manager (who holds ONE set of keys) and can be contacted as shown in paragraph 4 above. **Borrowed keys must be returned without undue delay.** The copying of borrowed keys is strictly forbidden. Any loss of keys should be reported immediately to the Observatory Manager.

Leaving the Observatory

17. Prior to leaving the Observatory the names of those members who have been in attendance should be entered in the Observatory attendance book and the entry should be signed.
18. The Observatory should be left in a tidy and orderly state and the internal lights must be switched off.
19. The door to the Observatory should be closed and locked top and bottom. The plastic chain link should be strung across the entrance to the decking.
20. All visitors should leave Dyffryn Gardens, the key custodian should make sure they are the last to leave and lock the main gate (Duffryn Lane) on departure.

[This document was last edited by Edward Cooper on behalf of the Cardiff Astronomical Society on 11th December 2019]