

The first meeting of our new season will be on **Monday 2nd September**, it starts at **8pm** sharp in our usual venue of **Ballyclare High School Lecture Theatre**

[Directions can be found here.](#)



I am really excited to announce that our first speaker for the new season is **Gary Fildes** the creator of **Kilder Observatory!**

When I first read his book a couple of years ago, I knew we had to get him over to give us a talk.

About Gary: As a child I wasn't encouraged by my teachers to explore my love for science. We were destined for the shipyards, building sites or the military. I ended up on building sites for 25 years. I also became an astronomer. By the time I was in my mid thirties, I had joined the Sunderland Astronomical Society where my interest grew massively. By 2002 I had started the Kielder forest star camp, and a year later I would start a path that would change my life forever, in ways I hadn't imagined.

In 2004 I was appointed astronomical adviser for the Kielder Observatory project, in the beautiful Kielder Forest in Northumberland. I put all my passion for the stars into my plan to build an observatory. In 2008 it opened, with me as a volunteer. I was then appointed Director and lead astronomer where I oversaw the whole organisation and managed it to what it is today, eventually being appointed as CEO.

In 2019 I resigned from the observatory to pursue my own ambitions – ambitions to reach even more people than before.

In 2016 I published my first book 'An Astronomers Tale' here you can learn all about how and why I found myself directing the observatory, starting off from my humble beginnings as a brickie in Sunderland.

We hope you will join us in welcoming Gary along to the society! This promises to be a fantastic start to our new season and a night not to be missed.

Please note: Under 16's are very welcome but due to our child protection policy, we ask that they are accompanied by an adult.

As always we will have refreshments available after the meeting, a donation bucket is available at the door if you wish to support us in our work!

Hope to see you all there!

