

# The IYA2009 in Europe at JENAM 2009

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Figure 1. The four children from the Meden School and Technology College: Warsop, Nottinghamshire — Niall Evans, Joshua Cantrell, Chloe Johnson and Laura Simpson (left to right) alongside Bridget, Astrium's EXOMARS Rover prototype.

The European Week of Astronomy and Space Science was marked by the combination of the UK National Astronomy Meeting (NAM) and the Joint European National Astronomy Meeting (JENAM), both held at Hatfield in the UK from 20 April through 23 April. Symposium Seven was devoted to the International Year of Astronomy (IYA2009) in Europe, with outreach and education as the key themes. Contributions were allocated to one of five 90-minute sessions (plus posters) and all were all extremely well attended, with a full house of around 60 participants on two occasions.

The first session focused on the international aspect of the IYA2009 and was led off by Pedro Russo (the International Coordinator), who gave an overview of all the activities and the state of the financial support and supporting organisations. This was followed by presentations about three IYA2009 Cornerstone projects: 100 Hours and 80 Telescopes Around the World (Douglas Pierce-Price); Portal to the Universe (Lars Lindberg Christensen) and She is an Astronomer (Helen Walker). The latter two Cornerstones had their international launch during the NAM/JENAM meeting. Everyone agreed that the "80 Telescopes Around the World" event had been a spectacular success and great appreciation was shown to

all those involved in its organisation and delivery. The "behind the scenes" snippets from Douglas showed what a truly professional event this was and how complex the organisation had been. Many thanks are due to ESO for the technical support. The demonstration of the Portal to the Universe, a one-stop, astronomy news and products web showed what a tremendously powerful tool this is and it is very clear that it will be a valuable asset for the future and will have a great legacy beyond IYA2009. She is an Astronomer brought lots of discussion about gender balance and bias, which continued well after the session.

The remaining four sessions focused on national IYA2009 activities and education. Presentations were given on IYA2009 activities from the following countries: United Kingdom, Armenia, France, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Serbia. Other presentations focused on specific activities, mostly in the UK and were wide-ranging. One of the UK ventures was the production of a short film – "*The Starry Messenger*"; a story about Galileo and his observations of the Jovian satellites along with a moral for the student of today. The producer, Robert Priddey of the University of Hertfordshire, gave a very honest and humorous review (including many outtakes) of what it took

to make the project happen. The film was given its first showing at the meeting and will be distributed to schools throughout the UK. For those interested in obtaining a copy, contact production team at [thestarrymessenger@gmail.com](mailto:thestarrymessenger@gmail.com).

In the education section, two of the IYA2009 Cornerstone projects were reviewed: UNAW (Carolina Ödman) and the Galileo Teacher Training Program (Rosa Doran). There was lots of audience discussion on both of these topics. We also heard about a wide range of educational activities in Benin, Spain and the UK. The highlight of the education session was organised by Mrs Tina Sherwood, a local schoolteacher, where four 11–12 year old schoolchildren gave very impressive and assured presentations about their project work on archaeoastronomy.

A new Cornerstone project was announced at the meeting — an autumn version of the 100 Hours of Astronomy. This will be held on 23–24 October and will concentrate on sidewalk astronomy and telescopic viewing of the Moon and Jupiter. The audience voted overwhelmingly to call this event "Galilean Nights" and this suggestion has been adopted by the IAU Executive Working Group.

Overall it was clear that a huge amount of work is going on globally, and especially in Europe, to promote IYA2009. All the sessions had extensive discussion both during and afterwards as people swapped ideas. A great meeting.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> On behalf of the JENAM2009 IYA2009 Symposium Organising Committee: C. Ödman (The Netherlands), I. Robson (Edinburgh, UK), P. Roche (Cardiff, UK), P. Russo (IAU/ESO) and M. Stavinschi (Bucharest, Romania)