

Galilean Nights Event ID: gn526

Number of telescopes: 2

Number of organisers: 4

Number of attendees: 20

Event photos: http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2790/4106605625_ff629f6439_b.jpg

Event Report:

Our Galilean Night was scheduled for October 23. It was intended for an audience made of school students from Ruy D'Andrade School in Entroncamento, Portugal. Their parents and family were encouraged to come and of course, the event was open to general public as well.

The plan was to show Jupiter and the crescent Moon in two telescopes, while speaking about Galileo's contribution to astronomy. Because we were given the opportunity to observe with the street lights off in that area (for which we must thank the city authorities), it would also be possible to teach the main visible constellations and probably to end the session with the observation of the Andromeda Galaxy.

But the sky was completely clouded that night and we realised that not much people would come. Still, around 20 people showed up and that was our opportunity for plan B.

Plan B was to talk about Galileo, his life and discoveries, the improvements he made to his telescopes and how that opened the way for a new era in astronomy.

We took two telescopes with us which were a useful aid in showing the telescope basic principles.

This small audience was very receptive and interested in the subjects discussed and in no way we regret the one and a half hour spent under those thick clouds.

We left with the promise to organize a new observation event in the near future. Probably we will do it when the nights get warmer, with one or two planets up in the sky and even better if there is a crescent Moon fase. Coincident with this period was an astrophotography exhibition inside the school, with photos from the amateur astronomers who helped us in the Galilean Night. This also helped to call attention to astronomy activities and to IYA 2009.