

# Space@TheStade: Solar System Special

## Post Event Report

**Date:** Friday 24th August 2018

**Venue:** The Stade, Hastings Old Town

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Organised and hosted by Creative Space Science CIC



**Report compiled by:**

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Science Director

Creative Space Science CIC

25 Offa Road, Hastings TN35 5HR

**Date:** 31st August 2018



One Giant Step: The Moon Comes to Hastings, a Creative Space event from 2015

## Project introduction

Drawing on past experience of providing free public engagement events in Hastings, Creative Space developed a funding proposal for Space@TheStade. This is a fully funded project bringing space science and discovery to the people of Hastings, St Leonards-on-Sea, and the surrounding area. The project's aim is to make astronomy accessible to all, while stimulating and inspiring those who attend.

As a Community Interest Company (CIC), Creative Space is committed to providing free, fun, and educational experiences to the local community as part of its company ethos. The Space@TheStade project fulfils this commitment.

Funding was secured with the successful award of a Foreshore Trust Events Grant, plus match funding from Creative Space to cover the entire project.

The project spans three events during 2018, each with its own focus: Solar System, Deep Space, and the Moon. The events are completely free (admission and all activities) and aim to be accessible for all ages, abilities and sectors of society.

## Objectives

The main objectives of the event were:

- to have free admission and activities,
- to raise awareness of space science through education and engagement,
- to raise aspirations in one of the most deprived regions of the UK,
- to appeal to all sections of society within Hastings, St Leonards, and the surrounding area,
- to encourage investigation and scientific thought,
- to make space science both accessible and understandable for all,
- to deliver a high standard of educational outreach.

## Event overview

The first event, 'Solar System Special', offered hands-on, drop-in workshops and activities, citizen science projects, planetarium shows, a public talk, observational astronomy using a range of telescopes including solar scopes, plus a Telescope Clinic where visitors could get advice on buying, setting up, and operating astronomy equipment.

"We loved it. All four of us. My two-year-old loved the planetarium and was so excited by the rockets. Great staff too. We'd definitely come again."

HT, from the Facebook Page



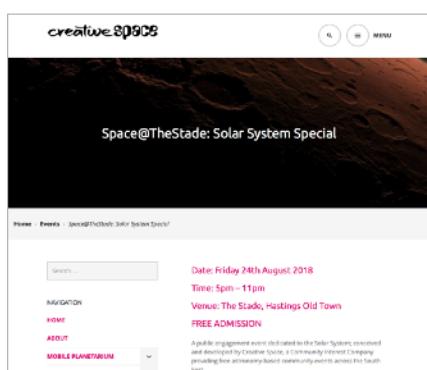
The pop-up planetarium in Stade Hall



Rocket launching on the Stade

Staff included Melanie Davies, Science Director and Planetarium Astronomer at Creative Space, plus three additional core staff, all professional science educators with an infectious passion for astronomy and science generally. This core team was supported by 12 volunteer STEM Ambassadors, plus three volunteers from East Sussex and Seven Sisters Astronomical Societies.

The Solar System Special was promoted on the Creative Space website and across social media in the weeks leading up to the event; the Facebook event page alone reached over 20,000 people. There was also local press coverage on the day of the event. Advanced registration for timed planetarium shows and the public talk was available through Eventbrite. This ticket sales platform also acted as a marketing and promotional tool, with many of the ticket reservations coming directly from Eventbrite. All advance tickets had been registered within days of being published.



Creative Space event web page



Social media promotion

## YOUR NEWS

# Head to the Stade for stargazing fun

Andrew Hemsley  
hastingsobserver@press.co.uk

People will have an opportunity to watch the night skies at a special free event at the Stade, in the Old Town on Friday August 24 from 5pm-11pm.

Space@TheStade is a special astronomy event dedicated to The Solar System.

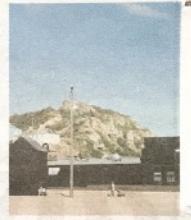
There will be numerous activities suitable for all of the family including various presentations, a pop up planetarium, virtual reality space exploration, rocket making and more.

If you have a telescope bring it along to the telescope clinic and get expert advice setting up your equipment.

If the skies are clear there will be solar observing in the afternoon and in the evening views of planets through telescopes with the support of local astronomical societies.

includes an astronomy related presentation or talk.

The event will include an astronomy related presentation and will involve



The Stade Open Space.

stargazing and observing the skies through telescopes weather permitting.

The event has been organised by Creative Space, a Community Interest Company delivering astronomy outreach and public engagement to all ages and abilities.

From mobile planetarium shows to free astronomy events, they have got space covered in a fun and creative way.

For more information visit the website at [www.creative-space.org.uk](http://www.creative-space.org.uk).

## Free stargazing event on The Stade

Creative Space, will be wowing the public with space science today Friday.

Admission is free. The Space@TheStade event, from 5pm till 11pm, will include workshops and activities for all the family, set up planetarium, public talk, plus lots of telescopes for observing the Sun, Moon and planets.

Founder of Creative Space, Melanie Davies, said: "We want to inspire the very young and the very old, from rocket making to measuring the speed of light using a microwave. Local astronomical societies will be on hand to guide people across the sky."

## Press coverage

The experience was split into two sessions: afternoon (5pm - 8pm) and evening (8pm - 11pm). *The Planets 360* planetarium shows ran during the afternoon session. This immersive film had just been released in the UK and the Space@TheStade screening was one of the very first in the country. As well as pre-registration on Eventbrite, a limited number of spaces were available on the day. The workshops included *Measuring Lightspeed*; *Rockets*; *Eat the Solar System*; *Your Weight on Other Worlds*; plus a citizen science activity and the Telescope Clinic.

The evening session opened with a public talk: *A Whistle-Stop Tour of the Planets* by William Joyce. William is a planetary scientist and experienced public speaker; his talk was extremely well received.



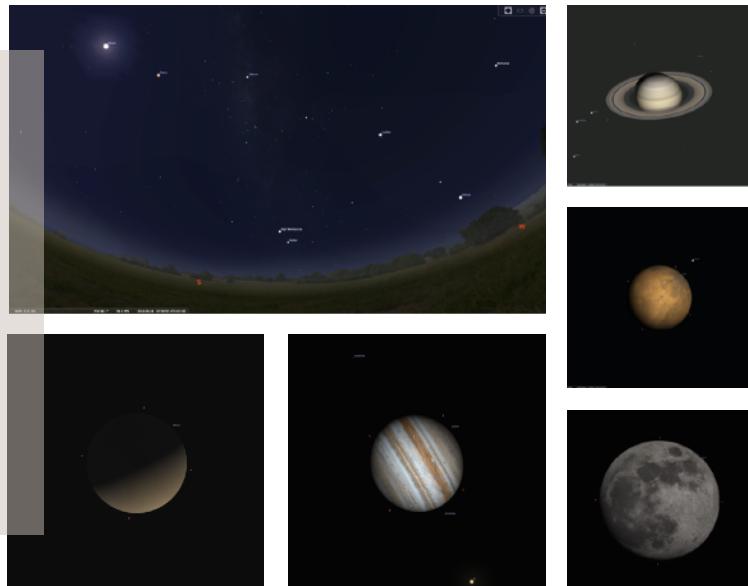
Public talk with William Joyce

Sadly the weather was very poor, with complete cloud cover and rain showers throughout, meaning observational astronomy wasn't possible through the telescopes.

Having the planetarium meant that we were able to switch to Plan B: viewing the Sun, Moon and planets in the dome, as they could have been seen through telescopes if the sky had been clear. So the talk was followed by sky tours inside the pop-up planetarium alongside the Telescope Clinic.

"The planetarium was an excellent way to still be able to see something despite the British weather! Will definitely look out for next event. Thank you very much."

MH, from Evaluation form



Real-time planetarium software showing the planets and Moon as they would have looked on the evening of 24th August 2018

## Outcome

Space@TheStade: Solar System Special was a great success, meeting all planned objectives. Considering the poor weather conditions for an astronomy-themed event, attendance was higher than anticipated, at about 200, from a good cross section of the local community.

Feedback from all angles has been favourable and enthusiastic; from word-of-mouth and evaluation on the day, to social media posts and email messages.

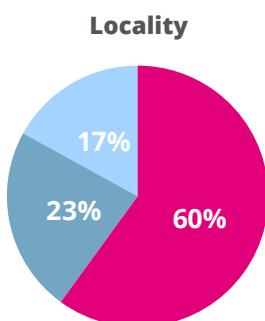
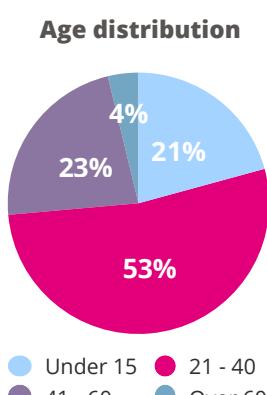
The audience covered a wide age range: predominantly between 21 and 40, mostly white British. Family groups dominated during the afternoon session, with fewer children in the evening crowd.

The majority of visitors attending the event were from the Hastings and St Leonards-on-Sea locality (60%), with 23% coming from within 15 miles of Hastings and 17% travelling more than 15 miles.

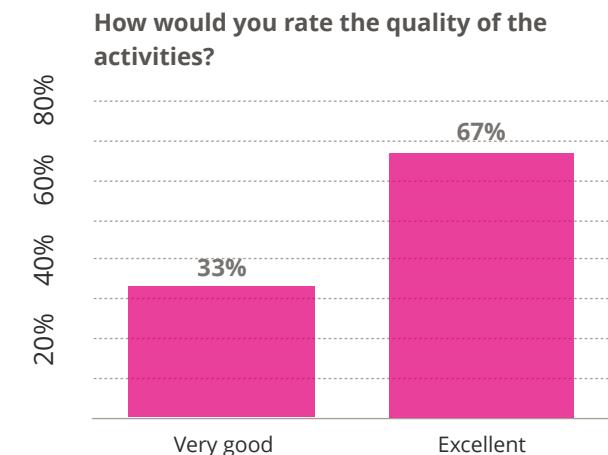
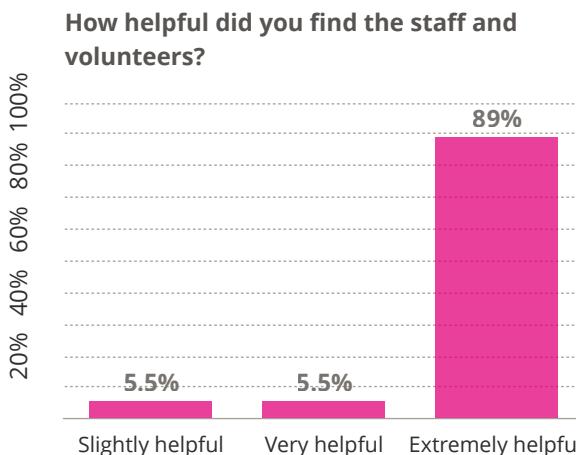
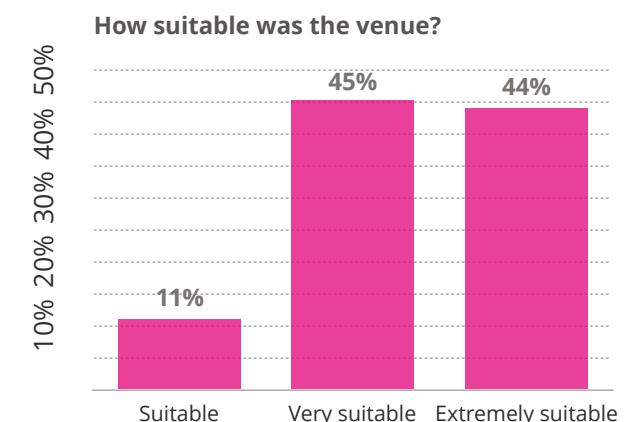
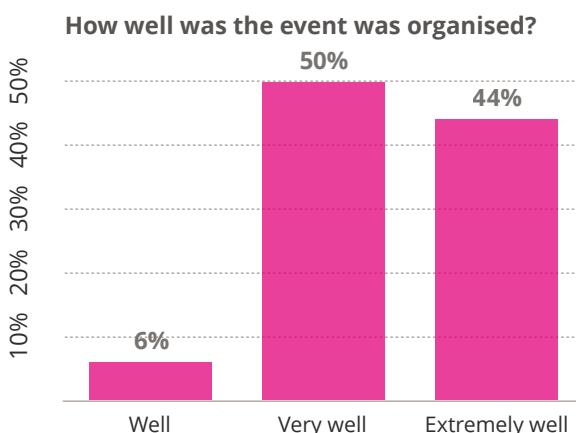
A good mix of genders attended every aspect of the event (planetarium, drop-in activities, and public talk). Of the 53 people

"Well done on such a successful event! It was great to see Stade Hall buzzing with adults and children and lots going on."

Cllr James Bacon,  
Deputy Mayor of Hastings



● Hastings/St Leonards  
● Within 15 miles  
● More than 15 miles



**"First time we've come to one of your events. It was fab! Keep up the good work!"**

CN, from Evaluation form

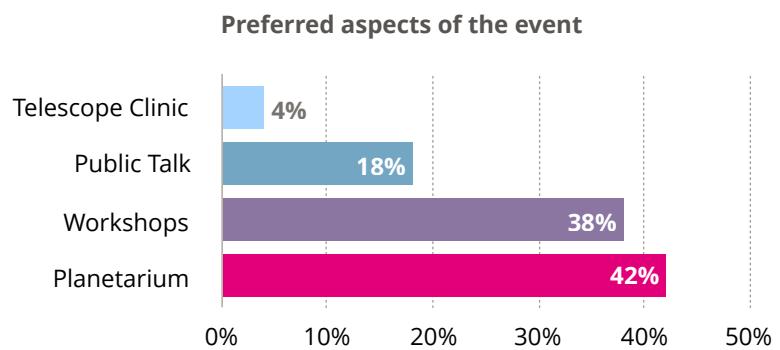
represented in the evaluation, 26 were male and 27 were female.

Evaluation was very positive. When canvassed about how well the event had been organised, participants felt overwhelmingly that the organisation had been excellent or very good, with a handful feeling that it had been good. And regarding the venue, almost 90% of people asked felt that the venue was extremely or very suitable.

There was high praise for staff and volunteers, with 89% rating them as extremely helpful. The quality of the activities

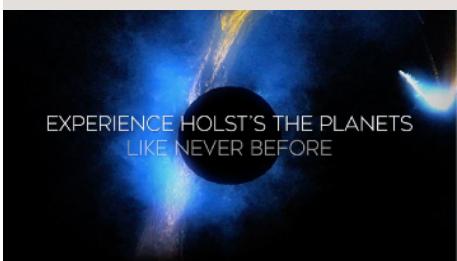
was described as excellent by 67% of people asked and as very good by 33%. When asked how easy it was to understand the science, 33% said it was easy, 61% said it was fairly easy, and 6% said it was not too hard and not too easy. 11% of the same people said that they would like the science to be harder, 83% said they would like it to be at the same pitch, and 6% wanted the science to be easier.

The data collected from the evaluation forms indicate that the most popular aspects of the event were the pop-up planetarium and hands-on activities, with some favouring the public talk. Of the 18% of people preferring the public



**"The Planets 360 show was great."**

RS, from the Facebook page



The Planets 360 planetarium film

and 10% rated it as just OK. One contributor suggested that the film "could have been a bit better, showing actual pictures of the planets". But overall it was enjoyed by nearly all that saw it.

Of the people who completed the evaluation form, 100% said they would come to other free Creative Space events; 88% of those said they would be willing to pay an admittance charge if funding wasn't available.

## Development

Constructive advice was received when asked if any improvements could be made. Several people said the publicity could have been better, with more local advertising; more work needs to be put into

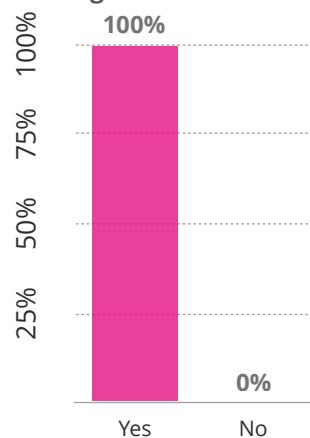
promotion for future events. A couple of people requested a timetable; the full programme was published on the Creative Space event web page. For forthcoming events, this could also be publicised on social media.

Suggestions also included more experiments for the under 5s, more hands-on activities, and that the rockets could be taken home. More Creative Space activities would require more staff; this is unfeasible within the current budget.

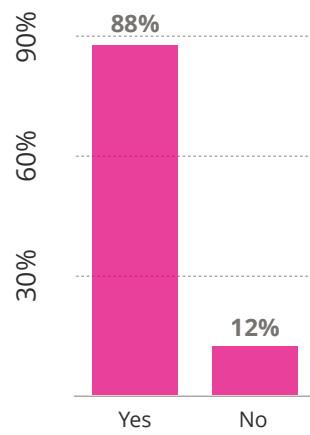
Key staff felt they were spread a bit too thin and that the event could have been enhanced with the collaboration and support of third parties. A collaboration had been sought with the University of Sussex for this event, but support from the university proved impossible during the summer break.

For the events due to take place in November and December 2018, earlier communication with the Outreach Officer at Sussex would be beneficial. A collaboration with the Institute of Physics outreach office should also be sought. These two institutes could greatly enrich the experience of future events.

**Would you come again if it was free?**



**Would you pay to attend if funding wasn't available?**



**"Me and my friend loved it. You mentioned there were other events lined up, are these listed anywhere so we can go to the next event?"**

CS, from the Facebook page

Space@TheStade: Solar System Special

# Conclusion

To sum up, Space@TheStade: Solar System Special affected around 200 people from Hastings, St Leonards and the surrounding area. It inspired many of them to want to know more about astronomy, and gave many an opportunity to discover and enquire about science in a friendly, accessible and creative environment.

Although the weather prohibited observing the Solar System through the telescopes, which for many would have been their sole reason for turning up, attendance was still very good.

## Thanks

The event could not have run so smoothly without the very generous contribution from the 15 volunteers who helped out throughout the event. Space@TheStade was added to the STEM Ambassador Hub, part of STEM Learning online: this generated interest from 13 STEM volunteers, 12 of whom gave up their time to enthuse and inspire in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths.

### Volunteer

support given by the astronomy clubs really enhanced the activities, without whom, the Telescope Clinic would not have been possible.

**"Thank you for your hard work in making this magical event happen!"**

SC. from Facebook inbox



A volunteer from STEM Learning with Cllr James Bacon, Deputy Mayor of Hastings



Staff and volunteers at the close of the event

**"Congratulations on a fantastic event... Do let me know if you need volunteers for the next one, would love to stay involved."**

CL, volunteer STEM Ambassador

**"I just wanted to write and thank you for including me in your event last night - I thought it was brilliant! Thanks again for inviting me to be part of such a special event."**

Dr KT. Creative Space staff

The Creative Space staff were first class. Their professionalism, knowledge and experience were noticed in all aspects of the event, from timekeeping and science delivery to accessibility and initiative. Their contribution was invaluable.

Finally, the organisers would like to thank the Hastings & St Leonards Foreshore Charitable Trust for its provision of grant funding and, by doing so, acknowledging the importance of improving science capital through creativity and learning.