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Newbury meteor watch becomes global phenomenon

Wed, August 12 2009

By John Garvey, Reporter
Email: newburytoday@newburynews.co.uk
Phone: 01635 564632

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Nearly 300,000 people worldwide enjoy annual meteor shower via Newbury society's Twitter Meteorwatch

NEWBURY Astronomical Society members are reeling as their Twitter Meteorwatch has become a global phenomenon. As the annual Perseid meteor shower peaked in the early hours of this morning (Wednesday), nearly 300,000 followed the event on the social networking site, downloading photos and live commentary.

Speaking from the Astrobunker - a converted garden shed in Great Shefford bristling with astronomical and computer equipment - jubilant society member Adrian West said: "We're the number one story in the world at the moment! It's just gone crazy.

"It was the most talked-about website in the USA, Europe and Asia and all co-ordinated from our little chunk of West Berkshire."
The global star party included guests from all over the world, who 'tweeted' their live images of the Perseids, as well as pictures of the Moon, Jupiter and other celestial objects (pictured above).

Astronomers across the world provided live commentary during the spectacle, which could be accessed live via computer screens. Society founder member Ann Davies watched the spectacle with her granddaughter Hannah, aged nine, who spotted four meteors. Meteor showers occur when the earth passes through a cloud of particles ejected by a comet as its orbit brings it close to the sun. The particles disintegrate as they enter the earth's atmosphere at up to 36 miles per second, resulting in streaks of light caused by super-heated air. The Perseid meteor shower is produced by orbiting material from the comet Swift-Tuttle, which last passed close to the earth in 1992 and won't be seen again until 2126.


The phenomenon has now peaked but stargazers can still hope to see Perseid meteors on the site after midnight tomorrow (Thursday).

To follow the Twitter Meteorwatch site, go to the society's website at www.newburyas.org.uk and follow the link.

To see video footage of the meteor shower, click on the link below.

[Click here to see video of the Perseid meteor shower](#)

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