**‘Comets and Curry’ Weekend Away Day 1, Saturday 19th November 2016**

18 walkers, 14.5 miles – leader Adam Dawson

A very promising start to our hike on Saturday from Eastbourne to Herstmonceux. Fantastic views from the South Downs Way at the start, then down across the Pevensey Levels. Sadly the clouds rolled in during the afternoon and by 3pm it was pouring. Staying at the Bader Centre on Saturday, courtesy of Queens University, Canada, then off up to the nearby observatory for the evening. The storm Angus which hit us at about 7pm and lasted all night put an end to hopes of stargazing – still the curry was excellent, the talk on meteorites fascinating, and the tour of the telescopes really interesting.

Thanks to Angus' attentions the viewing conditions at the observatory weren't exactly ideal, but we did learn that every day cosmic dust adds 40 tonnes to the earth's weight, and that an earth tide somewhat improbably causes Herstmonceux to rise and fall by 8 inches every day. And more useful facts about telescopes than it is possible to recall.

Photographs by Adam Dawson