

Astronomical Club from the Primary State School in Łany set out to see “falling stars” - meteorites from the Leonid meteor swarm.

**An evening of
astronomical walk
under the stars.**

Walburga Węgrzyk
translated by Roman Bugla

The Silesian sky in the evening of 14th November 2012 was going to be clear. The members of the Astronomical Club from the Primary State School in Łany were waiting for such a chance to see “falling stars” - meteorites from the Leonid meteor swarm, which usually appear on the sky in the half of November.



A group of 12 pupils from the Astronomical Club decided to have a walk out to see November sky. Exactly, at 5 p.m. in Roszowice there was a gathering. The parents drove their children to the meeting place – 12 boys at the age of 11-12.

Mrs Walburga Wegrzyk, the Maths teacher in Lany school, who runs the club, led them to Lany village along rural route among fields. This 3 km route meandered up and down outstanding hills and on the way there were places where there was no sign of light. Walking in the complete darkness was very exciting for them especially because no one had experienced it before. Even though the pupils were strolling along a side road they had put on fluorescent jackets and vests in case a vehicle would go that way.



At first the teacher pointed to the Arktur star in the west horizon and in the southern-west skyline the planet Mars was visible for a while.

Next, the children admired the polar circle constellations and learned to find the Polar star. In the east sky side they saw Jupiter and Aldehoron star adhering to it. A bit higher, in the northern-east sky Kapella was shining. The children easily recognized the Pleiades.

That night was Moonless and when the children's eyes adjusted to the darkness the sky started sparkling with bright stars and step by step a streak of the Milky Way began to be visible. Clever students spotted the constellation of the Northern Crown and the star Formalhunt in the south.



Apparently, the stroll became quite mysterious, because in the end it started to be foggy to that extend that one could write on the sky with a torch light beam like with a laser light. The fog quickly thickened and when the group reached the school in Łany the stars were out of sight. In the school some tea was prepared, lean sausages and some slices of bread brought by the teacher. The pupils were so hungry that they didn't notice that the bread wasn't so fresh and crunchy. Then all of them sat in front of the computers in the classroom and opened Stellarium software and once again they were watching things they had just seen.



Unfortunately, it wasn't possible to observe on the screen "the falling stars" so Mrs Węgrzyk described widely this phenomenon and explained that they would have a greater chance to see them at around 2 o'clock a.m. in the middle of the night.



Generally, the astronomical trip was very successful and the pupils as well as the teacher were very glad to see many objects on the sky. The whole meeting lasted up to 3 hours and brought lots of fun and inspiration for the young observers.

To add more, the Astronomical Club at Lany school was established in the 90's by the Maths teacher Mrs Walburga Węgrzyk. Pupils aged 9 to 12 regularly attend it .



The Primary School in Lany embraces several villages in the region where there are a lot of good places as observation spots not contaminated by artificial light.

The members of the club meet regularly at school and from time to time outside on the astronomical camps.



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