



# **A sundial in the courtyard of my school**

**Varshets, Montana (Bulgaria)**



**This work has been the winner (1<sup>st</sup> classified) in the EAAE Competition “*Find a sundial and ... Show it to us*” (individual modality) of the year 2011-2012.**

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## “FIND A SUNDIAL AND ... SHOW IT TO US!”

Our sundial is not an ancient discovery. It is our own creation, in our school in our town. I am a student in the town of Varshets – a little, beautiful town, surrounded by the ridge of West Stara Planina in Bulgaria. My town is suited in 300 to 499 meters altitude and has 43.1953N latitude and 23.2861E longitude.

100 years ago, in 1910, was built the first state mineral bath in Bulgaria by Doctor Damqñ Ivanov. For a very short period of time this great Bulgarian man – the first balneologist in the new Bulgarian country then – made it possible Varshets to be a favorite place of elite of citizens. Villas and hotels are built, on the both sides of beautiful, plane trees alley; the first Casino in Bulgaria; park of 800 decares rowed with exotic and rare tree spices; irrigative channel, passed through the whole village for maintenance of equable humidity and perfectly clean mountain air.

The lovely small town, gifted with incredible nature and mineral water, starts turning into a modern, attractive health resort. People like Donka and Doncho Stanchevi came to Varshets to be teachers in the local school. Their son – Lachezar Stanchev, is in born in Varshets. He becomes a great Bulgarian poet and later with a smile on his face he writes:

*I believe: the world will shine in Sun  
I believe in your love, girl  
Faith there is only in home –  
And the world through it I will love.*

That was 100 years ago. Today the home of this great poet is quite different. Even our time today is different. But the faith in the Sun and stars still remains. In 2009 with this magic faith started a magic occasion – autumn astronomical party – in Varshets.

2009 was the world year of Astronomy. In synchrony with the motto of the world Astronomical year – “The Universe yours to discover”, we – students for High School Ivan Vazov in Varshets, decided to discover the Universe. In 2009 was the first astronomical “party” set the tradition for an annual AstroParty Varshets.

But what that “party” is? It is an Astronomical weekend and during it students from different Bulgarian schools, local people and students could enjoy astronomical lectures, observations and games. The main originator of the occasion is my Physics and Astronomy teacher – R.Kostadinova. With the help of lectors and young astronomers from Astronomical Association in Sofia, it was done the lectures and games part. But for the observation part help was received by foundation “America in Bulgaria”. The foundation finance a project

for buy up of a telescope NEXTSTAR 5 SE - Schmidt Cassegrain with 125mm mirror's diameter and CCD camera.

The World year of Astronomy was celebrated by us, students in High School "Ivan Vazov" Varshets, and with a week of Astronomy. During this special week, we students hold lectures to all people interested in Astronomy. But our greatest aim was to make something more, to leave to the next students' generation a permanent memento. The best way to do this was a monument of time to be built – sundial. We wanted with that ancient device for time to make our school unique. For the realization of our dream a lot of resources were needed and we decided to organize charity concerts. We organized and performed the first charity musical, poetry matinee, devoted to Astronomy and time. The funds we gathered were few, that is why we organize and performed another musical, poetry matinee, devoted to Europe day – 9 may. Unfortunately, the funds were very insufficient –



from both concerts €100. Our dream for a sundial come true, thanks again to foundation "America for Bulgaria". The foundation finance 70percents of sundial's cost. Today we have a beautiful sundial made of marble and have a hand slanted on 43<sup>0</sup>N. It has a colorful flower garden, maintained by students. In autumn of 2010 our dream was officially inaugurated the school's sundial. Pictures from that incredible moment could be seen in AstroParty Varshets web-site. [www.astroparty.ivan-vazov.info/sundial-en.html](http://www.astroparty.ivan-vazov.info/sundial-en.html)

By old custom, all guests at the sundial's inauguration were hearty welcomed with bread and salt, under the sounds of school's orchestra. That is how in our town, in our school we inaugurate this monument. As the poet had said:

*The clock's hand is dragging along the stone steps,  
Of departure sunsets, sunny smiles are flowing  
And time is filled with meaning because we exist in it.  
Sun bunnies measure the unknown paths of Love,  
That gathered all of us today  
No matter, that it will only be temporary...*

Mrs. Ivanka Tsankova – director of section "Education and libraries" at foundation "America for Bulgaria" cut the band of the sundial and start the new

time for our school and its students. The inauguration of the sundial was supplement by practical lessons for construction of sundials. Dimitar Kokotanekov – Director of National Astronomy Observatory in Dimitrovgrad, teach students from 8 to 12grade to make horizontal, vertical and polar sundials.

For our town it was a great honor that the inauguration of our Sundial we had the opportunity to meet great Bulgarian astronomers and students and teachers from other schools.

Today it is very important for every class to take care of the Sundial, as we measure time and our aspiration for astronomical knowledge. This sundial measure the time of searching, experiments, creativity and knowledge of all students and we are all proud of it.



**Zhasmina Kostadinova**