

Astronomical Society of Edinburgh – Annual Report for 2007

The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh is registered Scottish charity SC022968.

The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh was founded (as the Edinburgh Astronomical Association) in 1924 and is governed by a Constitution adopted in 1937 and since modified (most recently on 13th January 1995). A copy of this Constitution has been supplied to each member and may be referred to in the Society's Library at the City Observatory and on the Society's web site. Copies may be obtained from the Secretary.

Clause 1 of that Constitution is:

The name of the Society shall be "The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh" and its objects shall be to advance the education of the public about the science of Astronomy and to promote astronomical research chiefly in Edinburgh and its neighbourhood. In furtherance thereof:

- (a) to circulate information on astronomical matters by the publication of articles, books etc.;*
- (b) to encourage astronomical study and observation; and*
- (c) to increase popular interest in astronomy.*

The Management of the Society is vested in a Council, elected from the Ordinary Membership of the Society at the Annual General Meeting. The following served from 1st April:

- President: Iain McEachran FRAS
38 Douglichill Place, Port Glasgow, PA14 5DH
Telephone: 01475 713495
Email: iain.mceachran@ntlworld.com
- Secretary: Graham Rule FRAS
105/19 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1QG
Telephone: 0131 667 0647
Email: graham@grahamrule.net
- Treasurer: Alan Ellis FRAS
10 Greenbank Gdns, Edinburgh, EH10 5SL
Telephone: 0131 447 9968
E-Mail: alan.ellis@blueyonder.co.uk
- Vice-Presidents:
Daniel Gallacher, Kenneth Thomas
- Councillors:
Maurice Frank, Des Loughney,

Pete MacDonald, David Small,
Adelaide Webster

The following Council members held office during the early part of the year (from 1st January to March 31st): Des Loughney, Iain McEachran, David Small, Graham Rule, Alan Ellis, Maurice Frank, Danny Gallacher, Pete MacDonald, Alastair Mackie, Kenneth Thomas, Adelaide Webster.

The Society's principal address

c/o Graham Rule
105/19 Causewayside
Edinburgh, EH9 1QG
Telephone 0131 667 0647

Our meetings take place at

The City Observatory
Calton Hill
Edinburgh EH7 5AA

There is currently no post box at the observatory which the post office can reach.

Membership

On the 31st December 2007 the membership of the Society was 73 of which 7 are honorary members.

Honorary Members

Honorary members are Dr M. Brück, Dr H. Ford MBE, Dr D. Gavine, Dr N. Grubb, and Prof D. Heggie. The Honorary Presidents are Prof Andy Lawrence BSc PhD FRAS FRSE (Regius Professor of Astronomy at the University of Edinburgh) and Prof John Brown BSc PhD DSc FRSE FRAS (Astronomer Royal for Scotland).

Publications

Editions 52, 53 and 54 of the Society's Journal were published in 2007 under the editorship Horst Meyer-dierks.

Members are issued with the latest edition of the Federation of Astronomical Societies "Astrocalendar" on payment of their subscription to the Society.

Electronic Communication

The Society's website may be found at <http://www.astronomyedinburgh.org/>

Email contact addresses have also been set up for some Society Officers:

- president@astronomyedinburgh.org
- secretary@astronomyedinburgh.org
- treasurer@astronomyedinburgh.org

Full details of the Society's activities and information about how to join are on the website.

The Council expresses its thanks to the Royal Observatory Edinburgh for continuing to provide web space and email forwarding.

Meetings

The Society has held the following meetings during 2007:

January	5th	Dr David Clarke Glasgow University The Zodiacal Light
February	2nd	Brian Kelly – Dundee AS Its About Time
March	2nd	Des Loughney President, ASE Star Spots
	16th	Annual General Meeting
April	13th	Prof Andy Lawrence – ROE Cosmic Explorers: Mapping the Universe
May	4th	Storm Dunlop – BAA Optical Phenomena in the Atmosphere
	5th	BAA Variable Star Section Meeting held at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh
June	1st	David Paterson – Dundee AS Imagined Planets
July	6th	Dr Suzanne Ramsay Howat ROE A Selective History of Astronomy

August	3rd	Members' Night Short presentations by members of the Society
September	7th	Prof Ian Robson – UKATC Active Galaxies and Supermassive Black Holes Robert McNaught Siding Spring Survey Rob showed images of comets, in particular his bright one of early 2007
	29th	Doors Open Day
October	5th	Dave Gavine Past President, ASE Thomas Dick
	8th	Observing Group
November	2nd	Andrew Elliott – BAA Real time video astronomy
	5th	Observing Group
December	7th	Lyn Smith BAA Solar Section Director Observing the Sun in White Light and Hydrogen Alpha
	10th	Observing Group
	21st	Observing Evening Mars opposition and Moon in the Pleiades mince pies and mulled wine

The Council wishes to thank Alan Pickup for kindly presenting the "Monthly Sky Map" talk to the Society whenever he was available. Thanks also go to Dave Gavine for arranging speakers for many of the meetings.

Council Meetings

The Council of the Society met on 12th January, 26th January, 23rd February, 30th March, 27th April, 28th September and 30th November.

Observing

An arrangement has been made with a local organisation which allows our members use of a Dark Skies site. Members are being required to pay a deposit for keys to this site and we look forward to seeing the results of observing done there.

Dr Neil Grubb kindly donated a 10 inch Meade LX200 telescope to the Society. After a little bit of repair work this is now fully operational and has been used on a number of occasions at the Observatory. The Society expressed its thanks to Neil by electing him an Honorary Member of the Society.

The Cooke telescope has also been put to good use on meeting nights, observing nights and at other times with fine views of Mars and Saturn being seen.

The Observatory

Last year we reported the restriction on the Society's activities imposed when part of the ceiling in the Playfair Building collapsed. Since then we have been assured that it is safe to continue to use the stairs and are now able to make full use of the Cooke telescope.

Some lead was stolen from the roof of the Playfair Building, the small Transit Building and the City Dome in February. This was patched up by City Council workmen on the day it occurred and it was hoped that a permanent repair would be done before the start of the winter.

Unfortunately we have to, once again, regret the absence of repairs to the Observatory. Despite an optimistic meeting with the Leader of the City Council, Cllr. Jenny Dawe, the City's financial situation would appear to mean that work will not be done until internal damage is clearly visible.

The Council welcome the restoration work being done on the Observatory House, the forthcoming pathwork repairs and signage that the City are providing but feel that a higher priority should be given to the Playfair Building to ensure that it continues to be available as a place where people can learn about astronomy and the telescope donated by Sir William McEwan over a hundred years ago.

The water supply to the site was not working for some months but this has since been fixed and there is once again a toilet available for use by members of the Society and our visitors.

Doors Open Day in September was a great success with thousands of visitors in the space of a few hours. We continue to open to the public from time to time and people wishing to arrange group visits are encouraged to contact the Secretary to discuss this.

Throughout the summer months the City's Parks Rangers ran weekly walking tours of the hill and,

when available, your Secretary opened the observatory to these tours. For many people from Edinburgh this was the first they had known that the observatory was still in use.

The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh Trustees

A former Vice-President of the Society, Mr John Henry Lorimer RSA left a substantial bequest to the Society when he died in 1936. This bequest has been assigned to "The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh Trustees" and is managed by them under conditions set forth in a Deed of Trust granted in favour of Rev Dr James Patrick DD BSc and others, dated 10th December 1937.

The following are the trustees in terms of that deed:

- Mr Raymond Fenoulhet
(Secretary and Treasurer)
- Dr John Rostron
- Dr David Gavine FRAS
- Mr Jim Nisbet
- Mr Alan Pickup FRAS

All of the above trustees are members of the Society.

Financial Report

The financial report for 2007 shows that we incurred a deficit of £ 1,884 on our income and expenditure statement. The main reasons for this are:

1. Reduced donations from radio groups due to the condition of the Cox Dome. Donations were £ 322 compared to £ 620 last year.
2. Subscription receipts are down to £ 777 compared to £ 1086 last year.
3. Meeting expenses are £ 730 compared to £ 300 last year.
4. Increased communications costs.
5. Lorimer Trust Income is currently being held in reserve by the ASE Trust where a better interest rate will be obtained. Around £ 4,800 in deferred payments due to the Society will be invested by the Trust.

It was considered useful to split the expenditure into costs associated with the Society and those directly relating to the Observatory and as can be seen this amounts to £ 1,714 and £ 1,497 respectively.

The form of presentation of this report conforms to the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1992,

Statement of Balances for the year ended 31 December 2007

Bank Balances at 31 December 2006		
Current Account	£ 3,297.44	
Business Investment Account	£ 5,443.68	
Total Balance		<u>£ 8,741.12</u>
Less Liabilities for 2006	£ 17.50	Note 1
Plus Receipts for 2007	£ 1,327.64	
Less Payments for 2007	£ 3,212.01	
		<u>£ 6,839.25</u>

Bank Balances at 31 December 2007		
Current Account	£ 1,366.31	
Business Investment Account	£ 5,472.94	
Total Balance		<u>£ 6,839.25</u>

Income and Expenditure Report for year ended 31 December 2007

Income

ASE Annual Subs	£ 777.00	Note 2
Dark Sky Site – Key Deposit	£ 20.00	Note 3
Donations	£ 322.00	Note 4
Gift Aid	£ 145.54	
Bank Interest	£ 63.10	Note 5
Total Income		<u>£ 1,327.64</u>

Expenditure

Meeting Expenses	£ 730.27	Note 6
Travel Expenses	£ 25.75	Note 7
Library	£ 9.99	
Magazines & Subscription	£ 104.50	Note 8
Communications	£ 419.85	Note 9
Dark Sky Site	£ 140.00	Note 10
Equipment	£ 113.63	Note 11
Astrocalendars	£ 170.67	
Total Society Expenditure		<u>£ 1,714.66</u>

Electricity	£ 479.79	
Phone	£ 216.90	
Insurance	£ 634.48	Note 12
Observatory sundries	£ 116.95	Note 13
Observatory repairs	£ 49.23	Note 14
Total Observatory Expenditure		<u>£ 1,497.35</u>

Total Expenditure £ 3,212.01

Income – Expenditure –£ 1,884.37

which also requires the following statements to be made:

- i Nature and Purpose of each of the major funds:
Current Account: Bank of Scotland Treasurer's Account
Investment: Bank of Scotland Business Investment Account
- ii Remuneration and expenses of trustees (this refers to members of the ASE Council):
£1,224.14
This money was paid to Council members by the Treasurer on presentation of receipts for costs incurred on Society Business

Note on Statement of Balances and Income and Expenditure Report

At the 31st December 2007 one cheque had not been cleared. This represents a liability for the Society of £57.00. Cheque number 011866 for £57.00 to Federation of Astronomical Societies membership fee for 2007/2008.

General Notes:

1. The 2006 Liability of £17.50 represents cheque payments made during 2006 but not cleared until 2007.
2. Annual subscriptions are still due for 2007/2008 from a significant number of members. It is

3. Dark Sky key deposits received from two members.
4. Donations of £200 from Radio Ramadan for use of the Observatory premises for radio broadcast plus content of the Playfair Building donations box £122.
5. Interest from Current account £33.84 and Investment account £29.26.
6. Meeting expenses – Speakers' Hospitality £505 and Travel £155 and Refreshments.
7. Additional travel on Society Business.
8. Magazines £94.50 and SAG subscription £10.
9. Journal production (new toner cartridges, previous inkjet cartridge costs and postage). Also Astrocalendars and other letters. Also Internet Domain name registration renewal (2 years).
10. Dark Sky site annual rent (£120) plus four keys (£20).
11. President's Medal inscription plate and presentation box replacement (£95) and DVD player for lecture hall (£18).
12. Insurance – General Contents £6,498 and specified items of individual equipment ranging from £1,695 to £3,264. Also included is £5 million public liability insurance.
13. Observatory Sundries – Exterior lighting and additional keys.
14. Blocked drain repair.

This report was approved at a meeting of the Council of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh held at the City Observatory on 29 February 2008.

*Graham Rule, Secretary
For and on behalf of the Council of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh*

Report by the Independent Examiner

I have examined the Annual Report, the Society's accounting records, and the above Receipts and Payments Account and Statement of Balances. To the best of my knowledge and belief, and in accordance with the information and explanations given to me:

1. The association is eligible under section 7(1) of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1992 to choose to have an independent examination, instead of an audit. I therefore do not express an opinion on the view given by the accounts.
2. The Receipts and Payments Account and Statement of Balances have been prepared from the records of the Society and are in agreement with them.
3. The Receipts and Payments Account and Statement of Balances comply with the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1992 and with the Society's constitution.

David Thomson, 7th March 2008