
The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh

REPORT BY THE COUNCIL AND ACCOUNTS

For the Year ended 31st December 1956

Council (to 31st March 1957)

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ANNUAL REPORT

The Council have pleasure in presenting a brief Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st December 1956.

Membership

The total membership has remained stationary at about 130.

Finance

A Statement of Accounts for the year is appended.

Observatory

The Observatory on Calton Hill has been open throughout the year. Astronomy Classes, at several levels, have been conducted. Adult Classes, of twenty weeks duration, have been held in conjunction with the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Edinburgh. All Classes have included practical work and observation with the telescopes.

Over 3600 visitors have been received during the year. This total includes groups of Secondary School pupils from a wide area of southern Scotland. During the summer visitors from many countries were welcomed. Visitors were shown astronomical objects through the telescopes whenever conditions permitted, and the main instruments were demonstrated and explained. When observation was impossible an illustrated lecture was given.

Members of the Society have made good use of the facilities available at the Observatory. Telescopes were in use on 148 nights, mainly during the winter period. The work of the various Sections has been continued. The Planetary Section has been particularly active, mainly in connection with the opposition of Mars when the appearance of the planet was recorded at frequent intervals, whenever weather allowed, over a period of months. Small telescopes have been available, from time to time, on loan to members taking an active part in observational work and Directors of Sections help and advise members on what useful work they may do.

The roof of the Cox Building was damaged by lead thieves in January. A temporary repair was carried out. The condition of the Dome of the Crawford Building has been a matter of concern for some years and the question of renewal of the covering has been under discussion with representatives of the City. Work on the Crawford mounting has been held up owing to the state of the building. Some interior decoration of the main building has been carried out by the Society. Maintenance and renovation of the instruments and of the Dome mechanisms has been carried out.

Lectures

Lectures were delivered at formal meetings of the Society during the winter period, as follows:—

“ Our Galaxy ” (J. CISAR, D.SC.).

“ The 250-foot Radio Telescope ” (J. G. DAVIES, M.A., PH.D.).

" Astronomy in Russia " (M. A. ELLISON, B.A., M.SC., SC.D.).

" Venus " (PATRICK MOORE, F.R.A.S.).

At the February meeting a symposium on Mars was held. Various speakers contributed and against the background of the physical conditions, so far as known, botanical and biological possibilities were discussed. Among those contributing we were pleased to have Mr C. Hallam of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. In March an Astronomical Brains Trust was held when members' questions were answered and later a film of the 1954 total solar eclipse was shown.

As in past years papers were also given by members during the summer, at monthly informal meetings.

Publication

The monthly Notes and Star Maps have been issued to members and have been distributed to visitors to the Observatory.

Library

Numerous additions have been made to the Library and astronomical periodicals have been available as usual.

Lantern Slides

The Society's large collection of astronomical slides has been available to members. It is hoped in this way to encourage members to give lectures on astronomy.

Display

The public display of astronomical and meteorological information at the Register House has been continued. The work is done voluntarily.

Acknowledgments

The Council wish to thank all who have helped in the work of the Society during the year. Grateful acknowledgment is made of the gift of slides by Lady Whittaker, of apparatus by Mr J. Page and Mr R. E. Cameron and of a book by Mr A. R. B. Gordon.

Obituary

The Council record with regret the loss by death of Sir Edmund Whittaker, an Honorary President, and of the Rev. Dr Hector Macpherson, a Past President and a founder member who was very active in the establishment of the Society.

In name of the Council,

A. C. STEPHEN, *President.*

J. GIBSON KERR, } *Secretaries.*
N. G. MATTHEW, }

