
The
Astronomical Society of Edinburgh



REPORT BY THE COUNCIL
AND ACCOUNTS

For the Year ending 31st December, 1987

COUNCIL (to 31st March, 1988)

President

J. Shepherd, B.Sc.

Vice-Presidents

J. Cleghorn, Esq.

J. Heeley, B.Sc.

Secretary

T.I.R. Neil, Esq.

Treasurer

A.J. Rostron, B.Sc., Ph.D.

Councillors

R.G. Fenoulhet, Esq.

G. Ramsay, Esq.

J.A. Hunter, B.Sc., Ph.D. G. Taylor, B.Sc.

B. Kelly, B.Sc.

R. Veitch, F.R.A.S.

Perhaps the greatest advance of the year was the installation of a new false ceiling in the Lecture Dome. This has finally made it possible to sit through a mid-winter lecture without sitting on one's hands and some people have even taken their coats off! It is also now possible to hear speakers from the back row, due to the acoustic absorbency of the ceiling tiles, which lie in a steel framework, itself suspended from the ribs of the dome by numerous steel wires. At the same time as the ceiling went in, a pulley was attached to one of the struts at the very top of the dome, thus enabling the old Leith Nautical College planetarium umbrella to be hung from the ceiling. It can be winched easily out of the way when not in use. The planetarium projector itself works but needs minor repairs. Shows with it should be possible later this year. We thank Edinburgh District Council (especially Jack Cooper and Jim Cruikshank) and the lads from Carter Ceilings for these very welcome improvements.

The Observatory was open to the public during the 1987 Festival. There was solar viewing with the six-inch Cooke, while in the Lecture Dome we had an experimental 3-D slide show about the history of Edinburgh. This was well received and it is intended to run it over the summer months in 1988. Our thanks are due to Duncan Webberley, Jack Heeley, Robert Rudden, Stuart Jordan, Stephen Bathgate, Charles Dickinson and Keith Hunter for their efforts in running the Observatory over the Festival.

There were few group visits this year - mainly because this facility is not widely publicised. Would members please note that the Director is always pleased to arrange such visits. These consist of a look round the place, a short talk and telescope viewing if the sky is clear (we have one of the best telescopes in Scotland for visual astronomy).

The Junior Club meetings fizzled out due to poor attendances; however these have been restarted under a different format. They are now on the third Saturday of each month at 7.30 pm. This new time allows observing if the sky is clear. The meetings will be an opportunity for Juniors to meet others with shared interests, to use the Library and other facilities, and of course, to observe. Occasionally there will be talks by invited speakers.

We have also re-started regular Friday night opening of the Observatory, from 8.00 pm. onwards. This is a social evening; we are open rain, hail or starlight - so do come along.

The Cooke telescope is still being underused. The present arrangements are that any member, who in the opinion of the Director is competent to operate the telescope and the Observatory's alarm system, may borrow keys for an evening's observing. The Director will gladly provide instruction if required. The only other stipulation is that at least two responsible adults must be present, in case of an emergency.

There is still no progress on repairs to the Cox (13-inch) telescope. The necessary repairs to the dome are the responsibility of Edinburgh District Council and shortage of funds is the problem. We hope for some progress during the next financial year.

A long-standing problem with the internal drains in the Playfair building has at last been solved. Effectively some 25% of the roof drainage was finding its way under the floorboards! The building is a lot less damp now. A few minor problems with roof leaks have also been solved.

We have a new South Gate and a new lock on the front door after the old one jammed at an awkward moment. It took half an hour to get in! After many visits from Lander Alarms, the alarm system seems to be behaving itself a little better. Finally, we now have an answering machine for the telephone. This should make it easier for people to get in touch with us.

At the end of the year the membership was still hovering about the 140 mark, with new members replacing those who have resigned or not renewed their subscriptions.

The lectures given during 1987 were:

Jan.	"The Cosmic Winter" Dr. W.M. Napier, Royal Observatory, Edinburgh	
Feb.	"Observations from Mauna Kea, Hawaii" Dr. A. Longmore, Royal Observatory, Edinburgh	
Mar.	"Noctilucent Clouds and conditions in the Upper Atmosphere" Dr. M. Gadsden, Aberdeen University	
Apr.	"Our Very Own Star"	Mr. I. Neil
May.	"Piazzi Smyth's 3-D Photography"	Mr. J. Heeley
June	"The Dunecht Observatory and its Famous Astronomers"	Dr. D.M. Gavine
July	"Celestial Harmony and Man"	Dr. A.J. Rostron
Aug.	Member's Night (Short talks by various members)	
Sep.	"The Astronomical Unit"	Mr. R. Veitch
Oct.	"Radio Jets - Faster than Light?" Dr. A. Heavens, Royal Observatory, Edinburgh	
Nov.	"The Role of Man in Space" Dr. J.K. Davies, Royal Observatory, Edinburgh	
Dec.	"Telescopes and Imaging Techniques at La Palma" Prof. A. Boksenberg, Director, Royal Greenwich Observatory	

On October 31st, the Society held a joint meeting at Calton Hill with the Stirling Astronomical Society. Dave Gavine gave a short talk about the history of the Observatory. This was followed by a talk by Dr. Ken Mackay of Stirling A.S. about their Society's history and the restoration of a 12½-inch telescope in the Old High School.

On December 4th some 25 members visited the planetarium at Jewel and Esk Valley College where Dave Gavine provided a very enjoyable show.

The Society is grateful to the Director of the Royal Observatory, Blackford Hill for providing photocopying facilities.

Our thanks are due to David Todd for again auditing the accounts and for acting as Secretary and Treasurer to the Lorimer Trust from which, as the accounts show, we received a grant of £1,000 - a great improvement on the situation some years ago when more than 50% of the Trust income was absorbed in administration expenses. Now we receive it all.

Finally, we also wish to record our thanks to Edinburgh District Council for their continuing help in the form of grants and improvements without which we would not be able to provide the educational and recreational facilities enjoyed by so many of Edinburgh's citizens and visitors.

In the name of the Council:

J. Shepherd	President
T.I.R. Neil	Secretary
A.J. Rostron	Treasurer

Statement of Income and Expenditure for year to 31st December, 1987

<u>INCOME</u>		<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Brought forward from 1986:		a) <u>For the SOCIETY:</u>	
Cash	2.88	Lecturers and Meetings	148.40
Bank Balances	<u>2,586.05</u>	Printing and Duplicating	110.57
Subscriptions	639.00	Purchase of new 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Object Lens	540.00
Sale of A.S.E. Journals	.60	Honoraria:	
Sale of Society Badge	1.00	Secretary (1986)	200.00
Grants:		Treasurer (1986)	<u>100.00</u>
City of Edinburgh	3,200.00	Secretary's and Treasurer's expenses	122.36
Society's Trustees	<u>1,000.00</u>	Telephone (Inc. rental of £79.65)	104.52
Interest:		Library (Inc. half cost of Journals)	120.88
Bank Deposits	31.05	Insurance	68.63
Trustees Sav. Bk.	44.51	Photograph of Mr. Harry Ford, a Society Gold Medallist	5.40
O'Neill Bequest	143.84	Subn. to Federation of Astronomical Societies	15.00
Gall Inglis Bequest*	<u>108.99</u>	Subn. to Junior Astronomical Society	14.00
Donations: x			
Radio Society	10.00		
Sundry	<u>.23</u>		
Refund of premium overcharge in 1986	32.12		
		Total for Society:	<u>£ 1,549.76</u>
* Second interest payment for 1986 not received until 14.1.87, making three half years' in 1987.		b) <u>For the OBSERVATORY:</u>	
x Donations box not opened (inadvertently) before the end of 1987; amount will be included in 1988 accounts.		Director	350.00
		Assistant Director	175.00
		Rates:	
		1986/87	432.14
		1987/88	<u>2,140.62</u>
		(8 of 10 instalts.)	2,572.76
		Gas	36.19
		Electricity	395.94
		Cleaning	180.00
		Treasurer	100.00
		Director's and Treasurer's expenses	168.81
		Library (Inc. half cost of Journals)	75.80
		Insurance	137.25
		Bank Charges	.50
		Total for Observatory:	<u>£ 4,192.25</u>
		<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE:</u>	
		for Society	1,549.76
		for Observatory	<u>4,192.25</u>
			5,742.01
		<u>CARRIED FORWARD TO 1988:</u>	
		Cash	3.62
		Bank Balances	<u>2,054.64</u>
			2,058.26
	<u>£ 7,800.27</u>		<u>£ 7,800.27</u>

INVESTMENTS: These remain £570 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ % Treasury Stock, 1995 (cost £497.15) which is part of the Gall Inglis Bequest AND £1,000 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ % Treasury Stock, 1985/88 (cost £962.56) and £658.13 14% Treasury Stock, 1996 (cost £600), these last being part of the O'Neill Bequest.

I have examined the accounts of The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh for the year to 31st December, 1987 and am satisfied that the above abstract is both correctly detailed and properly vouched.

R. J. Todd

(D.C. TODD, A.I.B.)

4th February, 1988