



Astronomical Society of Edinburgh

Report of Council for the Year 1994

[Draft for Council approval 27/1/95]

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. 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. The following were elected at the AGM in March 1994 and served from 1st April:

Mr Graham Rule BA FRAS (President)
105/19 Causewayside, Edinburgh, EH9 1QG
Telephone 0131 667 0647

Mr Peter Macdonald (Secretary)
5 Braehead Crescent, Edinburgh, EH4 6BP
Telephone 0131 339 1309

Mr Jim Nisbet BSc (Treasurer)
46 Kenmure Avenue, Edinburgh, EH8 7HD
Telephone 0131 661 4535

Mr Alan Pickup BEng FRAS FBIS (Vice-President)
Mr Gerry Taylor BSc (Vice-President)
Mr Alan Ellis BSc
Mr A.R.H. Marks
Mrs May Fenoulhet BA MLitt
Mr Raymond Fenoulhet
Ms Carol Rankin
Dr John Rostron BSc PhD

The following Council members elected at the AGM in 1993 held office during the early part of the year (from 1st January to March 31st): Dr John Reid, Mr Raymond Fenoulhet, Mr Alan Pickup, Mr Peter Macdonald, Mr Jim Nisbet, Mr A.R.H. Marks, Mr Gerry Taylor, Mrs May Fenoulhet, Dr John Rostron, Mr Graham Rule.

The Society's principal address is:

The City Observatory
Calton Hill
Edinburgh EH7 3AA

Telephone 0131 556 4365

Review of the Year 1994

Honorary Members

In December it was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Professor Richard Stoy, CBE, MA, PhD, Hon DSc, FRAS, FRSE. Professor Stoy had been a long-standing member of the Society and one of our Honorary Presidents. We extend our condolences to his family.

ASE Meetings

The following Ordinary meetings of the Society took place during the year:

- Jan 14 Recent Discoveries in the Great Pyramid and the Stellar Alignment Theory
by Mr Robert Bauval and Mr Adrian Gilbert
- Feb 4 Under the Southern Cross
by Mr Malcolm Kennedy of Glasgow AS
- Mar 4 Annual General Meeting followed by Novae and Supernovae
by Mr Storm Dunlop
- Apr 15 Quiz night (ROE vs ASE) followed by Cheese and Wine (ASE won this for the third time in a row!)
- May 6 The Circumpolar Sky
by Gerry Taylor (ASE)
- Jun 3 Variable Stars
by Dr Dave Gavine (ASE)
- Jul 1 Comet Photography
by Duncan Waldron of the ROE
- Aug 5 Members' Night
- Sep 2 Binocular Astronomy
by Brian Kelly of Dundee AS
- Oct 7 The writer Agnes Clerke and her astronomical friends
by Dr Mary Bruck (Edinburgh University, retired)
Followed by 70th Anniversary celebration
- Nov 4 How do Stars Form?
by Dr Derek Ward-Thompson of the ROE
- Dec 2 Brown Dwarfs
by Dr Mike Hawkins of the ROE

The Council met some dozen times during the year. Reports of Officers to the Council and other papers, including minutes of meetings are available for inspection by members in the Library.

Other Meetings

During the Science Festival in April there were a number of events related to astronomy which were attended by members of the Society. Of particular interest were the ROE Star Party and Open Day, and

talks given by Prof Owen Gingerich and Dr Dave Gavine.

The Scottish Astronomers' Group met at the Observatory on 14th May. We hosted this very successful meeting which was attended by astronomers from throughout Scotland.

The Society was represented at the opening in September of the exhibition of books from the ROE's Crawford Library at the Royal Museum in Chambers Street. This exhibition, entitled "A Heavenly Library" was later visited by a number of our members.

A key event of the year was the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Society in 1924. This was celebrated by a buffet dinner following the October meeting. A most enjoyable time was had by all and the evening was rounded off with an opportunity to observe Saturn through the 6 inch Cooke Refractor.

About 20 members of the Society took up an invitation to attend a meeting of the Royal Scottish Society of Arts in October at which Dr Steven Miller of University College London gave an eye-witness account of "The Great Comet Crash of 1994". We extend our thanks to the RSSA for this invitation and have indicated that RSSA Fellows will be made welcome at our meetings.

The Treasurer was happy to accept an invitation to attend a meeting of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh Trustees.

The President represented the Society at a Civic Dinner held in Glasgow City Chambers on Nov 23rd to mark the Centenary of the Astronomical Society of Glasgow. We extend our congratulations to our sister Society.

Observatory Visits and Observing

Many enquiries from members of the public have been dealt with by the Secretary and by the Director, some of which have resulted in visits to the Observatory and newcomers to the Society. Where the enquiry was outwith the scope of the Society to handle callers have been advised to contact the ROE Visitor Centre.

Jamie Shepherd reports that during the early part of the year a group of people who had attended Astronomy classes he had taught the previous autumn returned to learn how to take Moon photographs with the 6 inch Cooke telescope. His class also made a trip out of town to do some dark sky observing (away from street-lights) using a 4 inch reflector. Some of these students have since joined the Society.

In the year some 30 groups were shown around the Playfair Building. Visitors were both local and from around Europe and included School groups, local members of the Institute of Valuers and the Edinburgh University Amateur Radio Club.

We were particularly honoured to welcome the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, the Right Honourable Norman Irons to the Observatory on 31st October. The occasion was the unveiling of a plaque on the Observatory House to commemorate the bicentenary of James Craig, the architect of the New Town. The Observatory House is one of only two Craig buildings still standing. There were some 30 people at this event from the world of Conservation many of whom expressed interest in the activities of the Society.

Weather permitting, visitors have been shown views of sunspots, the Moon, Jupiter, Saturn and Mars. A dozen or so lucky people saw the signs of the Jovian cometary impact on the 21st of July.

In all, over 1000 visitors were shown around during the year.

In the later part of the year the Council has been opening the Observatory every Friday evening from 8pm to 10pm (not just on clear nights). Members are encouraged to come to use the Library and, when possible, the 6 inch telescope. A number of members, including the President have indicated their willingness to be contacted at home should members wish to use the telescope on other nights and a few members have benefited from this.

Council Activities

Some of the Council spent a number of mornings at the EDC library in Murdoch Terrace sorting through a large pile of books that had, at some time, come from the City Observatory. Quite a lot of books belonging to the Society have been recovered while others, many in sadly neglected state, have had to be abandoned.

Lothians and Borders Police have a radio mast in the Observatory grounds and a small store building next to it. They applied for Planning Permission to expand this storage space but the initial plans were not acceptable to the ASE Council as the proposed extension would block the sightlines from and access to one of the telescope buildings. This was intimated to our landlords (the Edinburgh District Council) and, following further discussion, we have agreed to release a further small part of the ground for an expansion of the store building.

In the later part of the year much of the Council's time has been taken up with matters arising from discussions with the Charities Office and the Inland Revenue. It was pointed out to us that we had been failing to comply with the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1992 in the way we presented our accounts and annual report. It also became apparent that our constitution would need to be changed in order for us to retain charitable status. These considerations resulted in the Council calling a Special General Meeting for early 1995 at which the necessary changes could be effected. This report (and the associated accounts) have been prepared in terms of the changed constitution and are somewhat more lengthy than in the past in order to comply with the Regulations.

The Council has arranged the manufacture of a further stock of ASE lapel badges for sale to members.

The Society has recently (re-)affiliated to the British Astronomical Association, our previous affiliation having lapsed at some time. The Treasurer has made arrangements with Sky and Telescope magazine under which members may receive a substantial discount when subscribing.

Publications

Gerry Taylor has continued to produce our monthly Bulletins which are available at meetings and Dave Gavine has edited two editions of the Society's Journal. The Council extends its thanks to these two editors and to Duncan Waldron and the ROE for help with duplication.

Other Events at the Observatory

The fabric of the Observatory has had some attention paid to it by the landlords, the Edinburgh District Council. Much sprucing up was done in preparation for the Provost's visit. Major repair work was done to the roof of the Workshop building which has now been completely re-leaded following a temporary repair after a fire some years ago. New water heaters have been fitted in the toilets.

The Observatory became a film set in March when Goldstar Films shot some scenes for their short film "Latin for a Dark Room". This was premiered at the Edinburgh Film Festival in the summer and has since been seen on BBC2. The Society was mentioned in the film's credits.

During the Festival a film crew making promotional material for the National Lottery filmed the Festival Fireworks from the Observatory toilets.

Jamie Shepherd continues to run his business "Stereodome" in the City Dome. He has reported that around 20,000 visitors attended between April and October.

A number of groups holding short-term broadcast licenses have been allowed to transmit their radio programmes from the observatory grounds.

The year was rounded off with a spectacular firework display staged by Unique Events from the ground of the Observatory as part of the Edinburgh Hogmanay celebrations.

Financial Report for the Year 1994

The most significant event of the year regarding the Society's finances was the unexpected legacy from Miss Christian Merson, sister of the late Mr Bill Merson who had been a member of the Society. An interim

payment of £11,000 has been received from her executors and this has been placed in an investment account. The final amount which the Society will receive is not yet known.

We have received a larger than usual grant from the ASE Trustees which helped to fund the Society's 70th Anniversary celebrations.

Subscription income from members continues to show a slow but steady increase. The annual Subscription Rate remained unchanged at £10 (£5 concessions).

We acknowledge with thanks the continuing financial support from Edinburgh District Council.

The Society ended the year in a much healthier financial position than has been the case for many years. Further details can be found in the Statement of Balances and the Receipts and Payments Account attached as Appendix to this Report.

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 have been assumed as trustees in terms of that deed:

Mr David C Todd AIB	(Secretary and Treasurer)
5 Brunton Avenue	
Carlisle CA1 2AU	
Mr Raymond Fenoulhet	(also a member of the Society Council)
Dr John Rostron	(also a member of the Society Council)
Dr David Gavine FRAS	
Dr John Hunter	

All of these trustees are currently members of the Society.

During the year 1994 the Society received £1600 from the ASE Trustees being income from investments held by them for the benefit of the Society.

Statement of Balances for the Year Ended 31 December 1994

Bank Balances

(£)

At 31 December 1993

Current Account	856.90
National Savings Investment Account	1,382.80

2,238.98

Plus Receipts	14,348.42
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Less Payments	3,436.00
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13,151.40

At 31 December 1994

Current Account	624.69
Business Investment Account (opened Nov 1994)	11,065.16
National Savings Investment Account	1,461.55

13,151.40

Value of Investments

	Value (£) at 31 December	
	1993	1994

£570.00	12 3/4 % Treasury Stock 1995 (cost £497.15) [Gall-Inglis Bequest]	647.66	597.79
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£658.13	14 % Treasury Stock 1996 (cost £600.00)	771.25	703.38
	[Part of O'Neill Bequest]		

The Society has the following accounts/investments:

Current Account: Bank of Scotland Treasurer's Account

Investment Accounts: National Savings Investment Account
Bank of Scotland Business Investment Account

Investments: 12 3/4 % Treasury Stock 1995
14 % Treasury Stock 1996

Receipts and Payments Account for the Year Ended 31 December 1994

Receipts	(£)	
Membership Subscriptions		870.00
Grants		
Edinburgh District Council	250.00	
Astronomical Society of Edinburgh Trustees	1,600.00	
	-----	1,850.00
Investment Income		
Interest on Current Account	46.03	
Gall-Inglis Bequest: 12 3/4 % Treasury Stock 1995	72.66	
O'Neill Bequest: 14 % Treasury Stock 1996	92.12	
National Savings A/C Interest	79.47	
Interest on Business Investment Account	65.16	
	-----	355.44

Re-imburement for Electricity Costs from Good News Ministries		93.60
Legacy from Miss Christian Merson		11,000.00
Sale of ASE badges to members		14.00
Donations		
Goldstar Films for filming at City Observatory	50.00	
Good News Ministries for use of City Observatory	40.00	
Donations box	60.38	
From members	15.00	
	-----	165.38
TOTAL RECEIPTS		14,348.42
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Payments	Specific Notes	(£)	
For the Society			
Lectures and Meetings			
Expenses	1	174.47	
Presentations to Speakers	2	55.99	
Hospitality		117.80	
Cheese and Wine	3	30.17	
70th Anniversary Buffet	3	303.31	
		-----	681.74
Printing and Duplicating			111.78
Honoraria			
Secretary	4	100.00	
Treasurer	5	100.00	
		-----	200.00
Telephone			127.80
Library	6		64.10
Insurance	7		109.27

Expenses			
Secretary		222.84	
Treasurer	8	7.36	
		-----	230.20
Bank Charges			0.10
Purchase of Cups			34.00
Photographs and Frames			22.64
Subscription to Societies	9		67.75
Purchase of Badges	10		188.00
Total for the Society			1,837.38

For the Observatory

Honoraria			
Director		350.00	
Secretary	11	100.00	
Treasurer	12	100.00	
		-----	550.00
Gas			73.93
Electricity			442.93
Cleaning			180.00
Library	13		64.11
Insurance	14		221.89
Expenses			
Director		43.46	
Treasurer	15	7.37	
		-----	50.83
New Observatory Keys			11.03
Alarm Call-outs			3.90
Total for the Observatory			1,598.62

TOTAL PAYMENTS			3,436.00

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Notes to the Statement of Balances and the Receipts and Payments Account for the Year to 31 December 1994

General Notes

The form of presentation differs this year to conform to the requirements of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1992.

The following statements are required to be made:

(i) Nature and Purpose of each of the Major Funds

Current Account: Bank of Scotland Treasurer's Account

Society Investment Accounts: Bank of Scotland Business Investment Account
National Savings Investment Account

(ii) Remuneration and Expenses of Trustees (in the Society's case this refers to members of the Council)

Aggregate amount of Honoraria paid to Office-Bearers	£400.00
Aggregate amount of Honoraria paid to Councillors	£10.00
Aggregate re-imbusement of expenses to Council Members	£782.76

It should be noted that the split of expenditure under the headings of Society and Observatory is an historical decision which was made a number of years ago to attempt to show an estimate of the costs falling on the Society through its occupation of the City Observatory. The proportions of items which are split between the categories are identified in the specific notes below.

Specific Notes

(Numbers refer to items in the Receipts and Payments Account.)

1. This item includes the cost of tea and biscuits following meetings.

2. The Council approved two presentations to speakers in grateful thanks for their services: Robert Bauval and Adrian Gilbert did not make any claim for travelling expenses from London on the occasion of their talk in London; Mary Brück was not able to attend a meal prior to her talk in October.
3. These items represent the net cost of these events (i.e. expenses less proceeds).
4. This is one half of the Secretary's Honorarium with the other being shown against Observatory expenditure.
5. This is one half of the Treasurer's Honorarium with the other being shown against Observatory expenditure.
6. This is one half of the Library expenditure (including cost of journals) with the other being shown against Observatory expenditure.
7. This is one third of the Insurance cost with the other two thirds shown against Observatory expenditure.
8. This is one half of the Treasurer's expenses with the other being shown against Observatory expenditure.
9. This item includes the cost of subscriptions to the British Astronomical Association and the Society for Popular Astronomy.
10. The Society has purchased a stock of badges which will be sold to members. Income from these sales is shown against the appropriate heading in the Receipts Account.
11. This is one half of the Secretary's Honorarium with the other being shown against Society expenditure.
12. This is one half of the Treasurer's Honorarium with the other being shown against Society expenditure.
13. This is one half of the Library expenditure (including cost of journals) with the other being shown against Society expenditure.
14. This is two thirds of the Insurance cost with the other one third shown against Society expenditure.
15. This is one half of the Treasurer's expenses with the other being shown against Society expenditure.

The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh, Scottish Charity SC022968