



## The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh

### Annual Report for 1999

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. The following were elected at the AGM in March 1999 and served from 1st April:

<b>President</b>	Mr Alan Ellis BSc FRAS 10 Greenbank Gardens, Edinburgh EH10 5SL Telephone: 0131 447 9968
<b>Secretary</b>	Graham Rule BA FRAS FRSSA FRMetS FSA(Scot) 105/19 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1QG Telephone: 0131 667 0647
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mr Jim Nisbet BSc 46 Kenmure Avenue, Edinburgh EH8 7HD Telephone: 0131 661 4535
<b>Vice-Presidents</b>	Mr Johnnie S Bradley FRAS Mrs Lorna McCalman
<b>Councillors</b>	Mr Raymond Fenoulhet Mr Charlie Gleed MPhil Dr George Grant PhD

Dr Duncan Hale-Sutton BSc PhD  
Mr Peter MacDonald  
Mr Adrian Weatherhead BSc

The following Council members elected at the AGM in 1998 held office during the early part of the year (from 1st January to March 31st): Mr Alan Ellis, Mr Johnnie S Bradley, Mrs Lorna McCalman, Mr Graham Rule, Mr Jim Nisbet, Mr Charlie Gleed, Dr Duncan Hale-Sutton, Mr Peter MacDonald, Mr Adrian Weatherhead (co-opted in November 1998),

The Society's principal address is:

The City Observatory  
Calton Hill  
Edinburgh EH7 5AA

Telephone 0131 556 4365

## Membership

The following were admitted as members of the Society during 1999:

- Norman Anderson, Edinburgh
- Derek Banks, Livingston
- John Burdett, Newtongrange
- Pamela Burnside, Edinburgh
- Roger Curtis, Edinburgh
- Keith Davis, Mid Calder
- Stuart Forbes, Edinburgh
- Chris Gill, Bo'ness
- Victoria Gill, Bo'ness
- Graham Gilmour, Edinburgh
- Linton Guise, Bedford
- Dave King, Edinburgh
- Des Loughney, Edinburgh
- Iain McEachran, Port Glasgow
- Cameron MacKenzie, Lasswade
- Rosemary MacKenzie, Lasswade
- Neil Marsh, Edinburgh
- Horst Meyerdierks, Edinburgh
- Graham Neilson, Edinburgh
- Tim Puntis, Edinburgh

- Laurent Souchu, Edinburgh
- Alan Thomas, North Berwick
- Alistair Thomson, Edinburgh
- Ken Whitson, Edinburgh
- Peter Wilkinson, Rosyth
- Gill Young, Edinburgh

On 31st December 1999 membership of the Society was 155 of which 8 were Honorary.

## Honorary Members

The Society's Honorary Presidents are Prof. Andy Lawrence and Prof. John Brown. Honorary Members are: Dr M. Brück, Prof. H. Brück, H. Ford, Dr D. Gavine, Prof. D. Heggie, Mrs E. C. Jenkinson

## Publications

Two editions of the Society's **Journal** were published in 1999 (issues 39 & 40) under the editorship of Dr Dave Gavine.

The Society has continued to issue the Federation of Astronomical Societies' **Astrocalendar** to every member. These booklets can be used in place of membership cards in the unlikely event that members have to vouch for their status.

The Society also continues its arrangement with **Sky & Telescope** allowing a discount to members subscribing in a bulk order despatched by the Treasurer. (The magazine is posted direct to the member's address.) Any member who is not in this scheme but would like to join should contact the Treasurer so that they can be included in next autumn's order.

In addition, the Society continues its presence on the World Wide Web and results in a number of enquiries about the Society and membership from Britain and world-wide. The "URL" for the Society is <http://www.roe.ac.uk/asewww/> and the Society thanks the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh for hosting our pages on their server. In addition to notices of meetings and other events the Society's Annual Reports and Journals can now be found there.

## Meetings

The Society has held the following meetings during 1999

January 8th

Graham Rule BA FRAS - ASE

*The Calton Hill Observatories*

February 5th

Dr Adrian Russell - UK ATC, ROE

*The UK Astronomy Technology Centre*

March 5th

**Annual General Meeting**

Followed by Alan Ellis BSc FRAS - President, ASE

*Black Holes - the final frontier?*

April 9th

Bill Ward BSc

*Radio Telescopes*

May 7th

Alan Pickup BEng FRAS

*Astronomer, Camera, Action*

June 4th

Dr Dave Gavine FRAS FRMetS

*Astronomy in Scotland in the 19th Century*

July 2nd

*Barbecue at Earlyburn*

August 6th

Members' Night

Short presentations were given:

Charlie Glead - *Astrophotography demonstrated with Meade LX200 telescope*

Dave Gavine - *Observation reports and slides*

Ron Livesey - *Noctilucent Clouds*

Graham Rule - *How to observe the Eclipse in safety*

September 3rd

Storm Dunlop FRAS FRMetS

*Peculiar and Interesting Stars*

October 1st

Neil Bone BSc - British Astronomical Association

*The Leonids - A coming storm?*

November 5th

Ron Livesey CEng FICE FRAS - ASE & BAA

*It all lies in the soil*

December 3rd

Gerry Taylor BSc - ASE

*Star Names*

Attendance at meetings (where recorded) has been:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
40	40	-	35	42	38	-	-	-	-	-	-

## Council Meetings

The Council met on January 24th, January 29th, February 7th, February 28th, March 26th, April 30th, May 28th, June 25th, July 30th, August 27th, September 24th, October 29th and November 26th.

## Equipment

The 6" Cooke telescope is regularly used by members on Fridays with observations of the moon and planets being most common.

The 8<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" Newtonian is used for convenience and when demand for simultaneous observing is higher. The Society's Council has approved the purchase of a small 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" Newtonian telescope that will prove more portable for taking to talks at other locations or observing at Earlyburn.

The Council has authorised the purchase of three eyepieces for use with the 6-inch Cooke refractor and these have already provided greatly enhanced views of Jupiter, Saturn and the Moon.

## Observing

The Observatory continues to be open to members and the public every Friday evening. On clear nights members and visitors are given an opportunity to look through the Society's telescopes.

The main astronomical event of 1999 was the **Solar Eclipse** of August 11th. The Observatory was open for this and some 300 people came to see the partial eclipse with a variety of instruments. The Society had some good publicity for this with Graham Rule being interviewed by a number of newspapers and Ron Livesey on STV and BBC News 24. Some members of the Society went further afield to see the total eclipse although, for most, the weather was against them.

While the night of 17th/18th November started overcast the skies did clear well enough for the peak of the **Leonid meteor shower** to be seen. Again, the Society had some good publicity in the press.

The Society has entered into a leasing agreement with the Natural Environment Research Council for the **Earlyburn** Outstation near Peebles. Charlie Glead, Jim Douglas and Kenny Laidlaw have done considerable work in making this more comfortable for use and your Council hopes to see considerable use of this site.

## Library

The Library is still being treated for dry rot and as yet it is still not possible to reinstate books and periodicals from their current temporary location in the City Dome.

A printed version of the Society's Library Catalogue is now kept with the books and will be updated from time to time. Work continues in getting the books arranged on the shelves in an easily accessible order.

## Visitors to the Observatory

On May 10th **Broughton History Society** visited the Observatory. On 26th June we had some 50 members of astronomical societies from the North East of England visiting the Observatory. Both these groups heard a talk about the history of the observatory and had tours of the buildings.

Although we were unable to participate in the **Science Festival** we did help by providing the venue for the Press Launch of its programme on 25th February. Prof. Heinz Wolf appeared in some newspapers with one of the Society's telescopes.

On August 28th the "**One O'clock Gun Association**" held an event on the Calton Hill. Some 100 people visited the Observatory to see a small exhibition on the history of time-keeping in Edinburgh. A number of people were shown some spectacular sunspots using the Cooke telescope to project the image of the Sun. The Society continues to help this group with its researches. A permanent exhibition is due to open at the Castle in 2000.

In June, Graham was interviewed as part of the **BBC Radio Scotland** series "Classified Scotland" and on October 4th **BBC TV** filmed Brian Kelly (formerly of Dundee's Mills Observatory) on the roof of the Playfair building for their "Outside Now" series.

At midnight on December 31st the time-ball at the **Nelson Monument** was dropped by Graham Rule to signal the end of the 1990s. This was probably the first time that the signal was officially operated by an astronomer from the Observatory in the last 100 years.

## Other events attended

Representatives of the Society attended two meetings of the **Scottish Astronomers Group** (May 29th in Glasgow and November 27th in Stirling) and had a major presence at the **Scottish Astronomy Weekend** (September 10th-12th in Dundee).

On January 22nd Graham Rule visited our Honorary Member, Harry Ford, at the **Old Greenwich Observatory**.

Graham Rule gave his talk about "The Calton Hill Observatories" at **McDonald Road Library** (March 3rd), to **Morningside Heritage Association** (November 4th) and at **Huntly House Museum** (December 15th).

Alan Ellis, Jim Nisbet and Graham Rule spoke to a small but interested audience at Vogrie Country Park on November 10th.

## Restructuring of the Society

Last year the Council reported that it had been considering a proposal to restructure the Society as a Limited Company and this matter was discussed at the AGM. The reasoning behind the proposal was in order to establish the Society as a 'person' in law which could then enter into contracts in its own right and to limit the liability of the members for debts incurred by the Society.

As no objections to this plan were raised at the AGM, the Council intended to proceed with getting legal advice on some matters regarding the establishment and management of such a Company.

Unfortunately little progress has been made with this as the Council was awaiting information from the ASE Trustees regarding the position they intended to take on this matter when the sad death occurred of Mr David Todd in April 1999. Mr Todd had been Secretary and Treasurer of the Trust since the early 1980s. His death resulted in the Trustees having higher priority matters to deal with but it is hoped that progress towards incorporation will be possible in 2000.

## City of Edinburgh Council business

The Society continued to be represented on the City's Calton Hill Advisory Group by Graham Rule. This group has met four times in the year and has helped with preparation of a large "Conservation Study" of the Calton Hill for submission to the Lottery Heritage Fund and the City Council. This document should form the basis of future management and development of the Calton Hill. Unfortunately, funding has not yet been secured for the repairs to the Playfair Building and the Observatory House although significant progress has been made in this.

It hasn't escaped the notice of members and visitors to the Observatory that the Gardens are in a state of severe neglect. The City Council are aware of the problem but have so far found it difficult to provide the significant resource that is now required to restore the garden to a reasonable state. It is likely that plans for the observatory gardens will be developed in the light of the Conservation Study.

## Non-astronomical events

The Observatory was the venue on the morning of BBC radio's "Good Morning Scotland" at which a number of politicians (including David Steel, now Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament) were interviewed.

The Society was approached by BBC Resources with a view to them filming at the Observatory in December. However, the Observatory Management Committee decided that it could not provide facilities for this since it was for an advertisement for a newspaper astrologer.

Firework displays and bonfires took place at the Calton Hill on June 30th (the opening of the Scottish Parliament), September 4th (Festival), December 27th and December 31st (Edinburgh's Hogmanay Celebrations).

## Observatory Management

As reported at the AGM in March, your Council decided that the Society should have exclusive use of the Observatory and that the Edinburgh Experience should not re-open at the Observatory in 1999. Resulting from this decision the Council have found the management of the observatory to be much easier than in recent years and have been able to put more time into advancing the astronomical objects of the Society.

Mr Kay of Shetland visited the Observatory on 26th March and expressed the wish that the 12-inch and 18-inch **Dall-Kirkham telescopes** that he had built and donated to the Society might be returned for use in Shetland. As the Society has not used either of these telescopes for many years the Council agreed to this request and is discussing the logistics of their removal with members of Shetland Astronomical Society.

## 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  
Dr John Rostron  
Dr David Gavine FRAS  
Dr John Hunter

Mr David C Todd AIB served as Secretary and Treasurer of the Trustees until his death in April 1999.

All of the above trustees are members of the Society.

## **Financial Report**

The Society has seen a decrease in funds over the last year, partly attributable to lower levels of income but mainly arising from increased expenditure. Some of the expenditure relates to activities prior to 1999 but it has meant that we have dealt with a number of historic payments which have been outstanding for some time. However, the high cost of our occupancy of the City Observatory continues to concern the Society's Council, although it appears that some light may be visible at the end of the tunnel in our efforts to reduce our expenses.

Subscription income has increased by almost 10% compared with last year, mainly due to an influx of new members as the annual Subscription Rate has remained unchanged at £10 (£5 concessions). The Society continues to issue FAS Astrocalendars to members when subscriptions are renewed.

Income from users of the Observatory rose compared with 1998, although some of this related to activities taking place in the later part of the previous year. The Society's Council will continue to seek donations from users of the site to meet the rates and water charges for the Observatory, although it is possible that our commitments in these areas will be lessened in the coming months. No expenditure on water charges was made during 1999 as the Society was unhappy about the 60% increase in costs over the previous year. Following protracted correspondence with East of Scotland Water it was agreed that the account could be suspended until agreement was reached over the installation of a water meter for the site. This should substantially reduce our costs. In the last few months of the year we received paperwork from the City of Edinburgh Council to allow us to seek 100% rates relief because of our charitable status. It is the hope of the Society's Council that this will be successful and will ease the financial burden associated with the site.

Due to the unfortunate death of David Todd, Secretary and Treasurer of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh Trustees, no payments from that source have been made during 1999. However, the Society can continue to claim funds from the Trust's income and we will seek funding from this source once the affairs of the Trust have been put in order.



Expenditure on the Earlyburn observing site has continued, albeit at a lower level than last year. Once again, the generosity of members in giving up their time to undertake work has meant that we have not had to meet labour charges as well.

We acknowledge with thanks the continuing support from the City of Edinburgh Council, although the Society no longer receives a grant towards the running costs of the Observatory.

Details of the Society's finances can be found in the Statement of Balances and the Receipts and Payments Account included in this Report.

### Statement of Balances for the Year Ended 31 December 1999

#### Bank Balance

(£)

At 31 December 1998

Current Account	3,932.25
Business Investment Account	<u>18,655.59</u>
	22,587.84
Less Liabilities for 1998	672.50
Plus Receipts for 1999	3,040.36
Less Payments for 1999	<u>5,650.97</u>
	19,304.73

At 31 December 1999

Current Account	1,283.81
Business Investment Account	<u>18,080.40</u>
	19,364.21

#### Current Liabilities

Unpresented Cheques	Cheque No 011497	12.50
	Cheque No 011547	24.00

Cheque No 011563	12.98
Cheque No 011564	<u>10.00</u>
Total Liabilities	59.48

Notes : These cheques were written prior to the end of the financial year and had not been presented for payment by 31 December 1999.

The Society has the following accounts/investments :

Current Account : Bank of Scotland Treasurer's Account  
Investment Account : Bank of Scotland Business Investment Account

## Receipts and Payments Account for the Year Ended 31 December 1999

<u>Receipts</u>		(£)
Membership Subscriptions		987.13
Grants (see note 1)		
City of Edinburgh Council	0.00	
Astronomical Society of Edinburgh Trustees	<u>0.00</u>	0.00
Investment Income		
Interest on Current Account	45.12	
Interest on Business Investment Account	<u>424.81</u>	469.93
Donations		163.30
Organisations using City Observatory		1,420.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>		<b><u>3,040.36</u></b>

<u>Payments</u>	<u>Specific Notes</u>	(£)
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For the Society

Lectures and Meetings

Expenses	2	196.63	
Hospitality		<u>190.65</u>	387.28
Eurosom 3 Meeting expenses			33.94
Printing and Duplicating			97.50
Telephone			320.61
Library	3		185.61
Insurance	4		94.74
Expenses			286.33
Secretary			
Treasurer	5		13.95
Redirection of mail	6		60.00
Independent Examiner's Fee	7		0.00
Equipment (not Office)			55.52
Projector purchases and repairs			207.40
Items for Earlyburn observing site			62.99
Astronomy classes			734.40
Society Subscriptions	8		119.40
Total for the Society			<u>2,659.67</u>
 <u>For the Observatory.</u>			
Gas			32.07
Electricity			1,163.42
Rates			1,017.12
Water			0.00
Library	9		185.60
Insurance	10		189.47
Expenses			13.95
Treasurer	11		
Director	12		248.13
Eyepieces for Cooke Telescope			141.54
Total for the Observatory			<u>2,991.30</u>

**TOTAL PAYMENTS****5,650.97****Note to the Statement of Balances  
and the Receipts and Payments Account  
for the Year to 31 December 1999****General Notes**

The form of presentation conforms 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 Account :

Bank of Scotland  
Business Investment Account

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

Aggregate re-imburement of expenses to Council Members	£873.25
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These expenses cover costs incurred by Council Members on Society business which are later re-imbursed.

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 on the Receipts and Payments Account))

1. Comments relating to the Trustees can be found in the preceeding Financial Report.
2. This item includes the cost of tea and biscuits following meetings.
3. This is one half of the Library expenditure (including the cost of journals and the purchase of FAS Astrocalendars) with the other being shown against Observatory expenditure.
4. This is one third of the Insurance costs with the other two thirds shown against Observatory expenditure.
5. This is one half of the Treasurer's Expenses with the other half shown against Observatory expenditure.

6. The Society's Council agreed to redirect Society mail from the Observatory address because of the lessened use of the building during 1999.
7. This would cover the fee for examining the Society's report and accounts, although due to an oversight no payment was made for 1999. The matter will be rectified in 2000.
8. This item includes the cost of subscriptions to the British Astronomical Association, the Federation of Astronomical Societies, the Society for Popular Astronomy and the Scottish Astronomers Group.
9. This is one half of the Library expenditure (including the cost of journals and the purchase of FAS Astrocalendars) with the other being shown against Society expenditure.
10. This is two thirds of the Insurance costs with the other one third shown against Society expenditure.
11. This is one half of the Treasurer's Expenses with the other half shown against Society expenditure.
12. Although the Observatory Director resigned in 1998, expense claims were not finalised until 1999.

This report was approved at a meeting of the Council of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh held at the City Observatory on 28th January 2000

Alan Ellis  
President  
For and on behalf of the Council of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh

The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER  
to the members of the ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH

I have examined the accounts of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh, and according to the best of my knowledge and belief in accordance with the information and explanations given to me, confirm that they have been properly prepared from the records of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh and are in agreement therewith and comply with The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1992.

Craig J. Henderson 13 Feb 2000

**The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh**  
**City Observatory**  
**Calton Hill**

**Edinburgh EH7 5AA**

**Telephone: 0131 556 4365**

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