

Astronomical Society of Edinburgh Annual Report for 2004

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 served from 1st April:

President	Dave King (until 3rd December) 15 Baberton Mains Hill, Edinburgh, EH14 3DT Telephone: 0131 442 2631 Email: DavidKing007@Talk21.com
Secretary	Graham Rule 105/19 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1QG Telephone: 0131 667 0647 Email: Graham.Rule@ed.ac.uk
Treasurer	Charlie Glead 48 Durham Avenue, Edinburgh EH15 1RY

Vice-Presidents

Telephone: 0131 669 4608
E-Mail: charliegleed@blueyonder.co.uk

Pete MacDonald
Des Loughney

Councillors

Alan Ellis
Dave King (from 3rd December)
Iain McEachran (from 26th November)
Neil Macnaughtan (resigned 26th March)
Horst Meyerdierks

The following Council members elected at the AGM in 2003 held office during the early part of the year (from 1st January to March 31st): Dave King, Lorna McCalman, Pete MacDonald, Graham Rule, Charlie Gleed, Alan Ellis, George Grant, Des Loughney, Neil Macnaughtan, Horst Meyerdierks, David Small

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
Telephone 0131 556 4365

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

The Council would like to express its thanks to Lorna McCalman, George Grant and David Small who stepped down from the Council during the year. Due to changing work commitments Dave King had to give up the post of President in December.

Membership

New members joining in the year were Mr John Sutherland, Mr David Woods, Mrs Helena Mackay and Mr George Mackay. On the 31st December 2004 the membership of the Society was 106 of which 7 are honorary members. Unfortunately some members are in arrears having not paid their subscription for the 2003-2004 session.

Honorary Members

Honorary members are Dr M. Brück, Dr H. Ford MBE, Dr D. Gavine, Prof D. Heggie, and Mrs E. Jenkinson. 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

Edition 47 of the Society's Journal was published in December under the editorship of Dr D.M. Gavine.

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 Society e-mail list is used to contact members about announcements, observing sessions and forthcoming events. Members of the Society can subscribe free of charge to this list. To join, please contact the Secretary of the Society.

The Council wishes to thank Graham Rule and Horst Meyerdierks for their work in supporting the web and email sides of the Society's on-going internet use and expresses its thanks to the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh for continuing to provide web space and email forwarding.

Details of Society meetings are available on our answering machine at 0131 556 4365.

Meetings

The Society has held the following meetings during 2004:

- | | | | |
|----------|------------|---|--|
| January | 9th | Ron Livesey | - ASE & BAA |
| | | | "Space Weather" |
| February | 6th | Dr Neil Grubb | - ASE |
| | | | "The First Space Shuttle?" |
| March | 5th | Annual General Meeting | |
| | | Followed by a showing of the excellent computer presentation "Changing View of Mars", produced by the Society for Popular Astronomy and narrated by Heather Couper. | |
| April | 2nd | Open Forum about the Society | |
| | | Following on from some points raised at the AGM about the Society's finances and our use of the Observatory this meeting gave an opportunity for Members to discuss the future of the Society with the Council. | |
| May | 7th | Prof Jim Dunlop | - Royal Observatory, Edinburgh |
| | | | "Black Holes & Galaxy Formation" |
| June | 4th | Dr Wayne Orchiston | - Anglo-Australian Observatory and Australia Telescope National Facility, Sydney |
| | | | "From Tahiti to Tasmania: Transits of Venus and the Quest for the Astronomical Unit" |
| July | 2nd | Social Evening | |

August	6th Members' Night	
September	3rd Dan Hillier	- Royal Observatory, Edinburgh "The South East Earth & Space Project - Helping Teachers with Astronomy"
October	1st Dave Edwards	- Open University "Open University introductory Astronomy courses"
November	5th	Demonstration of some astronomy software and a video
December	3rd Graham Rule	- ASE Secretary "History of the Calton Hill Observatories"

Thanks to Alan Pickup for kindly presenting the "Monthly Sky map" talk to the Society whenever he was available.

Council Meetings

The Council of the Society met on January 30th, February 20th, March 26th, May 28th, June 25th, July 30th, August 27th, September 24th, October 29th and November 26th.

Equipment

The 6-inch Cook telescope continues to be regularly used by members of the Society. Also available for use by members at Calton Hill are the 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ inch Dobsonian, a 4 inch Newtonian, Celestron 11x80 binoculars, and a Nearstar Solar telescope. The 12 inch "Lewis" Newtonian reflector is available for use by members at the Society's dark sky site.

Observing

The observatory is open to members of the Society and the public on clear Friday evenings between 8 and 10pm. A message is left on the Observatory telephone answer machine to say if there will be someone available to open up the

observatory on the night. The message is updated at 5pm each Friday.

The Society organised a public observing session of the Transit of Venus on June 8th 2004. The Observatory was opened in time for the Transit which lasted from about 5.15 am to 11.25 am. Members brought their own telescopes and the Society's instruments were also set up including our solar telescope. Our intention had been to do as accurate timings as possible (to a tenth of a second) of the transit. The weather was not kind in Edinburgh so we are not able to observe the entry and exit of Venus from the disk of the sun and do our timings. For most of the transit clouds obscured the sun. However, there were periods of ten minutes when the transit was visible through broken cloud. The image shows what it was like in Edinburgh that morning. Our observing session was publicised in the local press and we were joined by members of the public particularly around 7.30 am before people went to work.

Other Events

There have been a number of visitors to the Observatory during the year including The Old Town Association on 25th February. The Travelling Gallery launch event was held in the Playfair Building (and in the gallery's bus) on 20th August.

On 28th October members of the society gave a presentation at Vogrie Country Park. This was the first time we had managed to get some clear(ish) skies.

The Scottish Astronomers Group met at the Observatory on 20th November.

City of Edinburgh Council Business

The City of Edinburgh council maintains the Calton Hill site and respond to any daytime alarm call-outs and the Society acknowledges the support received from the City Council.

Proposals have been made for the restoration of the Calton Hill site but no progress has been seen on this front for some time. If these proceed it may restrict the Society's access to the Calton Hill Observatory for a period of time. Unfortunately, the fabric of the observatory is steadily deteriorating and it may be that the buildings become unsuitable for use before the City's project secures the necessary funding. Members of the Society will be kept up to date with any developments in this area.

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
Dr John Hunter
Mr Alan Pickup

All of the above trustees are members of the Society.

Financial Report

During the year 2004, the main expenditure of the Society has again been running the Observatory. This amounted to £2,585.76, about £400 more than last year. It should be noted that if we had 100 members, which is about the capacity of the lecture hall, who were all paying the full subscription, the total income would still be less than these running costs.

Subscription income was £170 higher than last year. The higher subscription rate was offset to some extent by reduced membership. Due to invoicing difficulties, the Society is still owed £350 from Unique Events for use of the Observatory grounds, which they have budgeted for in the next financial year. Also, income from the Lorimer Trust will be available after the Trust accounts have been audited in early 2005.

The form of presentation of this report conforms to the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1992, which also requires the following statements to be made:

Nature and Purpose of each of the major funds:

Current Account: Bank of Scotland Treasurer's Account

Investment: Bank of Scotland Business Investment Account

Remuneration and expences of trustees (this refers to members of the ASE Council): £214.25. This money was paid to Council members by the Treasurer on presentation of receipts for costs incurred on Society Business.

Statement of Balances for the Year Ended 31 December 2003

Bank Balance at 31 December 2003		
Current Account	3161.18	
Business Investment Account	<u>8060.89</u>	
Total balance		11,222.07
Plus receipts for 2004		1702.85
Less payments for 2004		<u>3147.53</u>
		9777.39
Balances at 31 December 2004		
Current Account	1645.16	
Business Investment Account	<u>8132.23</u>	
Total balance		9777.39

Income and Expenditure Report for 2004

Income		£
Subscriptions		1,088.50
Donations		400.00
Gift Aid		121.85
Bank Interest		
	Current Account	21.16

	Business Investment Account	71.34	
			92.50
	Lorimer Trust Income		0.00
Total Income			1,702.85
Expenditure			£
	Astrocalendars		153.62
	Astronomy Magazines		62.00
	Hospitality		70.00
	Food & Wine		144.25
	Insurance		527.90
	Subscriptions		97.50
	Rates		1,317.60
	Travel Expenses		34.40
	Utilities		
	Electricity	453.52	
	Gas	20.57	
	Telephone	266.17	
			740.26
Total Expenditure			3,147.53
Income - Expenditure			-1,444.68

This report was approved at a meeting of the Council of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh held at the City Observatory on 25th February 2005.

Des Loughney, 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.

David Thomson

Please address correspondence to the Secretary at
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