

# Astronomical Society of Edinburgh

## Annual Report for 2005

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:

<b>President</b>	Des Loughney 113 Kingsknowe Road North, Edinburgh, EH14 2DQ Telephone: 0131 477 0817 Email: desloughney@blueyonder.co.uk
<b>Secretary</b>	Graham Rule 105/19 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1QG Telephone: 0131 667 0647 Email: Graham.Rule@ed.ac.uk
<b>Treasurer</b>	Alan Ellis 10 Greenbank Gdns, Edinburgh, EH10 5SL Telephone: 0131 447 9968 E-Mail: alan.ellis@blueyonder.co.uk
<b>Vice-Presidents</b>	Iain McEachran David Small
<b>Councillors</b>	Maurice Frank Danny Gallacher Pete MacDonald Alastair Mackie Ken Thomas Adelaide Webster

The following Council members held office during the early part of the year (from 1st January to March 31st): Dave King, Des Loughney, Pete MacDonald, Graham Rule, Charlie Gleed, Alan Ellis, Horst Meyerderks, Iain McEachran.

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 Dave King, Charlie Glead and Horst Meyerdierks who stepped down from the Council during the year. Thanks are also due to Gus Self for some maintenance work he has done at the Observatory.

## **Membership**

On the 31st December 2005 the membership of the Society was 107 of which 6 are honorary members. Unfortunately some members are in arrears having not paid their subscription for the 2004-2005 session and a true membership number is closer to 60.

## **Honorary Members**

Honorary members are Dr M. Brück, Dr H. Ford MBE, Dr D. Gavine, and Prof D. Hogg. 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).

The Council notes with regret the passing of Nora Jenkinson, Honorary Member. Nora was awarded the Lorimer Medal by the Society in 1993.

## **Publications**

Editions 48 and 49 of the Society's Journal were published in 2005 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](mailto:president@astronomyedinburgh.org)
- [secretary@astronomyedinburgh.org](mailto:secretary@astronomyedinburgh.org)
- [treasurer@astronomyedinburgh.org](mailto:treasurer@astronomyedinburgh.org)

Full details of the Society's activities and information about how to join are on the website.

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

# Meetings

The Society has held the following meetings during 2005:

January	<b>7th</b>	<b>Charlie Gleed</b>	- ASE Treasurer
		Telescope Workshop	
February	<b>4th</b>	<b>Des Loughney</b>	- ASE President
		"Mars Revisited - An illustrated review of the work of the Mars Rovers and Mars Express over the last year."	
March	<b>4th</b>	As the previously announced speaker was unable to be in Edinburgh for this evening presentations were given by <b>Des Loughney, Horst Meyerdierks, and Alan Pickup</b>	
	<b>25th</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting</b>	
		Due to unavoidable delays in circulating the Annual Report and Accounts the AGM had to be postponed to the last Friday on March. Members were invited to attend a meeting of the Council which will follow the AGM.	
April	<b>1st</b>	<b>Ken Kennedy</b>	- Dundee Astronomical Society
		"A Brief History of the Moon"	
May	<b>6th</b>	<b>Gary Poyner</b>	- British Astronomical Association
		"Observing faint variables from city skies"	
	<b>7th</b>	<b>Variable Star Observing School</b>	
		This special event was led by Gary Poyner.	
June	<b>3rd</b>	<b>Douglas Cooper</b>	- Stirling Astronomical Society
		"Imaging the night sky"	
July	<b>15th</b>	<b>Social Evening</b>	
August	<b>5th</b>	<b>Members' Night</b>	
September	<b>2nd</b>	<b>Ron Livesey</b>	- ASE
		"The Sky is the Limit"	
October	<b>7th</b>	<b>Dr Bill Samson</b>	- Mills Observatory, Dundee
		"Measuring the Universe"	
November	<b>4th</b>	<b>Bob Marriott</b>	- British Astronomical Association
		"The Barwell Meteorite"	
December	<b>2nd</b>	<b>Brian Kelly</b>	- Dundee Astronomical Society
		"From the Sun to the Outposts of the Universe - the life of George Ellery Hale"	

The Council wishes to thank 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 28th January, 28th February, 27th May, 30th September and 16th December.

## **Equipment**

The 6-inch Cook telescope continues to be regularly used by members of the Society although the Council have become concerned about its state and believe that it is need of refurbishment. As it belongs to the City this matter has been brought to their attention and the Society has been advised to apply for grants to fund the necessary work. It is hoped that this work can be completed during 2006. The main challenge is finding an expert within the UK who can undertake the work.

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.

During the year the Society gave up its lease on the dark skies site at Earliburn. This was because the landlord wished to sell the site. Your Council considered purchasing the buildings but decided against this when more information about the state of these became available. The 12-inch 'Lewis' telescope is now being stored in the Observatory.

## **Observing**

The observatory is open to members of the Society and the public on the third Friday of each month. When these Fridays have coincided with a night on which it has been possible to observe a good number of the public have attended. In the autumn and winter these Fridays have been used to observe Mars and Saturn. Children and members of the public who have never looked through a large telescope are always fascinated by views of the moon.

On observing nights members with specialist interests such as the study of variable stars have explained these to the public.

There were open meetings on November 15th, 16th and 18th to observe the opposition of Mars. Over a 100 visitors came to the Observatory including many young children.

## **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.

Meetings have been held with the City officials who are responsible for Calton Hill. We have reported to the officials that the fabric of the Playfair building is deteriorating. There is a plan for the redevelopment of all of the astronomical buildings on Calton Hill but, despite much discussion over the years, nothing has been done to implement the plans. Funding has been unavailable.

At the most recent meeting with officials they announced that £0.5 million of work will commence in the spring to deal with the Astronomer's House on Calton Hill. They said that serious planning of the refurbishment of the Playfair building will start in the spring. We hope that these developments will actually take place. Members of the Society will be kept informed of developments. It is planned to meet with Council officials about every three months

# 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 2005, the main expenditure of the Society has again been running the Observatory. This amounted to £2,723.44, about £137 more than last year. The overall deficit this year is £1,629.57. Rates and Utilities bills represent 56% of total expenditure. Clearly, the continuing annual deficit in the Society's funds cannot be sustained indefinitely and still allow us to carry out the current level of Society activities. The Society, as a Charity, currently receives an 80% discount on the Business Rates payment for the premises. We wrote to the City in November asking for full rates relief and at the time of writing are still awaiting a response.

The Electricity Bill is particularly high this year (£943.56) mostly due to an accumulation of underestimated readings by Scottish Power over previous periods. We are also arranging for Scottish Power to visit the Observatory to have the electricity meter tested. Another relatively large item of expenditure was the out-of-warranty repair and shipment costs of the LCD Projector of £295.74.

Our main source of income continues to come from members' subscriptions and interest on investment income from the Lorimer Trust. The Gift Aid income for Tax Year 2004/2005 is expected to be paid in 2006.

There have been some operational issues with the Bank of Scotland last year in getting the Treasurer's details changed on handover from Charlie Glead to Alan Ellis and only after nine months of persistence has the address of the new Treasurer been finally implemented by Business Banking section. In addition the low interest payments received from the Society's Bank Accounts have prompted us to pursue higher interest rates elsewhere. The Skipton Building Society was investigated but although offering considerably higher interest rates were not able to offer us an account that could accept changes to any of the Council Member account signatories.

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 expenses of trustees (this refers to members of the ASE Council): £298.65.

This money was paid to Council members by the Treasurer on presentation of receipts for costs incurred on Society

## Statement of Balances for the Year Ended 31 December 2005

Bank Balance at 31 December 2004		
Current Account	1645.16	
Business Investment Account	<u>8132.23</u>	
Total balance		9777.39
Plus receipts for 2005		2923.68
Less payments for 2005		<u>4553.25</u>
		8147.82
Balances at 31 December 2005		
Current Account	739.31	
Business Investment Account	<u>7408.51</u>	
Total balance		8147.82

## Income and Expenditure Report for 2005

<b>Income</b>			£
Subscriptions		1142.00	
Donations		556.00	
Gift Aid		0.00	
Bank Interest			
	Current Account	14.40	
	Business Investment Account	76.28	
		90.68	
Lorimer Trust Income		1135.00	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>2923.68</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>			£
Astrocalendars		0.00	
Astronomy Magazines		52.00	
Hospitality		210.55	
Food & Wine		31.38	
Insurance		606.92	
Subscriptions		0.00	
Rates		1410.66	
Repairs & Maintenance	ASE Equipment	295.74	
	Observatory	87.50	
		383.24	
Publicity Material		384.00	
Mailing & Stationery		90.63	
ASE Internet Domain		46.99	
Travel Expenses		111.60	
Utilities	Electricity	943.56	
	Gas	8.54	
	Telephone	273.18	
		1225.28	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>4553.25</b>	
<b>Income - Expenditure</b>		<b>-1629.57</b>	

## Note on Statement of Balances and Income and Expenditure Report

At the 31st December 2005 two cheques had not been cleared. This represents a liability for the Society of £69.50

- Cheque number 011797 for £50.00 to the Federation of Astronomical Societies (annual subscription)
- Cheque number 011804 for £19.50 to Brian Kelly for travel expenses

No payment was made during the year for Astrocalendars as the invoice was not received until very late. A cheque for £168.96 was sent in January 2006.

This report was approved at a meeting of the Council of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh held at the City Observatory on 10th February 2006

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Graham Rule, Secretary  
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 5/3/2006

Please address correspondence to the Secretary at  
105/19 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1QG  
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