



The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh

<http://www.astronomyedinburgh.org/>
Registered Scottish charity SC022968

Annual Report 2011

Trustees' annual report for the period 1 January to 31 December 2011

Constitution and management of the Society

- Charity name: The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh
- Registered charity number: SC022968
- Principal address: c/o Horst Meyerdierks, Secretary of the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh, 71 Cameron Toll Gdns, Edinburgh, EH16 4TF

Names of the charity trustees on date of approval of the trustees' annual report.

trustee name	office (if any)	dates acted	appointed by
1 Mr David Small	President	whole year	AGM
2 Dr Horst Meyerdierks	Secretary	from 1 April	AGM
3 Mr Alan Ellis	Treasurer	whole year	AGM
4 Mr Peter Mulholland	Vice-President	from 1 April	AGM
5 Mr Kenneth Thomas	Vice-President	from 1 April	AGM
6 Mr Daniel Gallacher		whole year	AGM
7 Mr Alan Pickup		from 1 April	AGM
8 Mr Pete Macdonald		from 1 April	AGM
9 Ms Rachel Thomas		from 1 April	AGM

Names of all other charity trustees during the period.

name	office (if any)	dates acted	appointed by
Mr Graham Rule	Secretary	to 14 January	AGM
Dr Horst Meyerdierks		to 14 January	AGM
Dr Horst Meyerdierks	Secretary	14 Jan to 31 Mar	Council
Mr Iain McEachran	Vice-President	to 31 March	AGM
Ms Rachel Thomas	Vice-President	to 31 March	AGM
Mr Vincent Balfour		to 20 January	AGM
Mr Frank Howie		to 31 March	AGM

Mr Peter Mulholland	to 31 March	AGM
Mr Kenneth Thomas	to 31 March	AGM
Dr Bruce Vickery	1 Apr to 22 May	AGM

The Society is an unincorporated association founded (as the Edinburgh Astronomical Association) in 1924 and is governed by a Constitution most recently modified on 13 January 1995. The Constitution may be referred to on the Society's web site at <http://www.astronomyedinburgh.org/constitution>.

Clause 1 of the 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 at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). In the event of any vacancy arising in the Council, the Council has power to co-opt a Member of the Society to fill such a vacancy.

On 31 December 2011, the membership of the Society was 66 of which six were honorary members. Honorary members are Dr H. Ford MBE, Dr D. Gavine, Dr N. Grubb, and Prof D. Heggie. 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 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 10 December 1937.

The following are the trustees in terms of that deed:

- Mr Alan Pickup (Secretary and Treasurer)
- Mr Raymond Fenoulhet
- Dr David Gavine
- Mr Jim Nisbet
- Dr John Rostron

All of the above trustees are past Presidents and Members of the Society.

Astronomical Society of Edinburgh Trust is registered Scottish Charity SC013921.

Activities during 2011

The Society continues to hold meetings throughout the year with educational talks on different aspects of astronomy. The Council wishes to thank Alan Pickup for kindly presenting the "Monthly Sky Map" talk to the Society whenever he was available.

Practical observing has always been encouraged by the Society with some members contributing to nationally coordinated observing programmes (through the British Astronomical Association), some producing interesting images to show at our meetings and through our Flickr group.

Meetings

The Council of the Society met on 14 January, 11 February, 20 May and 23 September 2011. The Annual General Meeting was held on 4 March 2010. Ten Ordinary Meetings with educational talks on different aspects of astronomy were held. The approximate attendance at monthly meetings was: Jan no data, Feb 32, Mar (AGM) 35, Apr 25, May 28, Jun 26, Jul 36, Sep 25, Oct 40, Nov 25, Dec 29, total 330.

Meetings and events.

- Jan 7th Dr Andy Longmore - Royal Observatory Edinburgh
Adaptive optics - obtaining the finest images from large telescopes
- Jan 19th *Imaging Group*
- Feb 4th Dr Roger Kinns - Maudslay Society
Some new insights into the history of the Time Ball on Calton Hill
- Feb 16th *Imaging Group*
- Mar 4th *Annual General Meeting*
- Mar 16th *Imaging Group*
- Apr 1st David Small - Astronomical Society of Edinburgh
Astronomy in education
- Apr 6th *Imaging Group*
- Apr 21st *Universe Challenge*
at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh
- Apr 23rd *Stall and telescopes*
at the Science Festival event in Teviot Row
- May 6th Ken Kennedy - Aurora Section, British Astronomical Association
Noctilucent clouds - A modern phenomenon?
- Jun 3rd Dr Horst Meyerdieks - Astronomical Society of Edinburgh
Algol and Almaaz - two bright variable stars
- Jul 1st Dr Bruce Vickery - Astronomical Society of Edinburgh
Impact of astronomy on ancient Egypt
- Sep 9th Dr Alexander MacKinnon - University of Glasgow
Lochaber to the cosmos
- Sep 24th *Doors Open Day*
at the City Observatory
- Sep 24th *Stall*
at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh Doors Open Day
- Sep 25th *Stall and telescope*
at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh Doors Open Day
- Oct 7th Dr Peter Davidson - Curator of Minerals, National Museums of Scotland
Meteorites
- Oct 8th *Observing session - Draconid meteor shower*
- Oct 19th *Imaging Group*
- Nov 4th Prof Simon Stewart - Institute of Petroleum Engineering, Heriot-Watt University
Impact craters on Earth - how many are yet to be found?
- Nov 16th *Imaging Group*
- Dec 2nd Prof Richard Brown - Centre for Future Air-Space Transportation Technology, University of Strathclyde
The future of air-space transport
- Dec 14th *Imaging Group*

Publications

No editions of the Society's Journal were published in 2011. Due to the co-option - and at the AGM election - of the Journal editor into the position of Secretary, the Journal is currently without editor.

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. Certain announcements are publicised through the Society's Twitter account at <http://twitter.com/ASEdinburgh>, which has over 330 followers at the end of the year.

The Council expresses its thanks to the Royal Observatory Edinburgh for continuing to provide web space and email forwarding.

Observing

An arrangement has been made with a local organisation, which allows our members the use of a Dark Skies site near West Calder. Members are being required to pay a deposit for keys to this site.

An observing session was arranged for 8 October, when the maximum of the Draconid meteor shower was expected. However, the weather did not permit any observations.

Imaging Group

The ASE Imaging Group is now into its third year. We held 7 sessions in 2011 and these were well attended. The meetings are held in Juniper Green village hall - monthly on Wednesdays during the winter months. Meetings are open to any member of the Society. There is a wide range of ability, experience, equipment and interests. The group is very much a cooperative venture with members keen to share knowledge and experience. There is also a social aspect to the group and a general aim to encourage practical astronomy. One Wednesday saw good enough weather to do some observing from the adjacent park. It is possible that we might extend the group to provide for general observing and even an equipment clinic.

Details are available on the Society's web site together with a link to our Flickr page (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/aseimaginggroup>) where we are able to share images and comments.

Books, storage etc.

From October 2011, the Society has some storage space at the meeting venue, the Augustine United Church. This space is smaller than the existing storage in Leith, but less expensive per volume. The library, the slides, and two telescopes have been moved from Leith to the Church. In Leith remain a few globes, a pair of film projectors, an old-style slide projector and a few items of less interest. During 2012, the Leith storage will be emptied and the contract terminated.

With all books stored at the meeting venue, the sale of books to members has been widened to include about three quarters of all books. Excluded from sale are books that are of special interest

to the Society or that are on long-term loan.

Lorimer Medal

The Lorimer Medal is awarded by the Society to people who have made an outstanding contribution to the public understanding of science. We were delighted to present Alan Pickup, as the 12th recipient, with the Lorimer Medal. At the award in May, a cake with an image of J.H. Lorimer was presented, as the medal was not yet ready. The medal proper was handed over at the October meeting.

Alan Pickup is a long-serving member of the Society, and for the last few years has presented the sky preview at most of our monthly meetings. He was on the Council from 1975 to 1981, from 1993 to 1996, and since 2011. He served as President from 1979 to 1981. Since 2002 he is one of the ASE Trustees and since 2008 their secretary and treasurer.

Retired from the Royal Observatory Edinburgh, Alan Pickup still works with the ROE Visitor Centre and takes the Starlab to schools to introduce pupils to the wonders of the night sky. He has been writing on astronomy and space science for the *Guardian* since 1974, and also writes a monthly column for the *Scotsman*.

City Observatory

At the 2010 AGM, it was agreed that the Society should meet with the City Council regarding access to the City Observatory. This meeting took place toward the end of March 2011 and the results were presented at the April Ordinary Meeting. In attendance were from the ASE Ken and Rachel Thomas, Peter Mulholland, Bruce Vickery and David Small; for the City Dorothy Marsh and Frank Little.

The Museums Department of the City were in the process of forming partnership arrangements with a variety of partners to reduce the cost of running the department. For the City Observatory, the then considered plan was to establish a gallery in the City Dome. In the Playfair Building, the partitions between the wings were to be removed and a glass or acrylic glass partition to separate the transit telescope from the viewing area. There was a commitment to keep the Cooke telescope and dome operational - but only if the Society was interested in using it. The Observatory would be open daily, similar to the Nelson Monument. The presence of a gallery in the City Dome would make this unavailable for meetings or storage.

There was a capital budget for 2014 to carry out work. Once the Playfair Building had been made fit for use, the Society might have access to the telescope about once a month, possibly more often in conjunction with any occupier of the building. Opening the building very regularly in the evening might exceed the City's resources.

The Society, on the other hand, could also not be sure how much volunteer effort there would be available from its side.

It was agreed that there was scope for discussion; the Society was interested in the telescope being used, while the City would need our expertise to operate it. Both sides hoped to open the City Observatory for Doors Open Day, and to open again for a public observing session after that.

By autumn, the plan was to open the Observatory to the public on the second Fridays of December, January, February and March. There would be a short presentation on the night sky - presented in the main room with the telescope pillar in it. In case of clear skies, this would be followed by use of the telescope. Else, there would be a tour of the Observatory instead. The City was very supportive of this. However, in early November, the City had to cancel these plans, as there had been some water damage, and there were health and safety concerns about having members of the public in the Playfair Building. Even limiting participants to members of the Society was in the end not possible.

Science Festival

Similar to 2009, John Brown, Lorna McCalman and Charlie Gleed - Honorary President, former

President, and former Vice-President, resp., of the Society - organised a day of two events for the Science Festival. The day saw talks by professional and amateur astronomers, all to a theme of *Cosmic Threats to Earth*. This was followed by the *End of the World Ceilidh* in the evening. The Society supported this event financially, with a grant of £250.

We set up some posters, models and telescopes at the entrance to the lecture hall. Toward the end of the talks programme, the Sun could be briefly glimpsed with the H α telescope. For the evening, Saturn and a pass of the International Space Station could be observed from the terrace adjacent to the bar.

Also within the Science Festival, the Royal Observatory Edinburgh held a quiz night under the title *Universe Challenge*. A team of three professionals from ROE was pitched against three amateurs from the Society. The Society won hands-down, as is tradition in pro/am quizzes.

Doors Open Days

The City Observatory on Calton Hill opened up the Playfair Building for Doors Open Day on 24 September 2011. At the City's request, prior booking was required and numbers were limited to 300 in total. There was great interest in the building and in the two remaining telescopes. Members of the Society were on hand to explain about the Fraunhofer meridian circle and its role in time keeping and navigation, and to show the Cooke refractor in the dome upstairs. Special thanks go to Bruce Vickery, who organised the event in conjunction with a number of organisations, including the One o' Clock Gun and Time Ball Association. In sunny weather the H α telescope was put to good use.

The Royal Observatory Edinburgh invited the Society to set up a stall at their Doors Open Days on 24 and 25 September 2011. Our presence on the 24th was limited due to the simultaneous event on Calton Hill. On the 25th we were able to show sun spots and solar prominences with our H α telescope. The Society's kit for making a sundial and the kits for making a planisphere were very popular. This was a good opportunity to meet the public; over 2800 people attended and voted the solar telescope one of the most popular exhibits that day.

Financial review

For a number of years prior to 2010, our policy had been to exhaust the funds of our own investment account, and to defer receiving interest and dividends earned on investments held by ASE Trust. The deferred income due to the Society had instead been invested by the Trust on the Society's behalf, yielding a far higher rate than the Society would have been able to secure. In 2010 we had asked for payment of £2000 from the Trust to balance our budget, and in 2011 we again asked for the same amount. For comparison, for 2010 the ASE Trust reported income from dividends and interest of £2428.

The reduction in storage cost envisaged in last year's report did not happen in 2011. There has been a slight reduction due to re-negotiation in early 2011 of the rate charged. Since autumn 2011, we have additional storage at the meeting venue, for which the annual charge has not yet been invoiced. During 2012, the previous storage in Leith will be terminated. As a result the storage cost will reduce from about £1200 in 2011 to about £500 in 2012.

Declaration

The trustees' annual report presented on pages 1 to 6 was approved by the Council of The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh (the trustees of the charity).

10 March 2012. Horst Meyerdierks, Secretary.

For and on behalf of the Council of The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh.

Receipts and payments accounts

The format in which the accounts were presented in 2009 and 2010 was not well received by members of the Society. This year, we return to the old format, with the addition of information on assets.

Statement of balances

	Notes	2011		2010	
		£	£	£	£
Bank balances at start of year					
Current Account		2,894.19		2,479.31	
Business Investment Account		77.45		77.33	
Total balance at start			2,971.64		2,556.64
Plus receipts		3,320.91		2,914.90	
Less payments		-3,330.17		-2,499.90	
Total balance at end			2,962.38		2,971.64
Bank balances at end of year					
Current Account		2,884.81		2,894.19	
Business Investment Account		77.57		77.45	
Total balance at end			2,962.38		2,971.64
Assets and liabilities at end of year	1		0.00		-307.56

Income and expenditure report

	Notes	2011		2010	
		£	£	£	£
Income					
Donations					
ASE annual subscriptions		1,065.00		747.50	
Other donations		52.00		25.00	
Gift Aid		142.75		120.20	
Donations total			1,259.75		892.70
Grants					
ASE Trust		2,000.00		2,000.00	
Grants total			2,000.00		2,000.00
Bank interest					
Current Account		1.04		2.08	
Business Investment Account		0.12		0.12	
Bank interest total			1.16		2.20
Other charitable activities					
ASE badge sale		0.00		0.00	
Dark sky site key deposit		0.00		0.00	
Other charitable activities total			0.00		0.00

Asset sales			
Books		60.00	20.00
Asset sales total		<u>60.00</u>	<u>20.00</u>
Income total		3,320.91	2,914.90
Expenditure			
Charitable activities			
Meeting expenses	2	837.07	725.03
Memberships and affiliations	3	28.00	28.00
Communications		49.20	95.34
Dark sky site		140.00	0.00
Astrocalendars		70.34	79.00
Stamps	1	26.78	0.00
Public liability insurance	4	28.00	28.00
Travel expenses	5	15.00	0.00
Charitable activities total		<u>1,194.39</u>	<u>955.37</u>
Grants			
Prof John Brown		0.00	250.00
Grants total		<u>0.00</u>	<u>250.00</u>
Asset purchase and upkeep			
Artwork	6	528.12	0.00
Equipment		0.00	0.00
Repairs and maintenance	1	160.38	0.00
Storage rental	1,7	1,245.68	1,164.93
Contents insurance	1,8	201.60	129.60
Asset purchase and upkeep total		<u>2,135.78</u>	<u>1,294.53</u>
Expenditure total		<u>3,330.17</u>	<u>2,499.90</u>
Income minus expenditure		-9.26	+415.00

Assets

	Notes	2011		2010	
		£	£	£	£
Books	9	30,000		30,000	
Artwork	10	600		200	
Telescopes etc.	11	6,000		6,000	
IT equipment	12	300		300	
Educational equipment	13	200		200	
Assets total		<u>37,100</u>		<u>36,700</u>	

Notes to the accounts

General notes:

- All funds are unrestricted, i.e. available for any of the Society's purposes.
- No grants were made in 2011.
- No remuneration was paid to any trustee (Council member) of the Society, nor to any person connected to a trustee of the Society.
- Trustee expenses:
 - David Small: £15 travel expenses.
- Transactions with trustees:
 - Several Council members purchased books from the Society:
 - Peter Mulholland: two books for £10,
 - Horst Meyerdierks: one book for £5,
 - Rachel Thomas: one book for £5,
 - Kenneth Thomas: two books for £10.

Specific notes referenced above:

1. Due to late clearance of one cheque, a number of figures from last year's accounts have been amended. The cheque in question, in the amount of £307.56, reimbursed the Treasurer for four distinct out-of-pocket expenses:
 - £160.38 for engraving of the President's Medal,
 - £26.78 for the purchase of stamps,
 - £106.00 for storage rental,
 - £14.40 for contents insurance associated with storage.These sums appear in the statement of balances as end of 2010 liabilities. They are included in the 2011 figures of the income and expenditure report.
2. Meeting expenses comprise of £528.00 to hire the venue at the Augustine United Church, £60.80 for the Imaging Group to hire the meeting room at the Juniper Green Village Hall, £37.67 for refreshments, and £210.65 for speakers' travel or meals. Included in the last figure, an extraordinary expense refund of £128 was made to Dr Roger Kinns, whose train was cancelled at the last minute due to flooding, so that he had to take a taxi from Glasgow to make the meeting. His return journey was by train.
3. Federation of Astronomical Societies annual membership.
4. Public liability insurance is with the Federation of Astronomical Societies.
5. £15 to cover David Small's travel to the meeting with the City Council.
6. Five Lorimer medals were purchased. One was awarded to Alan Pickup, the others remain with the supplier.
7. We hire a 35 square feet storage unit from Safestore. The rate paid was re-negotiated in spring 2011 and reduced from £106 to £79.52 per four-week interval.
8. Contents insurance is with the storage company Safestore and applies to the contents of our storage unit.
9. The value of the books is listed as unchanged. The value is a very rough estimate, so that the sale of a few books from the low-value end has no significant impact on the overall estimate.
10. This figure estimates the value of the four remaining Lorimer Medals and of the President's Medal. Not included in the value are a number of large photographs, three science displays, and two 20th century water colour paintings of the City Observatory.
11. This includes estimated values of the modern instruments available to members, and of an early 20th century refractor. Not included is a 1942 refractor.
12. The value is for the data projector purchased a few years ago. While our main venue provides data projectors, this is used regularly at other venues.
13. This figure is a rough estimate of the value of three globes.

Declaration

The receipts and payments accounts presented on pages 7 to 10 were approved by the Council of The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh (the trustees of the charity).

10 March 2012. Horst Meyerdierks, Secretary.

For and on behalf of the Council of The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh.

Independent examiner's report to the Council of The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh

I report on the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2011 which are set out on pages 7 to 10.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Council is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The Council considers that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (a) to (c) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the financial statements as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and seeks explanations from the Council concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations;have not been met, or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Mr. Adrian C. Townsend, CA; 87 Morningside Drive, Edinburgh, EH10 5NJ