



The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh

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

Annual Report 2014

Trustees' annual report for the period 1 January to 31 December 2014

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 Gardens, 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 Kenneth Thomas	President	whole year	AGM
2	Dr Horst Meyerdierks	Secretary	whole year	AGM
3	Mr Alan Ellis	Treasurer	whole year	AGM
4	Mr Alan Pickup	Vice-President	from 6 June	AGM
5	Mr Scott Provan	Vice-President	whole year	AGM
6	Dr Geraldine Dennis		from 6 June	AGM
7	Mr Peter Mulholland		whole year	AGM
8	Ms Rachel Thomas		whole year	AGM
9	Mr John Wood		from 6 June	AGM

Names of all other charity trustees during the period.

	trustee name	office (if any)	dates acted	appointed by
	Dr Duncan Hale-Sutton		whole year	AGM
	Mr Alan Pickup		to 6 June	AGM
	Dr Bruce Vickery		27 June to 30 December	Council

The Society is an unincorporated association founded (as the Edinburgh Astronomical Association) in 1924 and is governed by a Constitution most recently modified on 30 March 2012. The Constitution may be referred to on the Society's web site at <http://www.astronomyedinburgh.org/about/constitution.html>.

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 2014, the membership of the Society was 78 of which six were honorary members. Honorary members are Dr H. Ford, Dr D. Gavine, Dr N. Grubb, and Prof D. Heggie. The Honorary Presidents are Prof Andrew Lawrence (Regius Professor of Astronomy at the University of Edinburgh) and Prof John Brown (Astronomer Royal for Scotland).

The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh Trustees

A former Vice-President of the Society, Mr John Henry Lorimer, 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 and others, dated 10 December 1937.

Astronomical Society of Edinburgh Trust is registered Scottish Charity SC013921. As of 31 December 2014, the following are the trustees in terms of that deed:

- Mr Alan Pickup (Secretary and Treasurer)
- Mr Alan Ellis
- 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; Mr Ellis is also Treasurer of the Society.

Activities during 2014

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 24 January, 28 March, 16 May, 27 June and 1 August; we thank the Royal Observatory Edinburgh for offering a meeting room for Council meetings. The Annual General Meeting was held on 6 June. The Imaging Group met 8 times during the winter months. 11 Ordinary Meetings with educational talks on different aspects of astronomy were held; the February meeting was without guest speaker and instead

dedicated to advice on telescopes and other observing aids. The approximate attendance at monthly meetings was: Jan 43, Feb 17, Mar 36, Apr ~35, May 28, Jun 30 (AGM), Jul 34, Sep 35, Oct 44, Nov 37, Dec 46, total ~385.

Meetings and events.

- Jan 10th Alexander Mead - Royal Observatory Edinburgh
Dark energy
- Jan 13th *Stargazing Live, at Linlithgow Burgh Halls*
- Jan 15th *Imaging Group*
- Feb 7th *Surgery on telescopes and other observing aids*
- Feb 12th *Imaging Group*
- Mar 7th Dr Bruce Vickery - AS Edinburgh
The speed of light and other stellar effects
- Mar 12th *Imaging Group*
- Apr 4th Geoffrey Scott - AS Edinburgh
Astronomy in Mongolia and China
- Apr 9th *Imaging Group*
- May 2nd Cairns Mason
John Napier of Merchiston - the 400th anniversary of the discovery of logarithms
- Jun 6th *Annual General Meeting*
Followed by a presentation by Dr David Gavine on *Visual observing of variable stars*
- Jul 4th **ASE@90:** Prof Andrew Lawrence - Royal Observatory Edinburgh
The Universe and Me: our place in the cosmos
- Sep 12th **ASE@90:** Prof Peter Brand - Royal Observatory Edinburgh
The Golden Years of Astronomy: will they ever cease?
- Sep 17th *Imaging Group*
- Sep 27th *Stall and telescopes*
at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh Doors Open Day
- Sep 28th *Stall and telescopes*
at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh Doors Open Day
- Oct 3rd **ASE@90:** Prof Douglas Heggie - University of Edinburgh
The million-body problem: the life and death of star clusters
- Oct 8th *Imaging Group*
- Nov 7th Dr Ross Archibald
Physiology and health in space
- Nov 12th *Imaging Group*
- Nov 29th *Astronomy Day at the Museum of Flight*
- Dec 5th Prof Charles Cockell - University of Edinburgh
Will we ever speak to aliens?
- Dec 10th *Imaging Group*

ASE@90

The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh was founded on 15 October 1924 as the Astronomical Association of Edinburgh. As a small celebration of the 90th anniversary, a mini-series of three talks was given by leading Edinburgh astronomers with a connection to the Society. Prof Lawrence holds the post that Thomas Henderson, first Astronomer Royal for Scotland, took up in 1834. Lawrence is also an Honorary President of the Society, like all his predecessors starting with Prof R.A. Sampson in 1924. Professors Brand and Heggie were active in the Fellowship of Junior Astronomers - an off-shoot of the Society a few decades ago.

An ASE-themed birthday cake was kindly provided for the October meeting itself by the Mackie family, who are members of the Society.

Publications

The Society's Journal has resumed in the form of an on-line blog coordinated by Rachel Thomas. This is available to the public at <http://asedinburghjournal.wordpress.com/>

Similar to Alan Pickup's sky preview at monthly meetings, his monthly astronomy article for "The Scotsman" - with kind permission of the paper's publishers - is republished in the Society's Journal.

Members are issued with the latest edition of the Federation of Astronomical Societies' "Astrocalendar" on payment of their subscription to the Society.

There are three handouts - beginners' seasonal star charts, planisphere and sundial that have been uploaded to the Society's website and are available to the public. They are available under the Creative Commons by Attribution Licence, so that others can redistribute or amend and distribute these documents, requiring only that the Society be acknowledged.

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 and the Journal coordinator:

- president @ astronomyedinburgh.org
- secretary @ astronomyedinburgh.org
- treasurer @ astronomyedinburgh.org
- journal @ astronomyedinburgh.org

To help members organise observing activities, an ASE observers' mailing list was created. At the end of the year, 21 members were subscribed to this list.

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 had over 1300 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.

Outreach

The Society took part in the BBC Stargazing LIVE event in Linlithgow, in which about 1000 people participated. The Royal Observatory hosted most of the indoor activities. Due to the bad weather, the Society's main attraction was the stall and a few telescopes indoors. In spite of light rain, we set up two telescopes as backdrop to the BBC Reporting Scotland item outside in front of the Palace.

On 27 and 28 September, members of the Society turned out to support the annual Open Days at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh. For the past few years we have been invited to attend the Open Days to help promote astronomy to the general public, as well as to publicise the Society. We provided telescopes and staff to look at the Sun. Due to the changing cloud cover, much of the time one telescope was pointed at a recent image of the Sun instead. In addition, there was a stall set up with various member-produced materials for the public to take away, including information about the Society. Over the course of the two days 3300 people came through the gates of the Observatory.

In association with the National Museum of Flight at East Fortune, the Society organised an astronomy day on the 29th of November. In the main hangar, under Concorde, exhibits and

activities were provided by ASE, the Royal Observatory Edinburgh (ROE), StrathSEDS (Strathclyde Students for the Exploration and Development of Space), and two Edinburgh astrophotographers. We were hoping to provide solar viewing during the day, but the weather was against us. However, the evening session enjoyed some patches of clear sky and allowed participants to view Mars and the Moon through various members' telescopes. StrathSEDS brought along their Cubesat which was launched on a commercial sounding rocket. The ROE provided planetarium shows, comet making demonstrations and craft activities for children. The attendance was 350, which has to be compared to a regular museum attendance of 80 at that time of year.

Observing and Imaging Group

While there have been no centrally organised observing sessions for members, the observers' mailing list has helped arrange a few sessions at dark sites. The Imaging Group also carried out a site inspection.

The Imaging Group is now well established and held eight meetings in Juniper Green village hall – monthly on Wednesdays during the winter months. There were discussions and demonstrations of a variety of hardware and software, as well as general discussions of astronomical topics. Meetings are open to any member of the Society and several new members have joined the group. Although imaging is the main focus, there is also a social aspect to the group and a general aim to encourage practical astronomy. The group shares images and comments on its Flickr page (<http://www.flickr.com/groups/aseimaginggroup>).

Books and storage

The bulk of the old library of the Society is no longer of use and can be disposed of. These approximately 700 books were offered to a local book dealer specialising in science among other subjects. An offer was made for only 42 of these books, illustrating that it is next to impossible to dispose of the books in this manner. We did not take up the offer, as there was no significant storage space to be reclaimed from the sale.

212 books valued at £10 or less were extracted and donated to the Christian Aid Book Sale at St Andrew's and St George's West.

During 2014, 42 books were sold to members, many of these at a nominal price in a last-chance offer before their being donated to Christian Aid.

This leaves the Society with the following books:

- 105 items in the ASE Library, not for disposal,
- 61 items valued at £100 or more, remaining for sale to members,
- 422 items valued at more than £10 but less than £100, also remaining for sale to members.

Disposing of the low value books has eased the pressure on storage significantly, but the situation remains difficult with telescopes and other items still being stored by members.

Calton Hill

Given the opportunity to see the City Observatory in its current state, several Council members went to the stakeholders open day on 1 July, run jointly by the City as landlord and the Collective Gallery as tenant of the City Dome. City and Gallery plan to return the site to a usable state, to expand the Gallery to the whole site, but also to preserve and display some of the astronomical instruments, and to keep the McEwan Cooke refractor in working order and available to interested groups, like the Society.

The City asked the Court of Session to sanction a 25-year lease of the site to the Collective Gallery, and the Court asked for input from the Society on the matter. The Society, essentially, supports the plans, but has some reservations whether the display of astronomical instruments and preservation of the telescope will actually come off. The

Society also noted that the City's submission appeared to somewhat obscure the fact that the City did run an observatory on the site from 1896 to 1937, before the Society did from 1938 to 2009.

Financial review

As with previous years we have again requested and received a payment of £2000 from the ASE Trust (SC013921). We continue to have a reasonable annual surplus thanks to this funding, this year being £1575. This money will keep the members' subscription fees at their current level and will enable us to continue to meet our constitutional objectives. In particular, the purchase of additional equipment for use by Society members and the funding of high quality speakers and events will continue to attract people who want to develop their interest in astronomy.

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).

*15 May 2015. Kenneth Thomas, President.
For and on behalf of the Council of The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh.*

Receipts and payments accounts

Statement of balances

	Notes	2014		2013	
		£	£	£	£
Bank balances at start of year					
Current Account		5,749		4,227	
Total balance at start			5,749		4,227
Plus receipts		3,408		3,268	
Less payments		-1,833		-1,746	
Total balance at end			7,324		5,749
Bank balances at start <u>end</u> of year					
Current Account		7,324		5,749	
Total balance at start <u>end</u>			7,324		5,749
Assets and liabilities at end of year	1		0		0

Income and expenditure report

	Notes	2014		2013	
		£	£	£	£
Income					
Donations					
ASE annual subscriptions		1,287		1,054	
Other donations		18		34	
Gift Aid	2	0		102	
Donations total			1,305		1,190
Grants					
ASE Trust	3	2,000		2,000	
Grants total			2,000		2,000
Bank interest					
Current Account		0		0	
Bank interest total			0		0
Other charitable activities					
ASE badge sale		0		8	
Other charitable activities total			0		8
Asset sales					
Books		103		70	
Asset sales total			103		70
Income total			3,408		3,268

Expenditure			
Charitable activities			
Meeting expenses	4	1,155	1,201
Memberships and affiliations	5	28	28
Astrocalendars		85	84
Stamps		70	13
Stationery		32	0
Public liability insurance	6	20	20
Member expenses		5	0
ASE events		38	0
Charitable activities total		<u>1,433</u>	<u>1,346</u>
Governance costs			
Independent examination		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
Governance costs total		100	100
Asset purchase and upkeep			
Equipment	7	0	0
Repairs and maintenance		0	0
Storage rental	8	300	300
Asset purchase and upkeep total		<u>300</u>	<u>300</u>
Expenditure total		<u>1,833</u>	<u>1,746</u>
Income minus expenditure		+1,575	+1,522

Assets

	Notes	2014		2013	
		£	£	£	£
Library	9	7,740		7,620	
High-value books for disposal	9	11,890		10,380	
Low/medium-value books for disposal	9	11,680		12,910	
Books given to Christian Aid	9	0		1,310	
Artwork	10	600		600	
Telescopes etc.	11	6,200		6,200	
IT equipment	12	300		300	
Educational equipment	13	5,200		5,200	
Assets total			<u>43,610</u>		<u>44,520</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 2014.
- 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:
 - Duncan Hale-Sutton: £4.80 for lunch while on Society business.
- Transactions with trustees:
 - Carl Dennis (spouse of Geraldine Dennis) purchased 13 books for £37.50.
 - Duncan Hale-Sutton purchased 4 books for £4.00.
 - Horst Meyerdierks purchased 7 books for £15.00.

Specific notes referenced above:

1. There were no uncleared cheques at the end of 2014.
2. The Gift aid application to HMRC was submitted late for tax year 2013/14 and payment not received until 2015. The 2015 annual report next year will therefore show two payments.
3. Lorimer Trust income from investment income on financial assets management by the ASE Trust.
4. Meeting expenses comprise of £968 room hire at the Augustine United Church, £100 for Imaging Group room hire, £67 meeting refreshments and £20 speakers' travel.
5. Federation of Astronomical Societies annual membership.
6. Public Liability Insurance is with the Federation of Astronomical Societies.
7. No equipment purchases in 2014.
8. Annual cost for storage at the Augustine United Church.
9. During the year some further valuations were made, others were updated. Some items consequently moved between value bands. Also, further items were identified for keeping in the library. The values, for each book, are very rough estimates. They are cost of replacement, whereas revenue from disposal would yield only a fraction of these figures.
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 three historic telescopes.
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 plus the 1990s valuation for a "starfinder" instrument by Sir William Peck.

Declaration

The receipts and payments accounts presented on pages 7 to 9 were approved by the Council of The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh (the trustees of the charity).

15 May 2015. Kenneth Thomas, President.

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

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Report to the trustees/members of	The Astronomical Society of Edinburgh		
Registered charity number	SC022968		
On the accounts of the charity for the year ended	31st December 2014 which are set out on pages 6-9		
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 ('the 2005 Act') and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) (the '2006 regulations'). The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the 2005 Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.		
Basis of independent examiner's statement	My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Regulations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the trustees 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	<p>In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 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 record 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 accounts to be reached. 		
Signed:	Helen Bourquin	Date:	31/5/15
Name:	Helen Bourquin Associate Member ACIE		
Address:	67 Station Road, Roslin EH25 9LP		