

Croydon Astronomical Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Friday 2nd May 2008

1. Attendance Record

The members present for the AGM 2007/08 is listed in the attendance register, and also noted below:

Committee members: Paul Harper, Ray Bailey, Mike Ross, William Bottaci, Steve Sumner, John Murrell, Alan Drummond.

CAS members: Dave Burfoot, Roy Aldridge, John Chandler-Honor, Peter Clarke, Chris Green, Alice Kennedy, John Henderson, Konrad Malin-Smith, Stephen Morris, Kenneth Pearson, Kevin Phillips, David Sketchley, Michael Sketchley, Jim Vaughan.

Attendance after AGM: John Chandler-Honor, Chris Green, John Henderson, Konrad Malin-Smith, Jim Vaughan.

2. Minutes and Reports

Copies of the minutes and reports were given to all attendees.

3. Approval of the minutes of the AGM on 4th May 2007

The minutes were read and approved. Acceptance proposed by Alan Drummond, and seconded by Roy Aldridge.

4. Treasurer's Report

Mike Ross presented the accounts for the period 2007/08 (see attached); which shows that donations fell by 40%, Grey box up 2%, Raffle up 2%, Teas up by 2.5%, but Kenley down by 8%. Thanks were given to Paul Harper for arranging the many visits to Kenley observatory.

Another claim for Gift aid has being made to the government this March, for £789.60p. A new claim as the last one was 4 years ago, so it will include interest at 5%, hopefully taking the total to around £870.

Various questions were asked, with a summary below:

Deterioration of the observatory has not been taken into account;

SAGAS invoice of £15 per year will been taken into account starting next year;

Little or no interest is paid by banks to current accounts, only to deposit accounts; consequently Mike Ross moved £1,500 from the current to the deposit account.

Regarding the RRS meetings, a correlation of income to the presented talk will be performed by the membership secretary.

Roy Easto audited the financial accounts.

5. Approval of the Accounts

Approval was proposed by John Murrell and seconded by Chris Green.

6. Observatory Report

Steve Sumner presented his report of work carried out during the year (see attached). Various questions were asked, with a summary below:

The dome shutters do not perform as they used to and are being looked at;

The clubhouse needs a new door;

The clubhouse roof felt was replaced 2 years ago by David Burfoot;

A vote of thanks was proposed for both Steve Sumner and David Burfoot for all their work in the last year, and particularly for Steve for the Health & Safety report and compiling the list of defects.

7. Group Visits Report

Paul Harper read out his report for the work carried out by on group visits during the year (see attached). Paul was acknowledged and thanked for the record number of visitors.

8. Astronomer's Report

John Murrell presented only a very brief report as he felt that the report is best compiled after the Exhibition meeting, when he can see what the members have produced.

A vote of thanks was proposed for John for all his work in the last year, as both Astronomer, Webmaster and other duties.

9. Chairman's report

Paul Harper addressed the meeting outlining the work carried out by himself and the committee (see attached). A vote of thanks was proposed for Paul for all his work in the last year.

10. Membership Report

William Bottaci read out the membership details, the summary of which is:

82 signed up members, and 3 life members;

A new database has been compiled listing past and future members, so it will be easier to compile 'across years' reports, such as Gift Aid information.

Konrad (a life member) said that a life member is someone who has given a long service and or commitment to the society, such as serving on the committee.

The average member donation upon annual sign-up is about £15.

11. Statement on the members of the committee 2007/08

Paul Harper read out a statement (see attached). Various questions were asked, with a summary below:

At least five people are required for a quorum;

As the constitution states that questions for the AGM have to be submitted in writing in advance, the committee should mention if any have been received;

An advantage of the £15 per society annual membership is that we get a discount on future events, such as Nightlife;

A speaker list is with the FAS, which is not publicised;

The next SAGAS Star Party is on the Isle of Wight.

12. Appointment of Auditors for 2007/08

Roy Easto was proposed by Mike Ross and seconded by John Murrell.

End of AGM

Open Forum

There were several themes/threads of discussion and these are grouped.

Teas and Raffle

Konrad Malin-Smith: asked for help from others with lifting the heavy tea urn and container of all raffle items.

Raffle: need to know if the current prizes are acceptable, (most are photographs by Nik Szymanek). Some asked if we can have other prizes, such as books. Members were asked to submit particular books themselves that they have come across which might be suitable. The consensus was that books and photographs are good prizes.

Mike Ross: Planispheres would be a good raffle prize in addition to a good way to promote the society by giving to relatives and friends.

The average donation to the raffle per RRS meeting is about £25.

Paul thanked John Murrell for kindly donating his CCD book to the Kenley Library.

Science venues to visit

John Henderson: there is a new telescope installed in the Kilder Forest of the Northumbrian National Park, where they have two star parties a year and it may be a good idea to organise trips to this dark sky event.

Peter Clarke: suggests a visit to the Science Museum where there is a very good exhibition and also at Olympia nearby. It is a themed exhibition and is still free, (no photography allowed).

Peter Clarke: suggests a visit to Jodrell Bank, although the distance is an obstacle to travel. Konrad Malin-Smith went on one visit that took a day to travel with one coach and three drivers. Paul Harper also went there in 2003 for a star party.

Steve Sumner suggested the National Space Centre in Leicester, which although is a 300 mile round trip it will be easier than Jodrell Bank.

Paul Harper: suggests the Tanbridge telescope, to which he visited with Konrad.

Paul Harper: said that anyone can suggest and organise a visit, no need to be on the committee. However, need to be aware of vehicle driving licence class required for the vehicle. A 'D' licence is required for a 15-seater, but if a fee is charged it requires a PSV licence.

Paul Harper: suggests Bath, combined with the home of photography, as well as the William Herschel museum, (Alan Drummond is a member of this museum).

John Murrell: suggests a more ambitious visit to the continent; the Space Centre at Toulouse, and the particle laboratory at CERN; both by train and taking about 3 days.

John Chandler-Honnor: says that flights to Toulouse in France can be cheap and we may be able to recruit new members by advertising the visit, and in some publications the advertisement would be free.

Jim Vaughan: Regarding advertisements, Residents' Associations are good places to advertise, as often the members are looking for local activities.

Kevin Phillips: suggests a junior class to attract younger people. Unfortunately there are complications with registering with the Criminal Records Bureau, CRB, which is required for any involvement with children. At Kenley observatory the emphasis is on the

parents, guardians and leaders for the CRB check. We would need more committee members just for viability.

John Henderson: suggests the Edinburgh Observatory; however it is no longer open to the public.

For virtually all coach trips it will be cheaper to hire a coach and for one or more members to drive.

There was a show of hands and Leicester, Toulouse and CERN were amongst the favourites. Travel would preferably be by coach, pooled cars or by train.

PaulH and JohnM: On Saturday the 9th of August at Sidmuth, Exeter, there is an open day at the Norman Lockyer observatory where there will be a planetarium show, trade stands and viewing if the sky is clear.

End of Open Forum

Croydon Astronomical Society

Chairman's Report 2007 / 2008

Lecture Programme

During the last year we have tried to have a mixture of historical, planetary, deep sky, imaging etc.

However there have been difficulties. I have to take on this difficult role, in addition to Chairman and Group Visit Co-Ordinator. At times I have had clashes of jobs which, meant I have not spent enough time on specific areas. This has been mainly caused by the size of the committee.

If anyone would like a specific subject covered or has a comment regarding the lecture programme. Please raise this in the open forum, after the break.

Kenley Observatory, Astronomy Programme

I would like to thank, to John Murrell for organising and advising us on various observing projects over the last year.

Committee

It has been a difficult year, with only 6 committee members out of a possible 10, we had to spread the jobs around. William Botacci, volunteered to be membership secretary on a temporary basis.

Despite the lack of committee numbers, it has been amazing that we have had a quorum at every meeting. A quorum is a minimum of 5 committee members.

Fortunately the committee for 2008/9 is larger, more about this in the, "Statement of the New Committee".

I would like to thank all the Committee Members for their help during the last year. Without them there would be no society for you to attend.

Norman Fisher Observatory, Kenley

Many thanks for Steve Sumner, Dave Burfoot Barry Cheasley and John Murrell, who have continued their hard work in maintaining the observatory.

Over the next year will have a large number of jobs, including the Alan Trease dome, club house door, and the main dome.

Visits

The society participated in two visits this year. Last November, we visited the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, where some 22 members attended.

On 27 April, seven members joined Orpington AS, on a tour around London of little know astronomical sites. This was a great day.

Later on this year we hope to join Orpington again, in a visit to the Mullard Space Science Laboratories near Dorking.

As some of you have noticed in the Altair_b forum, I asked for ideas on future visits. There have many ideas, and I would like to thanks those who contributed. Perhaps we can talk about this in the open forum later.

Communication

The website continues to have regular hits, It's most popular section is weather and light pollution.

Thank you to, John Murrell for his good work as webmaster. He also the webmaster for SAGAS.

SAGAS

Last year saw a major revamp of SAGAS. The number of societies had dropped to around 12. However a new standing committee was formed, headed by Keith Brackenborough of Eastbourne AS, also CAS life member.

SAGAS, has now grown to 25 societies. We pay a fee of £15, which covers the cost of meeting, and a representative to attend FAS meetings.

Last years summer SAGAS at Vectis AS, on the Isle of Wight was a great success as well as the SAGAS star party last March. I am looking forward to this summers SAGAS at Basingstoke.

Thanks to all those who made it happen

I would like to thank all the Committee Members for the work they have done during the year. Also I have to thank all those who gave their time to prepare and present lectures to the Society.

Group Visits 2007/8

Over the past year we had approximately 370 people who have visited Kenley on group visits; which is a slight decrease on last year. This was partly due to the weather we had in February.

Quite a few of our visitors were from youth organisations, which were learning about the universe as part of their project work for the National Curriculum.

The groups come from all types of background, ranging from Cub Scouts and Brownies, GCSE Astronomy, A level physics students, local Women's institutes and Ramblers Association.

Visits took place on Friday, Saturday or Sunday at either 7.30 or 8 pm. It would be nice to have visits on other nights, due to increased interest. However many of helpers find it difficult due to work commitments; which is understandable.

Visits by children, last an hour and half, depending on the weather. We normally give a slide show, followed by observing through the one of the telescopes if clear that is. If it's cloudy, then they are shown around the observatory, and show CCD pictures we have taken.

Adult visits follow the same programme as children; however we tend to give a more in depth lecture.

Many thanks to Alan Drummond, Chris Green, John Murrell, David Burfoot, Mike Ross, Ray Bailey, William Botacci and Barry Cheesly, for their help.

I have also made a point in visiting people who are unable to visit Kenley, due to their age or infirmity. During the last year I have visited 6 such groups, from Cub Scout Packs (7-11 year olds) to Over 60 clubs. This also included Park Hill Primary, Purley Oaks Primary, Ashburton High School and Coulsdon Manor High School.

Help is always appreciated; please see me afterwards, if you would like to help.

Paul Harper
Chairman

Statement on the Election of the Committee 2007-2008

There were 5 nominations out of a possible 8, to the committee:-

Alan Drummond, Kevin Phillips, Ray Bailey, William Botacci and Peter Clarke.

Therefore these have been duly appointed to the committee, together with Paul Harper and Mike Ross, who hold ex-efico positions, of Chairman and Treasurer. These are 2 year appointments.

Steve Sumner has also agreed to be co-opted onto the committee, subject to their approval at the next committee meeting.

This leaves two places available. If any one would like to help on the committee please contact me.