Federation of Astronomical Societies

FEDERATION NEWS

PROGRAMME:
10.00 Coffee
10.45 FURTHER EXPLORATION OF MARS - Les Wooliscroft of Sheffield University
11.45 ROBOTIC TELESCOPES - Dr Baruch of Leeds University
12.45 Lunch
2.00 ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM - Professor Woflason of York University
3.00 Tea/Coffee
3.30 COSMIC GAMMA RAYS - Dr Hillas of Leeds University
4.25 FAS Notices and thanks.

TRADE STANDS ARE INVITED - please contact the organiser. There will be plenty of room for exhibitions so feel free to bring display materials but again contact the organiser first.

The University has an astrophysics department and a long history of helpful association with astronomical societies in the region so a warm welcome can be expected.

Our thanks to the University for their hospitality.

TRAVEL INFORMATION:
The University occupies ground on both sides of Western Bank, a dual carriageway to the west of the city. It is reached from Brook Hill roundabout. A map can be obtained from the organisers when booking.

By train - 2.5 hours from London; 1 hour from Leeds or Manchester. The No 60 bus runs from outside the railway station direct to the University, one mile away.

Sheffield is a very hilly city and catching the bus is advisable if coming by train.

The University is on the following bus routes: 2, 50, 51, 52, 60 and 93.

News and articles for the Newsletter Issue No 20 should be with the editor by late July please. Publication due August with news of next FAS Convention in Cardiff, September 30, replacing the former annual convention held at the RGO.
At the AGM held in Coventry on Saturday May 6 the following officers were elected to serve for the year 1989/90:

President: Rosemary Naylor
Vice-President: Rob Bennett
Secretary: Chris Sheldon
Assistant Secretary: Tony Ireland
Treasurer: Ken Marcus
Editor: Roger Naylor
Education Secretary: Eric Zucker
Society News Editor: Martin Chick
Assistant Society Editor: Pam Chick
Publicity Officer: Dave Powell
Editor of Handbooks: Brian Jones
Council Newsletter: Bill O'Shaughnessy

Meetings Co-ordinator: Paul Money

The new list of officers will appear in the 1990 FAS Handbook, meanwhile most addresses can be found in the old list on page 37 of the 1989 Handbook. Exceptions are:

Dave Powell, 1 Tal-y-bont Road, Ely, Cardiff, CF5 3EU
Paul Money, Valley Cottage, Viney, Horncastle, Lincs, LN6 6PH

The treasurer presented his report for the year to 30 April 1989 which showed that our expenses were slightly higher than in the previous year, so our income had fallen slightly. We no longer have our October convention at Warkworth to look forward to as the source of income. Nevertheless, he felt that there was no need to raise subscription rates and these remain the same at £7.50 for societies with 25 or more members and £5.50 for smaller societies. Subscriptions become due in September.

Societies not present at the AGM may obtain copies of the statement of accounts from the treasurer if they wish to study the details.

There was the usual interactive discussion between members from the floor and council members on a range of topics from education to future conventions.

Pam Chick asked societies to take note of their present address when sending society news for inclusion in the FAS Newsletter's Round-Up. It seems some societies have still not updated their mailing lists as they have been with us for over a year since Mr & Mrs Chick moved to:

2 Magnolia Way, Chandler's Reach, Llantrisant, Nr Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan CF36 2QJ

Federation Sweatshirts and Teeshirts, as advertised in the last FAS Newsletter were still available providing proof that Chris Sheldon had hoped when she investigated marketing these as publicity for the FAS. The scheme to have Federation Sweatshirts and Teeshirts printed with our logo depends on quantities to achieve reasonable prices. So, if you had planned to order garments, please do so as soon as possible so that we can ensure the viability of the enterprise.

SPACERPRINTS COMPETITION

Societies submitting material to be judged at the AGM and Convention were few but the quality of items presented was high according to the judges. The winners were:

First prize of £50 to Comrades Astronomical Society.

Astronomical Society.

Third prize of £25 to West of London Astronomical Society.

The judging was done by Ken Social in the photography section and Arthur Gilbert in the pictorial section. The number of members in each competing society was taken into account and weighting was applied accordingly. It was only as the results were being announced that society names were revealed.

The judges had found the competition a very close run thing with non-winners being such worthy entrants that it was afterwards decided by the Council that the runners-up, Bristol Astronomical Society and Plymouth Astronomical Society should be given £10 each out of FAS funds.

The Federation is extremely grateful toפסים'17a High Street, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS20 1AA for their generosity.

Their free colour catalogue can be obtained from this address showing their range of products, which will hopefully include some of the material submitted in the competition in the near future.

One of the judges, Arthur Gilbert, is an international space artist and would like to encourage our members to do more painting of space scenes. His letter is printed elsewhere in the Newsletter.

The conclusion reached by Ken Social, after seeing the quality of the photographic entries submitted, was that standards have improved dramatically. He said that at one time British astrophotographers could be considered less than 10 or 15 years behind achieving the quality demonstrated by American astrophotographers but now they are experimenting with considerable success. He cited the current conditions with which we amateur astronomers have to contend as the driving force. The answer to the problem was found in short exposures on fast film, so that now our photographers are catching up with the rest of the world.

Speakers at the Convention which followed the AGM were well received and provoked considerable discussion. They were:

John Fletcher on "Astrophotography". John will feature in the film Earth calling Babbage to be shown on Channel 4 TV late July.

Bernard Abramson on "Super nova". Bernard is author of a book to be published by Stanley Thronton shortly to be used by students of astronomy at school level.

Norman Walker spoke on the opportunities which amateur astronomers have to make useful contributions to observational astronomy, particularly in the field of photometry, his talk was accompanied by a paper written by Norman Walker co-author of the book "Getting the Measure of the Stars" by Alan Cooper and Norman Walker, just published by Adam Hilger.

FUTURE MEETINGS

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RADIO LEEDS ASTRONOMY

The annual meeting held by the Yorkshire Group in which astrophotography contest pit the best against each other in the contest for the cup originally donated by Radio Leeds will take place on Saturday October 21st. Dr Martin and Bob Sayed, offered to host the 1989 meeting and to set the questions.

Questions will be set by Mark Benton and Nigel Palmer. Each competing society to the quiz enter one candidate to represent them at the meeting. The winning team will be awarded to the winner of the best team. The winners will be announced at the end of the meeting and will be awarded prizes.

Nigel Palmer, 83 Maesy Avenue, Bolton-on-Deane, Rochdale, South Yorkshire S63 8DZ

LIVERPOOL AS/NORTH WEST ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETIES

Liverpool AS are to host the North West Astronomical Societies meeting on Saturday October 21. This takes place at Liverpool City Museum & Planetarium between 10am and 5pm.

The Astronomer Royal, Sir Patrick Moore, will be guest speaker at the public lecture which will end the proceedings. More details next year from Liverpool AS secretary:

Gerard Gilligan, 83 Steerscroft, Cantrill Farm, Liverpool, Merseyside L28 8AN

LINCOLN AS ASTRONOMY AND SPACE '89

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Lincoln Society, a meeting is to be held on Saturday September 23 from 10am to 6pm.

Speakers include:

Nevil Ridgway: "Soviet的努力" at dusk
Nigel Bowler: "Apollo's End" at dusk
Alan Wells: "Lunar Occultations with automated telescopes" at dusk
Ron Maddison: "The next generation of Super Telecopers" at dusk

For more information contact David Sooby, "The Everglades", 12 Beaufort Close, Nettleham Park, Lincoln LN2 4SF, Tel evenings 0522 535191

"EARTH CALLING BABBAGE"

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If you want the general TV-watching public to tune into a programme about the strange habits of these nocturnal creatures, amateur astronomers, give it an equally strange title. This seems to be the thinking of a team of film makers who are currently putting together the year's Channel 4 programme. To see the results, you should tune in to Equinox, Channel 4 TV, Sunday July 30 at 7.30 pm. A number of our members will appear on air in the programme which will run for 50 minutes and will take place in various locations in the UK during April this year. The Basingstoke of the title obviously refers to the Basingstoke Astronomers, who got the programme from the FAS members taking part include John Fletcher of Comrades AS, David Graham of Bristol AS and a certain woman who tried to explain why there are so few women in astronomy. It is difficult to say at this stage what the result will be since 90% of what has been filmed will need editing, but the programme will be a great help to get the message across to as many people as possible. So please do so as soon as possible so that we can ensure the viability of the enterprise.
The Editor has received copies of a brochure for the above centre in Portugal from the FAS Convention, Autumn 1989.

In place of the Biennial meeting, Martin Ochler is organizing a meeting at Cambridge University. Astronomers at this University are amongst the country's leading researchers in the field, and through the courtesy of a grant holder, indications are that this will be a prestigious meeting.

Please make a note of the date and expect full details later.

FAS at Cambridge: Friday, September 29 and Saturday, September 30.

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

Dear Rosemary,

I would like to thank everyone for allowing me to come along to your AGM on September 6 in Cambridge to act as judge in the Artistic Impressions section of your Space Art competition. I must add that I was most impressed with the standard of entries and found it quite difficult to mark one against another.

'Space Art' has the advantage of bringing to the attention of the general public the subject of astronomy in a visually appealing way. If you feel you have the talent, why not exhibit your work? It is quite possible that some young mind could be awakened to the subject by your work.

If anyone is interested further in Space Art or the International Association of Astronomical Artists, of which I am a member, then further details can be obtained by writing to me at the address below.

You do not have to be an artist to join as there are 3 levels of membership, together with newsletters, exhibitions and other events.

Best wishes to all

Arthur Gilbert, 2 Rowland Court, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE5 7DZ

**OBSERVATOIRE ASTRONOMIQUE ANIANGE**

The French Association for Astronomy is organizing an international meeting at the Observatoire d'Aniange on the French Mediterranean coast near Montpellier.

The meeting runs from Wednesday, September 29 to Thursday, October 13, and is entitled: "Le Ciel et l'Espace". The theme is to be education, research, space exploration and scientific research. The meeting is supported by the French Ministry of Education, the European Communities Commission, the European Space Agency and the European Space Observatory.

The meeting will be attended by professional astronomers, members of astronomical societies, space industrialists and the general public.

The official languages to be used at the site are French, Spanish and English. More information can be obtained from:

Bernard Pellerin
Observatoire d'Aniange
BP 14
34150 Aniange
Herault
France

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AYLESBURY AS: In March Dai Jones described his tour of the USA when he visited many of the major observatories. These included the Lowell Observatory, the Very Large Array in New Mexico and the Multiple Mirror Telescope in Tucson where the University held public viewings. These are rarely cancelled because of bad weather. Back in the UK, the 52 society observing sessions planned, only 31 were successful, the best months being September and October and the worst January and June.

BASSETTLE AS: The magazine has started a series of in-depth articles on various members, with the treasurer, Peter Whyteles. Several new members were recruited following a successful Mars Working Group in October. The magazine was also published through exhibitions and displays at local events. Social events include a Christmas party, a sponsored walk, the annual Christmas quiz and dinner, and a pea and pie supper with games.

BOSTON ASTRONOMERS: Neil Bone was talking on atmospheric phenomena at the March 13 meeting, to find out what they dispersed afterwards, the spectacular auroral display seen across the country that night. Don Avery, at his first meeting on astrophotography at the 10-inch, particularly with his own video. In May, Peter Rea gave an audio-visual presentation. A visit to Bradford IMAX Cinema was also made.

BRITISH AEROSPACE AS: At their Christmas lecture, Dennis Day of Greenhead, of Croydon Astronomical Observatory described the building and the 'amateur' work now underway including the new supernova search and double star program. A buffet followed. The society is now one year on, 18 proving popular with members.

BRISTOL ASTRONOMERS: At the December meeting, Squadron Leader David Bradshaw, RAF, Farnborough, spoke on the subject of moonlit flights. In February, Martin Radcliffe, Armagh Planetarium, spoke on the history of the observatory. In March, Dr Allan Chapman, Oxford, spoke with enthusiasm on the history of the Greenwich Observatory. A visit to the Greenhead Hotel and dinner was in fancy dress celebrating the French Revolution.

CARDIFF AS: Bob Moseley, Cowbridge & Warwick AS, described his fascination for double stars and how he led him to undertake measurements of these stars so that results would be available for astronomers to consult in hundreds of years time. Future plans include a skittles night and buffet and a car park treasure hunt.

COTTSOLDS AS: Member Andy Packer, a student of astronomy at St Andrews University, spent a winter monthly holiday at the Anglo-Australian Observatory. John Fletcher spent a winter holiday at St Andrews with Andy, using telescopes there. At Mount Tuffley members contributed talks in January to the annual meeting. In February, third Astronomer Royal, John Fletcher reviewed star atlases and charts, and Fred Watkiss showed slides taken using a telescope. Ken and Chris Swedon took part in another workshop and looked at the OP, Dick Warden and Peter Cadogan spoke about computers and Les Stephens on his work with variable stars.

COWTRY & WARWICK AS: Vaughan Cooper regularly has detailed drawings of his observations of lunar craters in the magazine. Ian Clark, whose drawings have featured in the magazine, has had one of his drawings published for a further publication in the American magazine 'Astronomy'.

FLY AS: Work at the new observatory site at Bentworth progresses and a barbecue and meteor watch will be held in August as their opening night. Guest speakers have been Nicholas Booth on 'The Race to Mars', Neil Bone on 'Astrobiology' and David Early on 'Photography'.

AS OF HARTLEY: Greg Seye-Russky kept the society awake recruiting volunteers to help with the December observing and a talk on 'Life on the Moon'. Conrad Mallin-Smith showed his camera platform designed to travel to La Palma and to observe the wind-tunnel tests at the Large Rocket Centre. Also, Alan Smith and Bob Butler gave a demonstration of the Cloud Tent to do with lasers. Bricks supported the mirrors to prevent them from moving in the wind. Several amateur and professionally made mirrors were tested and the latter were not always the best.

LEEDS AS: Meetings for the summer include Neil Bone on 'Astronomical Phenomena', Dr John Baruch on 'Telescopes and Observing' and June on the length of day. The society will visit the Liverpool Museum and Planetarium, combining a planetarium show and a visit to the Liverpool AS's observatory and telescope.

LINCOLN AS: This society will celebrate their 40th birthday with an 'Astronomy and Space Science' exhibition on Saturday September 23. The programme includes several well-known speakers, astrophotography, space science, space art and refreshments and an open evening at the city's observatory.

LIVERPOOL AS: In March the society visited Southport AS, Observatory, Birkett Park. In June, the Neil Bone nebulae were viewed through the 6-inch Cooke refractor, which is in good condition there. The four young boys and the adult group were visited by 60 young people. There is a waiting list of 250 young visitors to this event. Eric Strachan demonstrated his solar hydrogen alpha equipment so that viewers could see the sun on the monitor. The magazine shows Eric's excellent sunspots drawings. In February, a weekend of astronomical entertainments was organised in Crowthorpe Country Park. The talks included computer displays and video and observing sessions were held at the open air stage. Attendance was 600 so the society became a regular event.

NELSON AS: Ten members visited the Societies of Southport and St Andrews and one of their projects is open to all. They have a monthly meeting in Perchholt. Several members have been appointed as a result of this meeting and a special meeting was held at an 8-inch Dobsonian. The society held a successful meeting on Saturday 27th. In March six members visited the London University Observatory at Mull Hill and observed the Orion Nebula through the 8-inch telescope. The Society held the 24-inch refractor with its 18-inch guiding scope and 6-inch finder.

ORWELL AS: The Society has an annual excursion to the north of Scotland with guides, to view the Astronomers. July 1988 visit to the Isle of Skye turned into observations of the standing stones there as the suns sea fog prevented them from seeing the sky. Not deterred, three members returned to the snow, but on the last night they saw an auroral display.

PLYMOUTH AS: Dr Percy Seymour hosted the 20th anniversary meeting in the lab and showed how the tube is as it works in the Society's first meeting. The celebrations continued in February with a tour of the Galaxy, where he showed the sky as it is, followed by a tour of the Society's new telescope. It was planned to visit the Rotherfield Park Laboratory and Jodrell Bank.

SAGAS: The AGM was hosted by the Hampshire Group where the formal meeting was followed by a talk by Hampshire's president, Robin Groom. He spoke on astronomy in Hampshire. The meeting was at the Science Museum in Plymouth.

SALFORD AS: Dr Allan Chapman gave the Christmas lecture. It is planned to visit the Ormskirk meteorological station and later to visit the Conder Brow Observatory, Lancaster. In 1990 several members hope to go to the Sussex Group's summer meeting.

SCOTTISH ASTRONOMERS GROUP: The theme of the April meeting was observing the sun. Dr Alastair Simons gave the main talk on the solar occultation of February 1986. Members also visited the Observatory in Paisley. A weekend in Edinburgh for Scottish Astronomers is planned for September 1-3.

SF KENT AS: Andrew Hartidge who monitors radio observations of meteors has built a new permanent aerial with a solar powered inverter, a aluminium bar and receiver. The signal goes to the radio telescope and is displayed on a computer screen. The Society held a talk by Mike Mander on solar eclipse photography. At the Christmas meeting, members showed their astronomical photographs; a party followed. The annual dinner was held in Dover.

SH HERTS AS: At the February meeting two British Petroleum films were shown: 'This Earth', the search within', explaining geological surveys for minerals and 'This Earth... inhabitants' describing the origin and structure of the Earth. In March, Seymour, Lancashire, a research student at the University of Oxford, spoke on remote sensing from satellites, with special reference to monitoring climatic changes.

WEST OF LONDON AS: The annual observing weekend was held in April at Portland, Dorset. Members stayed in hotel accommodation, observed successfully on both nights, getting a good view of the moon. The AGM in June will include a members session where equipment, photographs etc can be displayed and equipment sold or exchanged if required.

YORKSHIRE AS: In March Rosemary Naylor gave a talk 'Starlinks': included in the programme was a quiz. A jumble sale would hopefully raise funds.

ATTENTION SEKAS AND XOLAS AND OTHERS:

Please send Newsletters to our new address: Brian Rees, Llandrindod Fane, Nr. Pontypnydd, Mid Glam CF82 2NJ

PAM AND MARTIN CHICK

Please get your news to Pam and Martin by mid July so that the next FAS Newsletter can come out in August. In time for news of the FAS Cardiff meeting on September 30.