



**PRESIDENT** Tony Balfour, 43a Ellesborough Rd, WENDOVER, Bucks HP22 6EL  
Tel. No. 0296 622442

**TREASURER** Alan Drummond, 27 York Rd, CRAWLEY, West Sussex, RH10 5JS

**SECRETARY** Christine Sheldon, Whitehaven, Maytree Rd, Lower Moor, PERSHORE, Worcs. WR10 2NY  
Tel. No. 0386 860202

**EDITOR** Ken Sheldon, Whitehaven, Maytree Rd, Lower Moor, PERSHORE, Worcs. WR10 2NY  
Tel. No. 0386 860202

Issue 30

# Federation of Astronomical Societies

## FROM HELIOMETERS TO HAMBURGERS

Would you like to see the 72 inch mirror with which Lord Rosse discovered the spiral arms of the galaxies, the great Repsold heliometer used to measure early stellar parallaxes, and hundreds of other astronomical instruments? If so, don't go to the Science Museum, South Kensington, which officially curates them, for the entire astronomy collection has been removed from display to make way for the J.Sainsbury-inspired "Food for Thought" gallery. Heliometers are out, and hamburgers (plastic display models, of course) are in. To add insult to injury, you cannot even get a snack at the reproduction 1980's cafeteria which now stands where the telescopes once stood. "J.Sainsbury & Co." is every where.

The Nation's astronomical heritage is in store two miles away on the 3rd floor of the former Trustee Savings Bank Central Office building in Olympia. I am told that the buildings real claim to fame is as a film set for Arthur Daley and company. But there again, you have to be pretty quick off the mark to get in, unless you are invited.

I know that professional and amateur astronomers are disgusted at what has happened, and that a petition is afoot to apply pressure to have our astronomical treasures to be made accessible once again. I can only encourage people to sign this petition if they get the chance. But you can also write to your local M.P. and Euro-M.P. But best of all, Societies can write to Dr Neil Cossons, Director of the Science Museum asking for group visit admissions (costly for the Science Museum to organise and supervise) to the Olympia store, for if this inconvenience becomes regular enough, the telescopes might well get put back onto proper display. They are the Nations property after all.

And if the Science Museum tells you that the collection is out of bounds, why not write to the Minister for Education and Science? (I would also appreciate a copy of any Science Museum refusal letters). Lets have the heliometers back on display and the hamburgers in our mouths (real ones, of course), before "Arfer" offers the great Ramsden Equatorial to a punter at the Winchester Club.

ALLAN CHAPMAN

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ken,  
It was a pleasure to read your praise of PHOBOS in the April 1992 FAS Newsletter. Your comments on PHOBOS and on Worthing Society's newsletter resulted in Pam Spence, Worthing's editor writing to me. Our correspondence has highlighted a worry for all editors - what happens when the articles dry up? It has prompted me to do something positive about an idea that has been germinating for ages. PHOBOS has run some good articles in it's time; articles that other societies might want to reproduce in their journals. Equally we would benefit from publishing articles from sources other than within the Society. I would expect that the source Society and author would always be acknowledged in any reproduction of their work. We need a repository for such articles plus a means of advertising and distributing said masterpieces and the FAS seems the ideal organ for that task. Would the FAS be willing to take on the job? To start the ball rolling we have an excellent series of articles on spacecraft by Paul Dobson which would ease the editorial burden for months. I await your reply.  
Pete McKenna West Yorks A.S.

My reply was an emphatic YES. I am quite happy to be the repository for a 'bank' of good quality articles for use by editors when creating Society Newsletters and Magazines. I said that I would be prepared to be the central handling point for such a useful service. The only cost would of course be copying and postage. Any Society using articles from the 'bank' must acknowledge the author and his Society. If an Editor has suitable articles and I know that there are many good ones, I would like them - on disk please if possible. I will publish a list at regular intervals of articles available with subject matter, length of article and author. I would send a photocopy or if the Editor sent a disk the file in ASCII or Wordperfect to desperate Editors. At the moment I have three articles all supplied by WYAS. See page 4 for titles.

Please let me have your opinions about this and try and support it.

## HOW ARE HAG DOING?

I had the following letter from Graham Bryant of The Hampshire Astronomical Group.

Dear Ken,

I would like to update you for information for inclusion in the next issue of the FAS Newsletter with respect to the Hampshire Astronomical Group's fight against light pollution.

The Group has had discussions with the Hampshire County Surveyor, his deputy, the engineer for major roads and the county street lighting engineer. This meeting was at our Observatory and following these fruitful discussions, the HAG is now on the County's circulation list for discussion documents regarding lighting policies.

The Group has had the local district planning officer to the Observatory to discuss the possibility of influencing local planning criteria. Following this meeting we are now pursuing the possibility of having a clause in the local structure plan which would pay regard to lighting. The Group has also produced a series of leaflets on light pollution with regards to street lights, decorative lighting and security & floodlighting. Local companies that have very poor lighting control are currently being targeted. When we do so we always have a policy of inviting the managers to the observatory so that they can see our three observatories and our problem of light pollution.

More recently the County Architect has been approached regarding the lighting of schools and colleges. He has expressed interest in our problem and is requesting further information from us. We are also trying to speak to school Heads and Principals and are using the astronomical education argument in our fight against light pollution.

And Gerry Davis...? we are still keeping in touch and feel justifiably happy that our efforts in the early stages of our local campaign have paid off handsomely.

I hope these few lines are informative and encourage other Societies to tackle this growing problem.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Graham Bryant for Hampshire Astronomical Group.

Ed. There you are it can be done - you need the right approach and a bit of luck with your planners and lighting engineers. Please try it. The HAG leaflets are excellent and can be recommended as the correct ammunition in the battle for darker skies - they'll never be dark!

A short editorial this issue, mainly to ask you to follow up the three important items of the moment - one, to back Dr Allan Chapman in his fight to get the astronomy collection back into the Science Museum. Two, to write to the DoE trying to influence planning decisions on lights. Three, for editors to get involved in the 'article bank' as both users and as contributors.

Appropos to the Science Museum exhibition, Dr Chapman was telling me that we might get involved in a furore about the Museum of the History of Science in Oxford. He tells me that there is a study in progress on the use of the buildings in a more efficient manner! I am sure that those of you who have spent an afternoon at the Museum with Allan as the guide will be horrified if it means the loss of the wonderful show. When the results are known I will let you know.

In the meantime I will wish you all well for a good Autumn of observing. Looking forward to meeting some of you at Cambridge.

Clear skies.

Ken Sheldon

### LIGHT POLLUTION and the DOE

I hope that your Secretary passed on the letter from the DOE asking for comments on the Planning Consultative document, I included the relevant paragraphs on the back of the letter. I hope too that YOU did something about it, since responses from 3000 individuals would have more impact than that from 100+ societies. At least it would be heavier. If you haven't done so yet you have until the 3rd of October!!!

A few sentences from the British Standard on Lighting BS 5489: Part 1: 1992 are instructive. Section 6 relates to the visual scene by night. Section 6.1 says how important lighting in civic centres etc is but it is the end of this section and section 6.3 that I find interesting.

6.1.....The appearance of lighting schemes in environmentally sensitive rural areas when seen from within these and adjacent areas should be given particular attention. Such areas include green belts, national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty. Similarly, schemes close to the edge of existing residential areas should also receive special attention. In these cases the light distribution should be controlled to minimize light spill on adjoining areas.

### 6.3 Obtrusive light and sky glow

In some cases artificial lighting can be intrusive at night. This applies especially to rural and open spaces where the lighting can be seen as an intrusion in an otherwise darkened environment. In addition light above the horizontal should be minimized as it is wasteful and increases sky glow. For information on lighting in the vicinity of astronomical observatories, see the joint IAU/CIE publication 'Guidelines for minimising urban sky glow near astronomical observatories' (IAU/CIE Publication No.1: 1980).

Ed. Interesting isn't it? Needs thought.

The IAU/CIE publication is obtainable from NIC(GB), Delta House, 222 Balham High Road, London SW12 9BS.

# SOCIETY NEWS ROUND-UP

**AYLESBURY A.S.** Meet at the Observatory on the first Monday of the month. Contact Ian Welland on 0494 438090 for more details. At the AGM it was announced that Lord Rothschild had agreed to become the Societies President. Children from Brill visited the Observatory in May and were delighted to see the Moon and Jupiter. The June meeting was a talk (brilliant I'm told - no pun intended) by Geoff Elston, the Solar Director for the JAS, on the Sun. The talk was comprehensive and instructive. The July meeting took place at the Observatory with short talks by members. The August meeting was "Venus" by Dai Jones. The Newsletter with a new editor, John Smith, contains much of use to observers plus some nice articles on the Brightest Objects.

**B.A.S.S.** Meet fortnightly at either St. John's Centre, Palmeira Square, Hove or 27 Palmeira Avenue, Hove. Contact Terri Fearn on Brighton 581553 for more details. The Society have had a trip or two Bath to the Herschel House and Museum, Foredown Tower at Hove which houses the largest Camera Obscura in Britain and some of the members took off into the wilds of Ashdown Forest for the AstroCamp. Speakers for the early winter session include 8/10 Tony Lawton on 'Magnetic Cycles in other Stars', 22/10 Eric Zucker 'Telescopes without Lenses', 5/11 Prof Frank Close "Whatever happened to Cold Fusion?", 19/11 Ken Marcus 'Lesser Known Astronomers', 3/12 Prof Roger Taylor "Understanding the Universe", 17/12 Christmas Social.

**BEDFORD A.S.** The Society meet at Bedford School at 7.30 p.m. on the last Tuesday of the month. Contact Dave Eagle on 02302 5256 for details of the programme. The July newsletter contained some interesting information about Radio Astronomy. The name mentioned is Terry Sutton, I wonder if Malcolm Jones and he are talking now. Terry's name also appears in some notes on using a computer. He has produced a program called STARMAP which will print star charts. Very useful for observing sessions.

**BRADFORD A.S.** The Society meets at Eccleshill Library on alternate Mondays at 7.30 p.m. For more information contact D.Cooper on Bradford 638038. The society has had a good year including the purchase of some new equipment. There have been visits to West Yorkshire AS at Pontefract with a quiz in the offing. Speakers included John Scofield, Lionel Wilson and Alistair McBeath.

**CAMBRIDGE A.A.** are one of the few Groups with a really active Junior society The Cambridge Young Astronomers who had an active programme over the summer holiday period. The Summer Sky, Earth's Place in the Universe, Telescopes and Observations and Rocks from Space were the main titles. They also have their own Newsletter. The main association are busy planning their new Observatory, one major problem has been the acquisition by gift or by purchase of 3 telescopes. So apart from the main

dome (3.6m diameter) for the main telescope two others will be required. Like many other societies CAA is finding finance a little bit of a problem. Still an embarrassment of riches (in the way of telescopes) is better than no telescope. A couple of nice articles on 'Who owns a Meteorite' and 'The Eye in Astronomy' attracted my attention in the July CAPELLA. Talk to Dr Frank Murphy on 0223 264241 for more information about the Society.

**CARDIFF A.S.** Meet in the University of Cardiff, Park Place, Cardiff, on alternate Thursdays. Contact Dave Powell on 0222 551704 for more information. The 1992/93 session is just starting with the usual complement of good speakers and interesting demonstrations. The Society have observing evenings at Duffryn Gardens. The person to talk to about these is Hugh Lang on 0222 754211.

**COTSWOLD A.S.** Meet on the last Saturday of the month in Cheltenham. For details of the programme which includes Star Parties contact the Coordinator Trevor Talbot on 0386 881595. The Society have had some interesting sessions with a highlight an "old style" Star Party in the rain at John Fletcher's Mount Tuffley Observatory. Old Style because it rained - a rare event in August for the last few years. Lee Macdonald was a visiting speaker and stunned all the perfectionists with imagers and high precision drives by the quality of his eyepiece projection photographs of just about every type of object. I know that I rate as a technology person but it was smashing to see something so good with simple equipment.

**CRAWLEY A.S.** Meetings are at Ifield Community Centre on first and third Friday of the month. Contact Andrew Dale on 0403 56932 for more info. (got it right at last Andrew - sorry!) By the time you read this the first meeting of 1992/93 will have taken place. It is the AGM which is important but you won't have missed much Astronomy. Speakers for the coming session include Alan Drummond (topic unknown but he has been to La Palma), Bubs Griffin on 'Astrophotography' and Neil Bone on 'Aurorae'. Visits will include Croydon AS and Maidstone AS. The cover of the last magazine was a superior Veil Nebula in colour - I'm still GREEN from July! An Observing report from the Deep Sky group makes nice reading as does the 20 second Nova Patrol article.

**HAMPSHIRE ASTRONOMICAL GROUP** The Group meet regularly on Fridays at the Clanfield Observatory. Formal meetings on the second Friday of the month usually at Clanfield Memorial Hall. Contact Roy Dodd on Waterloooville 254032 for full details. Apart from their activities on the Light Pollution report (read Graham Bryant's report on Page 1) HAG have a high profile image with a Space Trail exhibition at the Q.E. Country Park which features the largest scale model of the Solar System in the UK. Open Weekends, one in April and one in August at the Clanfield Observatory with public

Have you contacted Malcolm Jones of Norwich A.S. or the Editor with information about your Radio-Astronomy activities. The FAS would like to bring like-minded Societies together.

astronomy helps to maintain public interest in astronomy and also helps the Groups form, presumably to help the fight against light pollution.

**HEART OF ENGLAND A.S.** The Society is very active with an ambitious observing programme. They also travel - I enjoy reading the stories of their visits in the excellent quarterly magazine *MIRA*, I'm sure that there must be a libel suit pending over them there. Pictures taken in the West Midlands conurbation by this Society's members are really excellent and I don't understand how they do it unless it is during power cuts. Write to Kevan White, 145 Hedgesford Road, CANNOCK, Staffs. WS11 2BP for information about the Society.

**HUDDERSFIELD A.S.** The society meets weekly on Fridays and as a consequence the programme fills a full page of A4 when printed in smaller type than the FAS newsletter. There will be four public lectures the speakers being Cmdr Dougherty on 'The Sun' on 25/9/92, Martin Lunn on 'Yorkshire Astronomy' 30/10, Rosemary Naylor with 'Eclipses and Transits' 11/12 and M. Armitage on 'Exotic Objects' 8/1/93. If you want more contact Robert Williams, 43 Oaklands Drive, Dalton, HUDDERSFIELD, West Yorkshire. HD5 9PR. SASE appreciated.

The Society is undergoing a financial trauma with rents for the Observatory site going up from £120 to £1000 per annum! That does seem excessive when the problems with business rates and water rates is taken into account. Maybe they upset someone on the council with their mad parties!!!! Information from OMEGA which has a new editor and presentation.

**IRISH A.S.** Meet twice a month at Ely House, Ely Place, Dublin. For more details contact the Secretary James Lynch at PO Box 2547 Dublin 15. The Society has recently visited Armagh. Calendar for the next few weeks is interesting with Prof P.A. Wayman and Dr Michael Cawley featured. A good newsletter included this month a very full write up of Richard Roberts 'Arthur Stone' work and the usual comprehensive Observing notes.

**ISLE OF MAN A.S.** Meet on the first Thursday of each month with viewing sessions, barbecues and other events between meetings. Last spring a Public Viewing session was held with a Slide show and talk by Howard Parkin. Other recent speakers included Dr Alan Hiscott and Brian Rae from the Met Office. Visitors have included a group from Leeds AS. Melvyn Taylor gave a talk about the activities of Leeds AS. If you are in the IOM give James Martin of Ballaterra Farm, Peel a ring on 0624 842954 for more information.

**LA SOCIETE GUERNESAISE A.S.** If you are having a holiday on Guernsey why not give David Le Conte a ring on 64847 and find out about the meetings on Guernsey. A planned Perseid observing session was clouded out but since a barbecue was planned in parallel all was not lost. The Section have now a 14" Celestron to add their other instruments and are planning a roll-off roof observatory. A good idea since the construction is much easier than a dome. The disadvantage is that you are not out of the wind! **LETCHWORTH A.S.** Meet at Plinston Hall, Letchworth on the last Thursday of the month. Ring Eric Hutton on 0462 431 988 for more details. Lots of talks and activities but

disappointing attendances, this is the message that I have gleaned from the lively newsletter. I think that the Star Parties held on a regular monthly basis at the Society's Observatory site are probably plagued by cloud and/or light pollution. Speakers have included Peter Bowers on various matters astronomical, Phil Bishop on 'Star charts and other aids to finding objects'. Jeremy Workman of ASH on 'mars, History & Knowledge'. The Society is liaising with local schools with Astronomy courses.

**LIVERPOOL A.S.** Meet on the 3rd Friday of the month beginning at 7.00 p.m. at The City Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool. Contact Ken Clarke, 31 Sandymount Drive, Wallasey, Merseyside, L44 0LJ A large SAE with 30p postage please. Observatory meetings are held at the Museum on Wednesdays between 7 and 9 p.m. A good point was made in the July News Circular. DO NOT SCAN for Mercury and Venus while the Sun is up! Some LAS members spent 12 days in Tenerife if 4 of the nights being spent 'on the mountain'. They really enjoyed what they saw including the Zodiacal Light. Carol Connor bagged 60 Messiers using binoculars. The Society also sent a brave party of seven to the Girl Guide Convention at Church Minshull in July. The weather wasn't brilliant but Tony Williams had a chat with Princess Margaret and they had a good feed so it wasn't a wasted day. Tony Williams did a lot of research into the local astronomer Charles Leadbetter. Thanks to Allan Chapman he found that LAS patron Reg Platt had already done it Tony hopes to get permission to print the booklet. The 1992/93 season starts on Sept 18th with a Wine & Cheese Reception

**LUTON A.S.** A communication reads "After several years of fund raising the Luton A.S. has finally completed the restoration of the 15½" Dall-Kirkham Cassegrain, donated to the Society by the late Helena Dall. The telescope has been re-housed in a new all-aluminium observatory made by Astro-Promotions and is sited within the grounds of Putteridge Bury College near Luton.

The Society would like to extend an invitation to any person who knew Horace Dall to the opening ceremony, which will take place on **SATURDAY OCTOBER 10th.**

The programme is being finalised, but the opening will be performed by Dr. P. Moore. Any person wishing to attend Information about Society meetings from the Secretary, Mr D. White, "Kingsfoil", 14a Back Street, Clophill, Beds., NK45 4BY including a S.A.S.E.

**NORTH EAST LONDON A.S.** Meet on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 3 p.m. in the Park Room, Wanstead House, 21 The Green, Wanstead, E11. Speakers finishing off the last year included Jeremy work and in July Gary Auker talked on 'Discovering Planetary Systems'. The Autumn programme should be starting with Konrad Malin-Smith. Contact Bernard Beeston on 081 363 5696 for more details.

**NORWICH A.S.** Have a monthly meeting but also have observing evenings on a regular basis. Problems have been experienced lately with the old Observatory site becoming unusable due to hospital lights, planners being reluctant to grant planning permission for a move but eventually allowing a move to "an industrial site!!!!". Add to that the problems caused by mindless idiots who

broke into the Observatory and stole all the small optical pieces, video tapes and books, plus of all things, the library rubber stamp! Speakers for the new season include Paul Money and Peter Montgomery who will be talking on "Wooden Telescopes" there must be a problem there! **CYGNUS** carries very comprehensive Observing notes and interesting articles.

Contact Malcolm Jones on 0508 78392 for info. **NOTTINGHAM A.S.** Meet on the first Thursday of each month at Djanogly City Technology College, Sherwood Rise, Nottingham Road Nottingham. (the college name IS correct)

Contact Carl Brennan on 0602 384521 for more. The 1992/93 programme is now available and speakers include 5/11/92 Mike Gainsford 'Jeremiah Horrocks', 3/12 Dr Greg Briarty 'Biology in Microgravity', 4/2/93 Bill Henshaw 'Advanced Techniques in Astrophotography', 4/3 Paul Money 'Unveiling Virgo'. Seems like a good start with some other top speakers later on. **SALFORD A.S.** Contact Kath Redford on 061 794 3179 for Society details. It was with deep regret that the Society learned of the death of Mr Allan Whittaker on June 27th this year. A past President of Manchester A.S., he was also one of the four Founder Members and Vice-Chairman of Salford AS. In the early days he was the driving force behind setting up evening classes for the study of Astronomy in Chaselay Field, (adjacent to the Observatory in Chaselay Field) for school children and students, and was one of the lecturers who taught to 'O' level standard. He also lectured voluntarily at Stand Grammar School, Prestwich. Although for the past 6 years he had not been an active member of the Society he will be sadly missed.

24 members and friends attended the Manchester AS Centenary Convention on July 4th at Parkers Hotel.

Very few Perseids were seen this year. Late evening on August 11th, 5 members went to the local moors hoping there would be some breaks in the cloud giving good observing after the rain, but shortly after midnight heavy prolonged rain caused the watch to be abandoned. Unfortunately, the majority of nights both before and after maximum were too cloudy.

The 45cm Newtonian Telescope's primary and secondary mirrors were recently sent away for aluminizing. They have now been returned and following repainting of the open tube, will be refitted. All we require then are clear skies.

The Society meets every Wednesday evening throughout the year. Meetings during the summer are informal and take place at the Observatory. The first Wednesday of every month is an Open Night for visitors to the Observatory. Other Wednesdays from the end of September until mid April are used for weekly lectures at nearby Buile Hill High School. Some lectures are given by members, with a guest speaker once a month. Every Friday a Messier Night is held at the Observatory, mainly for those interested in Deep Sky observing. Observing is done whenever possible.

**SCOTTISH ASTRONOMERS GROUP** A very active group consisting of 6 or 7 well scattered societies. The speaker list is obviously formidable including such well-known names as Fiona Vincent, David Gavine, Brian Kelly and Neil Bone(!). The Stirling AS weekend went well

These will be available shortly from Alan Drummond. Cost will be the same as last year. 1 - 4 copies 90p each, 5 - 14 copies 80p each and 15 or more 75p each. All prices include postage.

Alan Drummond's address is 27 York Road, CRAWLEY, West Sussex, RH10 5JS.

Handbooks and Observational Astronomy are also available from Alan.  
1993 Handbooks available by Christmas.

(I'm reliably informed). The SAGMAG has comprehensive Observing notes and articles on a wide range of subjects. Nicely done too but I said that I wouldn't comment on newsletters didn't I? Contact Brian Kelly at 449 Brook Street, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 2DX for details of Societies and their programmes. After all, you may want to go and see auroras in Britain and may be able to coincide with a meeting in Scotland.

**WEST OF LONDON A.S.** The Society meet on the 2nd Monday of the month at The Nave, Windsor Street, in the centre of Uxbridge. Talk to Arthur Davis on 081 866 3858 to confirm programme and to check on venue. The September talk was to be Prof Iwan Williams (President JAS) on who is an asteroid expert from Queen Mary & Westfield College. The talk is on Asteroid impacts. One interesting point in the ASTRO newsletter is the statement that every human has a greater chance of being killed by an asteroid than in an air crash. In October Dave Lee of RAL will be talking on satellites in global environmental research. The main observing projects for the summer were foiled by CLOUD!

**WEST YORKS A.S.** The Society meet weekly on Tuesdays at The Rosse Observatory, Carleton Centre, Carleton College, Carleton. Contact Robin Taylor on Wakefield 823507 for details of meetings. The Society sadly announce the death of their Patron Anne Countess of Rosse who passed away on July 3rd at her home in Sussex. A busy summer has ended in a waterproof Observatory - please tell me about it! The programme for the Autumn appears to be finalised and is a good mix of Society and guest speakers. The highlight of the August PHOBOS was a booking form for the Christmas Dinner it really looks smashing - sadly it clashes with our local Society Xmas do.

As usual the PHOBOS is very well put together with some thought provoking articles, I would like to follow up one of the questions raised - Who was Shelton? I also discovered the result of the Bradford AS versus WYAS quiz. The two-leg battle resulted in the home team winning in each case. The final result was a narrow 30 point win by Bradford. I won't say what the totals were.

**WOLVERHAMPTON A.S.** The meetings have a good mix of Astronomy topics and of course there is the Preston Weekend organised by WAS to look forward too. Mike Brice obviously enjoys himself as editor of LYRA and is now doing good graphics. Contact Malcolm Astley on 0902 782212 for details of the WAS meetings on alternate Mondays at Beckminster Methodist Church Hall.

**WORCESTER A.S.** Meet on 2nd Thursday of the month at Worcester College of H.E. Contact Ian Gray on 0386 47352 for details. WAS have

had their usual mixture of guest speakers and members evenings. In July Malcolm Astley spoke on 'Captain James Cook' which had most people fascinated by a man who got killed because he couldn't resist just one more look. If you want to know more get Malcolm to talk about it. The August meeting had various speakers on a range of topics - two different ideas about home made drives, commercial mounts, UV solar detectors, radio observations of the Perseids etc. The Autumn session is now underway with things such as the AGM appearing on the programme. **WORTHING A.S.** from September meetings will be on the second Wednesday of each month. They take place at the Church Hall in Queen Street, Worthing at 7.30 p.m. Those are the formal meetings. Speakers have included John Smith on Solar Observing and Photography and visits have been made or planned to the Old Royal Greenwich Observatory and Canterbury. It would require a whole page of my tiny printing to itemise the full activities of WAS but you can check on what is happening by talking to the Secretary Paul Carter on 0903 213001. The Observatory is well used and this summer/autumn Solar Photography sessions are included in the programme. The Newsletter has lots of articles I would like to sweep into our 'Article Bank' but since WAS was one of the Societies coming up with the idea it's probably not surprising.

## THE LEICESTER CONVENTION

The Leicester AS were the hosts to a splendid day out at their meeting place The Judge Meadows Community Centre on 4th July.

The speakers were introduced by Leicester notables.

The first speaker was Prof Ken Pounds talking on "Future Prospects of British Astronomy". He assured us that the British contribution was not dead and that in fact the contribution being made and to be made in the future were making many of the projects funded by ESA viable. He also regretted the dearth of good young astronomers to take over in the future. Sad really.

The second speaker was Dr Greg Briarty talking about "Biology in Microgravity". He detailed some of the experiments with which he has been involved and stressed that such work was important if Man was to go into Space and to the Moon and Mars. Fascinating.

Ann Bonell talked on "The History of the Leicester Society". Her tales were I suppose reminiscent of most Societies within a City environment but full of hope for the future. That is good since Ann & John Bonell have a baby and it would be nice if it could enjoy the stars.

Paul Money then gave one of his talks "The Summer Sky" He was his usual enthusiastic self and showed some superb shots - not all his some of them were David Malin. Nice interlude and

Fifth on the day was Prof Peter Dierker, becoming a friend of the FAS with another exciting presentation "The Centre - Galactic Fireworks". He gave us a complete rundown on what has been detected at the Galactic centre but concluded by saying that there is no real positive evidence of a Milky Way black hole - yet! A good talk but with a disappointing end. Finally Dr Alan Mills talked on "Isaac Newton's Sundials" He told us about the medieval measurement of time and explained how the sundials ascribed to Newton probably worked. A real trip into the fourth dimension. Tony Balfour then dismissed us to our homes. I think that every one enjoyed it and we must give our thanks to Paul Money as FAS organiser and to Leicester AS for the hard work they did, particularly Ann Bonell and Bob Holness. Thanks everyone

## ARTICLES HELD (all WYAS)

1. The Expanding Universe. Cosmology 8 pages
2. Dinosaurs. The Dinosaur extinction 5 pages
3. Parsec. Astronomical (ana)grams 20 pages

## FAS HANDBOOK 1993

This will be published in December - But I need some more articles for the book itself and more speakers.

Articles should be on topics of use to Societies such as the legalities or needs of running a Society or of specific use to groups in a Society (for instance Weather Satellites or Radio Astronomy). On a PC (ASCII or Wordperfect preferred DD or IID) although a BBC (ASCII, VIEW or Wordwise) disk would be fine. I undertake to return disks.

If you or your Society have a member or members who can talk to other Societies on our usual terms - expenses only - please let me know in the format followed in the Handbook - name, contact address, telephone and topics.

## SECRETARIES!

If your Society news does not appear it might be that you haven't sent your news direct to me - Ken Sheldon. Most people now do. Thanks but please keep it up. Equally if facts about your Society are incorrect maybe you should tell me or Chris about it! I do try!

## Publication dates for Newsletter.

March 14th	deadline February 23rd
June 14th	deadline May 26th
September 14th	deadline August 26th
December 10th	deadline November 21st

## NEXT YEARS DATES.

May 1 AGM and Convention - Coventry  
July 10 Summer Convention - Aylesbury  
Sept 25 Autumn Convention - Cambridge

1994 June/July Summer Convention & WYAS anniversary - Pontefract

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Council of the FAS.

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