



Federation of Astronomical Societies

April 1986

© FAS 1986

FAS EDITOR:
Rosemary Naylor, 256 Bacup Road, Todmorden,
Lancs, OL14 7HJ.

FAS SECRETARY:
Dave Powell, 1 Tal-y-bont Road, Ely,
Cardiff, CF5 5EU.

FAS TREASURER:
Ken Marcus, 5 Cedars Gardens, Brighton,
BN1 6YD.

SPACEPRINTS' PRIZEWINNING COMPETITION FOR UK AMATEUR ASTRONOMERS

Spaceprints' have offered £150 in prizes for a competition to be organised by the FAS. The results will be judged prior to the FAS Convention at the Amateur Astronomy Centre and the prizes presented on that occasion, July 12, by Patrick Moore.

The judges will be Tony Balfour (FAS), Alan Bell (Spaceprints) and Drew (AAC).

The competition, open to all UK amateur astronomers, is in three sections. Each section will attract a prize of £50 for the outright winner of that section. The FAS are offering a £10 prize for the best runner-up from amongst the FAS entries. An entrance fee of £2 will be required from each non-FAS entry.

Section 1: TELESCOPE MAKING: The winning telescope will give reasonable performance for least cost of construction. The judges will look for economy in building costs, preferably using materials easily and cheaply available.

The design and costings should be submitted to the organisers by July 1 for preliminary judging and the telescope presented at the FAS on July 12 for inspection and final judging.

Section 2: NEW TECHNIQUE: The judges are looking for a new technique introduced into an observing programme which gives valuable results which could not otherwise have been obtained. Details to the organisers by July 1, preferably with examples of the results obtained, but consideration will be given to untested ideas if they seem feasible.

Section 3: OBSERVATIONS: A programme of visual and/or photographic observations should be submitted, made during the year ending June 1986. Preference will be given to team programmes and a generous allowance will be made for any local difficulties, lack of facilities, etc. Please state names of observers, instruments used, location, etc. Entries to the organisers by July 1.

ORGANISERS: FAS c/o Rosemary Naylor, 256 Bacup Road, Todmorden, Lancs, OL14 7HJ; (tel 070 681 7767).

More information can be obtained from the above or from Tony Balfour, President FAS, 3a Ellesborough Road, Wendover, Bucks, HP22 6EL; (tel 0296 622442).

The FAS are extremely grateful to Spaceprints' for their generous contribution to amateur astronomers.

EDITORIAL

Astronomy, being for many of us a very visual thing, prompts me to report two contemporary events which have pleased/amused me respectively, especially after the gloom of January's Challenger disaster.

Firstly, I note that the Royal Astronomical Society have awarded the Jackson-Gwilt Medal and Gift to D F Malin for his development of new techniques in astronomical photography. David Malin's colour prints of the Horsehead Nebula and Orion Nebula will be known to many.

Secondly, the commemorative Halley Comet stamps issued by the Post Office on February 18 were designed by Ralph Steadman. Being many interpretations of the comet, they are highly appropriate for the subject and a welcome change from the recent boring special issues. I have been a fan of Ralph Steadman since buying his book "Leonardo"; a highly original illustrated biography of da Vinci which may or may not have been faithful to the life of this eccentric character.



PHOTOGRAPHING HALLEY'S COMET

by Geoffrey Johnstone; Astrophotography Correspondent, Tudor Cottage, Stoneleigh Road, Blackdown, Leamington Spa, CV32 6QR.

Now that the first phase of the current apparition of Halley's comet is over it is perhaps time to take stock of our successes or failures, or indeed if we have seen it at all. It has been quite bright, apparently even brighter than predicted. It was a splendid sight visually through a small telescope in December and even my wife could see it with no prompting.

I wonder how many people have recorded it photographically. It should not have been too difficult, the major problem being the weather. I never did see the comet near the Pleiades. Indeed I hardly saw it at all from the middle of November to the middle of December.

I set out with considerable determination to photograph Halley whenever possible and finally totalled 49 exposures taken on ten nights. In order to record it as early as possible, even before I could see it visually, required getting up long before dawn during September. The alarm clock was

Halley's Comet 1986 January 11
11.25 minute exposure on Kodak 2415
(Pure H₂; 10h; 50°C)
254mm spec. PF.

set each night; if it was clear I went out, if not I went back to bed. My reward was to record it on September 20th and 26th when the comet was in the same telescopic field. On November 15th it showed a most exciting feature, a long curved jet. In December the dust tail developed and in January the tail showed considerable structure.

It is interesting to compare the methods of enlarging the negatives to make the prints in September and November with that used in January. Kodak Technical Pan 2415 is a slow film (ISO 25) but when gas hypersensitised it is very sensitive for long exposures. It exceeds the speed of an ISO 400 film in less than ten minutes and an ISO 1000 in under twenty minutes using the same telescope. The grain structure of the film is so fine that it enabled me to make huge enlargements, as great as x20 without showing any appreciable grain. To do this I had to set the enlarger at the top of the column, while the easel was on the floor. In January the dust tail reached more than half way across the negative so that very little enlargement was required. The photograph of the comet shown was produced by first making a slide, using a slide copier, and then a print from the slide. This technique increases the contrast, often dramatically, revealing far more detail.



Notice is hereby given that the AGM will be held on 1986 May 3 at the Herbert Lecture Theatre, Coventry, at 11.30am.

AGENDA:

- 1 To approve the minutes of the 1985 AGM.
- 2 Matters arising out of the minutes not covered elsewhere in the agenda.
- 3 To receive the report of the Treasurer, and the accounts for the year ended 1985 April 30.
- 4 To fix the subscription rates for the session 1986/87.
- 5 To receive officers' reports and questions to the existing council.
- 6 To elect a council to serve for the session 1986/87.
- 7 Any other business.

Council nominations for the new council are:

President	Tony Balfour
Vice-President	Philip Heppenstall
Secretary	Dave Powell
Assistant Secretary	Bob Owens
Treasurer	Ken Marcus
Editor	Rosemary Naylor
Assistant Editor and Editor for Council Newsletter	Bill O'Shaughnessy
Publications Secretary	Brian Jones
Meetings Organizer	Mike Pace
Education Secretary	Eric Zucker
Society News Editor	Martin Chick
Public Relations	Pam Chick

Further nominations, offers of help, etc, should be sent to the Secretary asap.

To save congestion and delay on the day, please book in advance wherever possible. Cheques payable to FAS should be sent to Ken Marcus, 5 Cedars Gardens, Brighton, BN1 6YD. Understandably, Ken is not able to arrive in Coventry until immediately prior to the AGM at 11.30am.

Entrance charges, per person, as last year, £2.50 for members, £3.50 for non-members. Under 16s, half price.

Societies booking in advance for six or more delegates, qualify for a year's free subscription to the Federation.

Coffee and biscuits are provided, and delegates find our own lunch in one of the many eating places in Coventry.

The convention ends around 6.00pm. Trade stands will be in attendance and there is limited space for societies to display material. Please notify Mike Pace, telephone 09363 6514, of your requirements.

REMEMBER TO BRING THIS NEWSLETTER WITH YOU FOR THE AGENDA, NOMINATIONS, COUNCIL REPORTS, ETC.

SPEAKERS FOR THE AFTERNOON

CONVENTION AT COVENTRY

SATURDAY, MAY 3, TO BE

ANNOUNCED LATER.

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR THE YEAR TO THE AGM 1986

TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial position of the Federation is good, as the financial statements to be presented at the AGM will show. As in the past, we rely upon the surplus made at the various conventions and it is hoped that the convention at the AAC on July 12 will have a large attendance. Our thanks are due to the advertisers in the Handbook, Newsletters and the Astrocalendarr, their contributions help to keep down costs and enable us to improve both quality and quantity of publications.

Ken Marcus

SECRETARY'S REPORT

There have been three Council Meetings, one in Coventry, and two in London; all have been quite well attended. Some members of Council still find it difficult to meet due to geographical locations and cost. To overcome this, a Council Newsletter is sent out each month. This gives all Council members the chance to have their say on any subject. This means that those who do attend can make decisions with the knowledge that everyone has had a say.

The Handbook continues to be widely distributed and remains one of our main achievements.

The Astrocalendarr continues to grow in popularity and represents exceptional value for money.

To complement these publications we hope to publish a beginner's guide to Astronomy in the near future.

Also, we are improving facilities such as the slides offered for sale, and we now have several additions to the set.

Member societies continue to be active and information on this can be found in the FAS Newsletter which has been so well received by members.

The Conventions at Herstmonceux and Coventry remain as popular as ever and both will be repeated in 1986. This year, however, we intend to hold an extra Convention at the AAC. I feel sure this event will become as permanent as the other two meetings. During the year a major competition, sponsored by Spaceprints, will take place.

The regular work of the Federation has continued, the Secretary has handled a large volume of mail from outside bodies and individuals. Judging from the letters, Halley's Comet, and National Astronomy Week gave local societies a unique opportunity to increase membership and bring Astronomy to the public at large.

The number of societies joining the Federation is growing, and I think we are well on the way to giving real value for money.

The Council is always open to requests and advice, so please make the effort to attend the Annual General Meeting and Convention on May 3rd, we look forward to hearing what you have to say.

Lastly, I should like to pay tribute to Rosemary Naylor, for her valuable help and advice given in this my first year in the hot seat.

Dave Powell

1985 was the Year of the Comet and every astronomical society the land had a pretty successful National Astronomy Week showing Halley to thousands of people who would not have seen it otherwise and in the process making many new friends and quite a few new members. The Federation has helped with this, and held successful meetings at Coventry and Herstmonceux, thanks to the hard work of a great many people.

Aside from this, we have carried out our main function of being a source of help and particularly, information to any society who needs it. This work is essential but usually undramatic. We have been encouraged that the Calendar has sold well, showing many people find it useful, and we are looking at a similar booklet to help beginners; and the Handbook is a splendid value as always. Membership is increasing steadily, and in 1986 we plan to increase our activities by holding a third function, the Northern Meeting at the Amateur Astronomy Centre in July. The one disappointment has been that we have had few suggestions for more things to be done and few nominations for new Council members. Tell us what you want and offer to help if you can - new suggestions and new faces are always welcome, we can use them all!

Tony Balfour

EDITOR'S REPORT

Newsletters have appeared as follows:

Issue No 6 - June 1985
Issue No 7 - September 1985
Issue No 8 - January 1986
Issue No 9 - April 1986

These have been despatched in bulk to member societies. In general, societies paying 24 subscriptions receive 15 copies and those paying £7.50 receive either 15 or 35 according to needs. Societies requiring any other quantity should make appropriate arrangements with the Editor.

Assistant Editor, George Bolland, has been successful in obtaining commercial advertising to defray some of the production costs. Thanks George!

Stuart Lonsdale has written the Round for several years, but is now hoping to hand over the job. His is the longest contribution to the Newsletter, yet it arrives on the Editor's desk on time. It will be missed, Stuart. Many thanks to myself and the past Editor, GB.

Thanks to all other contributors. It becomes a cliché, but without your contributions, the Newsletter could not exist. Readers may have noticed articles on astrophotography at regular intervals from Geoffrey Johnstone. I have asked him, now, as astrophotography correspondent.

The editorial team are contemplating producing an observing section corresponding to the appeal of the Newsletter.

As yet, photographs do not reproduce in this style Newsletter, but I am working at it.

Finally, I would appeal to members to this publication as a vehicle through which to talk to one another, through a letter column. This is your chance to voice views and ideas.

STUART LONSDALE

his "Round-Up" is my 16th since 1981 and sadly it will be my last one. I feel that I have done my bit for the FAS and it is time to hand over to someone else. Really enjoying what you do, either at work or at play is a great thing, and I can honestly say that I have thoroughly enjoyed being Society News Editor. Even though I have never met many of the people that send in their letters, magazines and newsletters, I feel somehow that I know them. From all the correspondence received over the last few years I don't think I have ever had any criticism of my style of writing. After all, as I said when I took over, it is YOU that tell me what to put about your society, and it is my job to put it on paper for all to read, and not to criticise it. Running an astronomical society is often a thankless task and those who go to the trouble of producing a magazine or whatever, should be praised. I trust that those who take over will all remember to do the same.

any, many thanks to all my "pen-pals" and to the Council of the FAS. I wish them and their respective societies all the very best and I look forward to reading of your exploits and continuing sagas. Good luck!

BURY AS: They have never failed to send a copy of their newsletter. I will say Tony Balfour's handwritten comments to me at the top of each newsletter.

th four clear nights and some three hundred visitors, NAW was successful. Visitors were able to see Halley with the society's 6-inch refractor and 8-inch reflector. However, a follow-up during December was let down by the weather with just clear night.

and Bert Pedel, 92 years old, and understandably their oldest member, was able to see Halley during December for the second time around. His first view in 1910, according to Bert, was that it was brighter than Venus.

was agreed that more should be done to encourage observing at Winchendon and they will try to organize observing parties.

couple of members and wives had an enjoyable visit to the AAC. Ted Gates, however, was surprised to find that he was "deceased" according to the AAC computer! He says, "I am not sure whether to be glad I need no longer remember when my subscription was due."

to be sorry that my association with the project had been so short!"

the January meeting had a quiz based on the programme "Blockbusters".

STON ASTRONOMERS: Writes Bryne Tongue, things have been happening rather fast here in Boston. A concrete pier was constructed for the 8-inch reflector and it is now fully operational. Seven members attended the last AAC Star Party and member Mr Money won the Song Contest. On Saturday October 12, Paul Money found Halley with his 14-inch reflector. Public Halley watches commenced on November 11, when, despite rain, 42 people turned up at Hedgebridge to be entertained by computers and a slide display. Further Halley watches are held on the 7th, 8th and 14th of December and they were fairly well attended. Halley being visible together with other objects of interest. Our last meeting was a talk on Halley's Comet by Colin Goodson and around 50 people turned up.

A REE, HALSTADT & DISTRICT AS: Bill O'Shaughnessy writes to say that for

The public exhibition and lecture attracted 47 who were treated to four talks on Astronomy by Bill, Telescopes by Peter Smith, The Solar System by Phil Harvey and Comets by Neil Shuttlewood.

Seven new members resulted and contact was made with one Dorothy Dacombe aged 81, who saw Halley in 1910 and remembers it clearly, they were able to show her it again during December. It seems she has accepted an Honorary Life Membership and is able to attend meetings regularly.

The December meeting was a first attempt at a "family night" and it was a great success. Food, drink, dancing and musical games for the kids! The raffle made £14 for funds.

BRIGHTON AS: Membership has increased by some 50% as a result of good old NAW. The previously under-used telescopes are now in use again.

Another exhibition in the foyer of a small theatre in Brighton is to be staged during the Brighton Festival in May. It will run for three weeks and the lectures will relate

to the theme of the Festival, "Earth, Fire and Water".

As part of the summer lectures, already booked are Colin Ronan, Professor Harry Kroto (they hope) and a geologist from Brighton Poly. It was hoped that this would keep the public in touch with the society through interest generated in the Festival.

Some nine members are booked to visit La Palma at the beginning of June for a week's holiday. They hope to include an inspection of the observatory and to find out if they want any help while they are there! Like keeping an eye on it at night? Best of luck.

BRITISH METEOR SOCIETY: A Journal I will certainly miss being sent. I will have to join!

Bob Mackenzie says he finally managed to recover Halley on November 1 at 2250 UT. With bright moonlight the comet was very faint in his 6½-inch reflector and could only be seen with averted vision.

It seems that a very strong Draconid return took place in 1985. According to the latest results, which are still arriving, the maximum ZHR reached was some 800 meteors per hour on October 8.

There had been peculiar Perseid activity and the parent comet had still to be recovered. Bob stressed the need for naked eye observations and how important they were.

He has written a book called "The Astronomer's Software Handbook" which is a comprehensive collection of software including over 50 working programs, such as making predictions about the positions and characteristics of the Sun, Moon, planets, satellites, meteors and stars. There is a section on the use of commercial software packages in the study of astronomy, image processing, etc. It is available now, price £3.95, and is published by SIGMA Press.

The BMS Handbook Vol V is completed and is now "in the press".

HERDEN BRIDGE AS: A group of members visited the Huddersfield society's Crosland Moor Observatory in December, where they were met by Philip Heppenstall. Having glimpsed Halley's Comet briefly in binoculars before leaving Herden Bridge, they had hoped for better views in the 16-inch reflector at Huddersfield. Unfortunately,

HUDDERSFIELD AS: Writes Paul Harper, "Some 523 visitors signed in during NAW the observatory and the figure may be higher as some were unable to get in to view. Only two days out of the week were cloudy, the rest could not have been better. The lecture by Chris Devoy, "Comet Halley", attracted around 70 people and the hall was bursting at the seams. Publicity posters went out to all the libraries, we were in the Kirkless "What's On" leaflet and Philip Heppenstall was interviewed by Radio Leeds at the observatory. A profit of some £340 was made as a direct result of NAW. However, we only have one new member from it all. Out of our own wealth we have bought a computer and the Cambridge Atlas of Astronomy."

LONDON SOLAR COMMITTEE: Unfortunately, Bert Chapman who is the Editor of Solar News has been in hospital and so the usual magazine contents are lacking.

Four members are going "down under" to see Halley and it is hoped they will be able to give a report in April.

At the moment, Haig camera mounts are being constructed and tested.

It was expected that the solar minimum would be in 1986. Bruce Hardie says that from his records he noted that for the first time in 20 years he did not record the sun on Christmas Day. The one observation of that day showed that the sun was spotted.

NORTH EAST LONDON AS: Newsletters from Bernard Beeston indicate that monthly lectures continue with interesting and unusual topics. In November, Geoff Whit spoke on sizes and distance measuring using the title "The Universe at Large". In December, Stuart Malin lectured on the problems, historically, of crossing the oceans, in a talk entitled "Navigation Through the Ages". Then in January, Peter Weston argued that the true invention of the achromatic lens was Lee Chester M Hall, and explained how Dolland, by patenting the system, did no good at all the opticians of the day.

ORWELL AS: NAW attracted around 1,000 eager visitors including a gentleman of whom saw Halley's Comet in 1910. They queued for up to two hours to get a few seconds' glimpse. Each person who did see the comet was given a certificate signed by a member of the society witnessing the event. What a nice memento for the public!

With the bad weather on some nights at least half of the 1,000 failed to see anything. So during December it was decided to open up again. Weather triumphed once more, bad weather in fact. Quite often the observatory was empty except for the hard members. December 18 produced about an hour of clear skies.

During one evening in December, the 7th in fact, while at the observatory, members noticed a very bright flash and were lucky to see the terminal flare of a magnitude -8 meteor. The society fireball camera was running at the time and has indeed recorded the event.

The day before that event, another event took place with a visit to Greenwich and hopes of a view through the 28-inch, an observing session had been booked for some time. Unfortunately the weather was poor and observing was not possible.

SALFORD AS: Again as with all societies NAW was a success. Some 400 visitors and three consecutive clear nights together with an increase in membership of seven made it worthwhile.

It was decided that observing sessions

WEST MIDLANDS AA: The third edition of "An Astronomical Portrait" was produced at Christmas and included a supplement of astronomical terms. The idea behind the annual edition is to provide members with a guide to the forthcoming events and beginners' guides. Very useful for WMAA members as you will remember it is a "postal" astronomical association and does not hold meetings as such.

The monthly magazine "Nova" is being produced entirely on a computer printer.

The open evenings for NAW held in Alan Wells' garden with his 12-inch reflector for viewing Halley, were successful in attracting public attention. A party of about 30 scouts turned up in a coach, much to the surprise of everyone present. Unfortunately on this particular night the clouds refused to clear. Still, they now have more members than ever before.

Alan Wells says that there is a possibility of a visit to a French meteor group. He said that they had some international links which were increasing all the time. This is a very good idea. We in Sheffield have made lifelong friends with our Maltese "astro-pen-pals".

WEST OF LONDON AS: The WOLAS observations of Halley during NAW were a great success. The comet was shown to several hundred people over the five clear nights and according to Robin Scagell, most of them actually said they could see it.

Member David Frydman apparently saw Halley with the naked eye on November 12. His observation was mentioned in the Daily Telegraph. Sounds impossible but Robin says that David's eyesight is quite remarkable and he can see 12 of the Pleiades with the naked eye from Wembley.

A social event was to be held sometime in January - a WOLAS tradition each year after Christmas.

WEST YORKSHIRE AS: A Christmas raffle raised some £150 for funds. This was, however, only half that raised last year.

The open evenings during December were as most societies found - cloudy. WYAS managed about one hour of clear weather during which all present saw Halley.

A quiz against Bradford resulted in a win for WYAS.

As a result of NAW, membership is at a record level. This is in common with most other societies who have increased their flock. A reorganisation of the library has been necessary following the disappearance of some books.

A visit to the observatory by some scouts was too late to spot Halley so Orion became a good substitute together with a slide show.

In January, some members visited the Bradford Museum of Photography and Television to see the Space Shuttle film.

Items for the "Round-Up" should be sent to Martin Chick, 25 Calderton Road, Gwaun Miskin, Nr Pontypridd, South Wales CF38 2LL

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE

MEMBERS' ADVERT

SKYCALC 48k Spectrum program finds detailed data for sun, moon, principal planets, and Halley's Comet. Also displays moving map of stars and planets. Many features.

★ ★ ★

WATCHING ALL METEOR WATCHERS

Paul Roggemans writes from Mechelen hoping to strengthen links with meteor observers in the UK and the rest of I have a lengthy account of three matters.

- 1 International Meteor Weekend: 1 place in Belgium, 1986 October 3 evening to Sun aft., with formal informal discussions, papers inv Food and accommodation available 1000 Br. Language English.
- 2 International meteor journal: 6 per year, 250 Bf.
- 3 International Camp for Meteor Obs at Paimichel, Haute Provence, S, a permanent site with instruments facilities for group visits.

Meteor observers wanting the full ir on the above should send for full fa sheets from Rosemary Maylor. Please SAE + two 12p stamps to pay for phot



HERSTMONCEUX 85 COMPETITION RESULTS

We inadvertently omitted the results Instruments Section which was judged Norman Fisher, who also donated the of an astro tie to Bob White of Worth for his Poncet Mounting.

Other prizewinners are in Issue No 8.



FUTURE MEETING DATES

Saturday May 3: AGM and Convention at Coventry.

Saturday July 12: Convention at the Astronomy Centre.

Saturday October 4: Convention at the Greenwich Observatory.



CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Brian Jones, Publications Officer, new at:

17 Havlock Street
Thornton
BRADFORD
BD13 3HA

Tel: 0274 833651

Please amend this on page 44 of your FA Handbook.



REVIEW

ECLIPSE PROGRAM FOR THE SINCLAIR SPECTRUM 48k RAM by J S Coombes

Reviewed by Martin Chick

The program gives details of solar and lunar eclipses for the years 1951-2050. Clear display of data showing times, date and where the eclipse will be visible etc. The program is versatile, contains many sub-pages of very useful information. The program is complete with a one-page sheet of instructions which could have been made easier to understand.

SHEFFIELD AS: The Annual Astronomical Auction at the Christmas meeting produced an incredible £90-plus in just one hour! After the Auction we held a buffet which was very well received by all members and some wives who attended.

The Sponsored Meteor Watch was poorly attended but to be honest the sky was just as poor. That did not stop member Ted Bailey who managed to raise some £34 in sponsorship.

The annual visit will be to Greenwich and the National Maritime Museum on Saturday June 7.

Our President, Kim Lindley, took advantage of some exceptionally clear skies recently to do some photography with his camera drive. He described the seeing on some nights in November and January as probably the best one will ever get from our area of Rotherham. A slide of Orion taken in November with a Tamron 135mm lens and Fuji RD100 shows clearly the Horsehead Nebula! On January 3 while photographing the Rosette Nebula, a -2 Quadrantid passed directly in front of the Nebula! Both are recorded on the slide. The Nebula is outstanding to say it's only ordinary film. Again in January, a slide of the Sword Handle shows clearly IC1795 and IC1805. A 4-minute exposure with 135mm Tamron and Fuji RD100 film.

Member Ray Ward had one of those flights to see Halley. Will report in next Round-Up.

It is hoped to make a video during the summer of how to use the observatory and telescope.

SOUTH WEST HERTS AS: According to their newsletter, most members succeeded in viewing Halley and many took photographs. Arthur Davies, using a 200mm lens with Kodak 2476, and Clive Jackson with a 500mm and HP5, both took exceptional photographs.

Interesting talks recently have included "Astronomy One Hundred Years Ago" by John Burnett of the Science Museum, and "Observatory Timepieces" by Beresford Hutchinson of the Old Greenwich Observatory. Finding speakers is probably one of the most difficult tasks, so perhaps we should hear more of the interesting ones, we can then all make a note of their names.

STEVENAGE & DISTRICT AS: Once more I can say that NAW proved a success. Stevenage found it generated a lot of interest and the public lecture on November 14 prompted a congratulations from the Director and General Manager of British Aerospace, Mr Hockridge. Another letter of congratulation comes from Stevenage Borough Council for the services offered to the people of Stevenage during NAW. I wonder how many other councils sent thanks? Not many, I bet.

The trip to Bradford on January 12 to the National Museum of Photography and Television was enjoyed by all.

It has been suggested that given sufficient support, a visit might be made to the Kennedy Space Centre for perhaps four days. A letter has been sent to the Centre sounding them out. If you get the chance to go, Stevenage, take it. I can assure you it is a fantastic place - even more so if you see a launch.

Star Parties are to be held on a regular basis at the Fairlands Valley complex. Local press and radio have shown some interest.

It is hoped that a 4½-inch reflector will be available for members to borrow.

Paul Bishop is hoping to arrange observing sessions for members to use his 8-inch

