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issue number 28

Federation of Astronomical Societies

FAS AGM & CONVENTION

To be held on Saturday 2nd of May at 11.30 a.m.

in the Herbert Lecture Theatre, Coventry

Doors open 9.30 a.m.

The Convention follows

Lectures start at 2.00 p.m.

Sneakers are

Prof Peter Wilmore of Birmingham Univ

"Any Old Iron"

Dr Brin Cooke of Leicester Univ
"An X-ray Insight into Gamma Ray Bursters"

and
Dr Bodney Buckland of Brunel Univ

"The UK Space opportunities in Education"

Entrance £3.50 Tickets bookable in

advance from
Alan Drummond, 27 York Road, Crawley,

West Sussex, RH10 5JS

Don't forget that Societies sending 6 or more

members get free membership of the FAS for one year.

Minutes of the 1991 AGM have been sent to your Secretary in this mailing.

OFFICERS REPORTS

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

You may remember at the last Council Elections, at last year's AGM, the work of the Council was streamlined to improve efficiency. This has meant more work for Chris and Ken Sheldon, but has had the desired effect. We propose to continue along the same lines.

Thanks are due both to these two
Council members and to all others on the Council
for their continued support throughout the year.

You will find them listed on page 29 of the 1992 Handbook. Thanks too to those behind the scenes worker, Mike Maunder for work on slide production, Pam Chick and Dave Powell for work on material for the Handbook and Bob Owens for

We aim to improve and increase the range of FAS publications as a service to members, and hopefully, as a means of income from outside the Federation. This all helps to promote the respect already enjoyed by our organisation.

production of the Astrocalendar.

SUMMER CONVENTION

to be held at

JUDGE MEADOWS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Marydene Drive

EVINGTON

(off B667)

Speakers to include

Prof Ken Pounds of Leicester II

of Ken Pounds of Leicester U

"Future Prospects for UK Astronomy"
Prof Peter Wilmore of Birmingham U.

"ROSAT" Dr Alan Mills of Leicester U.

"ISAAC NEWTON'S SUNDIALS"

Peter Hea

"APOLLO - This New Ocean"

There are few nearby eating houses. Please

bring your own food or book the

Ploughman's Lunch £2-50p

(must be ordered in advance)

Adequate Car Parking on site

Tickets are £3.50 for FAS members.

Please book through

Alan Drummond, 27 York Road, CRAWLEY.

West Sussex, RH10 5JS

A map will be sent on booking.

This will be my last Presidential report, but not the end of my work with the FAS. I hope to continue to serve, if elected, in some capacity which does not conflict with my need to earn an income from selling books at FAS and other conventions.

I would like to recommend to you a former Council member, Tony Balfour as the Presidential candidate for the forthcoming session. Please give him your votes.

Mrs Rosemary Naylor

SECRETARY'S REPORT.

1991/2 has been just as busy as ever, I
have provised and answered 130 letters. I have

produced and sent out 6 Council Newsletters and have also kept in touch with other members of Council and with Society Secretaries if necessary by telephone. I have filled in several forms requesting information about the FAS for Directories of Astronomical Organisations and have had pleas for help from Singapore, Spain, Brazil and Argentina and a request for a Handbook from America. Although there was no NAW to bring a flood of requests about local Societies there has been a trickle of enquiries. Schoolchildren write for help with their projects and I answer them as helpfully as I can, generally pointing out the value of books, encyclopedias and magazines as well as setting them on the right track. If I think a local Society can help I give them the Secretary's name and address. I have again enjoyed attending all the FAS conventions. In August the Editor and I represented the FAS at NASS in Birmingham. We talked to a lot of people, collected information about Societies firsthand, and sold slides. It is an interesting post and I am happy to continue in it for another year.

Christine Sheldon EDITOR'S REPORT

We have published three newsletters and sent out two flyers during the year. The Handbook was produced in November and contained three articles from members - one on Standing Stones by Richard Roberts of Swansea AS and one by Ian Downie of Scottish Astronomers.

Postage costs have continued to rise and this is a major factor in production of newsletters and their distribution. We hope to increase the number of newsletters as the means of spreading information and a couple of small handbooks on constructional topics are under consideration.

One of the interesting but extremely time consuming features of this job is reading something like 250 newsletters in the course of a year - one lands on the doormat most mornings - please keep them coming.

I must thank Chris for her help in getting the material together. Ken Sheldon

NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

All posts become vacant. These are listed below. The Treasurer, Secretary, Events Organiser, Education Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Editor are prepared to continue if re-elected.

The following nominations have been made by council for the Session 1992-1993

Tony Balfour

Paul Money

Christine Sheldon

Alan Drummond

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

TREASURER

stand.

MEETINGS ORGANISER

EDUCATION SEC. PUBLICITY
ASSISTANT SEC. Tony Ireland EDITOR

These posts are all open to nominations from the floor of the meeting. However if you wish to nominate someone bease have a seconder and

make sure that the person nominated wishes to

Ed. I am including meeting details where available and hope that you will go along if you are in the area where one is happening. I haven't mentioned many reports of the

November Aurora - almost every newsletter had one! You could have done a triangulation on the bright meteorite at 2256UT from the different directions in which it was reported -'in Orion', 'in Organus', 'just inside bowl of Plough' etc. AS of HARINGEY Meet third Wednesday of

the month at Alexandra Palace Palm Court at 8
pm. Contact Wally Backer on (81 888 6228 for
details of programme. What a feast for the
members of ASH when at their November
meeting they had two superb talks - one by
Allan Chapman on William Herschel 'followed
by Peter King on 'Life in the Universe'. The
Post Office has to be thanked for that, having
total telter. The Society survived what to me
sounded like a very heetic AGM. It looks as
though they will have a busy year. A new
Editor has produced a new look.
AVLESBURY XS Meet on first Monday of

month at the Observatory, Contact Peter

Biswell on 0296 85125. The winter season has

been blighted by the death of Chairman Peter Edwards. The Society has been carrying on its business normally but like many other societies observing nights have not been beset by still transparent skies. The programme has included a Ouiz, 'Wolf-Rayet Stars' by Mike Tate, 'Olbers' by John Folkes, 'Meteorites' with Kevin Williams. Paul Atkins on 'Computers in Amateur Astronony'and finally Dr Allan Chapman on the 6th of April on 'William Lassel' Might be worth a trip to Aylesbury. BEDFORD AS Meet on the last Tuesday of the month at Bedford School at 7.30 p.m. Contact Dave Eagle on 02302 5256 for more details. The informative and nicely produced newsletter contains useful star and planet data plus lots of Space information from Steve Breen G7HZO. Date for your diary November

Society.

BRIDGEND AS For more details of meetings contact Keith Clark on 0656 664274. An active society with a Newsletter that seems to have pathways to information that beat mine - must be a starlink! Although not a large society by some standards the telescope count is in the order of 12 largish telescopes (17½" the biggest) plus lots of sub-3" models. Bridgend were the first recorded Society to persuade a super-market (Tescos) to switch off the car park [ights.]

COTSWOLDA S Meet on the last Saurday of the month at 8 pm at Church House Painswick

24th when Allan Chapman is talking to the

COTSWOLD AS Meet on the last Saturday of the month at 8pm at Church House Painswick Road Cheltenham. Contact Trevor Talbot on 0386 881595 for more details. The highlights of the Winter programme have been the post-Aurora meeting at the end of November, John Rock on "CCD Imagers" and a telescope evening. The Tenth Anniversary Dinner had Dr Allan Chapman as the guest speaker. CRAWLEY AS Meet on first and third Thursdays of the month at Biled Community Centre at 7.30 p.m. Contact Andrew Dale on 6003 55/932. Speakers in the last few months have included Alan Drummond on his Eclipse Trip, Neil Morrison on 'Using Star Charts and Atlases' and "Planetary Observing," Storm Dunlop on 'Observational Astronomy' and Denis Maiden on 20th Century Astronomers'. The cover of the December Magazine was a very eye-catching forion Nebula.

Densi Maoden on 20th Century Astronomers'. The cover of the December Magazine was a very eye-catching Orion Nebula.

CAMBRIDGE AA Meet the third Friday of the month at 8 p.m. in The Friend's Meeting House. They also hold regular practical and observing evenings on Mondays and meetings for juniors on Saturday mornings. Contact Rod Greening on 0763 838194 for details of meetings. Speakers have included Prof Alec Boksenberg of the RGO talking on 'From the Edge of the Universe', Prof Lynden-Bell on 'Galaxies' and Dr Paul Alexander on 'Termation of stars in Galaxies'. Lost of other activities too, some of them social. Brilliant covers to their useful newsletters.

covers to their useful newsletters. CRAYFORD MANOR HOUSE AS Contact Roger Pickard on 0322 521643 for details and times of meetings. I had a comprehensive report from Crayford which included the following items. The Society hosted the Centenary Meeting of the BAA Variable Star Section in October. Amateurs and professionals from many European nations attended. A banquet was held on the Saturday, Jean Felles provided Buffet meals during the conference. Roger Pickard won a prize from the work he has done in Photoelectric Photometry in the Pro-Am programme, CMHAS are the custodian for the Hewitt Camera Archive and a plate measuring machine. John Howarth is responsible for these and won a prize for his work on W Cygni. John Boothroyd is running a Hopwood Electrometer for meteor detection but is having problems with thunder and power cuts. John Wall continues to look after the instrumentation and is completing his 32" reflector as well as designing a 48" 'semi light bucket'. Both these instruments for PEP and Spectroscopy. Bert Carpenter endeavours to get members out for grazing lunar occultations and is actively involved with continental 'Grazers' particularly Dr Bredner. The Jack Ells Automatic Telescope has been moved to a more favourable site and should be operational

by this Spring.

DERBY & DISTRICT AS Meets on the first Friday of the month at the Council House in Derby at 7.30 pm. For more details contact John Holmes on 0322 842068. The Society has tectures, quitzes, discussion evenings and equipment evenings. DADAS publishes two magazines - a journal Arles the journal and Countdown which is space orientated. Observing sessions are held at member's homes but it is hoped that DADAS's own Flamsteed Observatory will be open Flantsteed Observatory will be open faralisford this year. Observing sessions take

James Lynch 'Ouarks to Ouasars' finishing in April with 'Another Nice Messier' with Dr Brian Kelly. LA SOCIETIE GUERNESIAISE ASTRONOMY SECTION Meetings are usually held at 7,30p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at the Observatory, La Pointe, Contact David Le Conte on Guernsey 64847 for info. The Winter programme has included Frank Dowding with 'A tour of the Solar System', A Quiz and Supper in December, AGM, 'Meteorites' by Neil Turner and Stephen Sweet 'Solar Eclipse'. The future programme is 'The Summer Sky'(May), Frank Dowding

talking on 'Venus'(June), David Le Conte on

'Computers and Astronomy'(July) and Geoff

Falla 'Double Stars' (September). Please keep the

crosswords coming David - Chris and I enjoy

HAMPSHIRE ASTRONOMICAL GROUP

Meet on Second Friday of Month at Clanfield

GLASGOW AS Meet monthly on a Thursday at

the University of Strathclyde, Contact Malcolm

Kennedy on Cumbernauld 725499. There has

been a full winter programme of lectures

including the Astronomer Royal on 'UK

Astronomy - its successes and its problems',

Colin McInnes on 'Solar Sails', Colin Steele on

'Finding a role for the Amateur Astronomer'

place at the site already.

Memorial Hall, Contact Roy Dodds on 0705 254032 for more information. Speakers have included Storm Dunlop and Lawrence Anslow. Lots of Observing and informal sessions on other Fridays. Note April 4-12 'Exhibition and Space Trail' at Q.E. Country Park and 'Open Weekend' at the Clanfield Observatory April 11-13. Contact Roy for more. HEART OF ENGLAND AS An active society based on Chelmsley Wood. See Gary Poyner or Robert Januszewski at FAS AGM for more details. A very active observing society with

special interests in variable stars and pro-am

cooperation. The now quarterly newsletter MIRA contains a lot of material most of it original, it is a good read. HUDDERSFIELD A & PS Meet weekly on Fridays. Contact Paul Harper on 0484 606832 for details of Society meetings. The members seem to have a good time they certainly enjoyed the Christmas party and their participation in Astromind (but not the result). The Society is actually in a fairly difficult financial state compounded by a swingeing water rate demand that makes each kettle of water cost about £5. Speakers have included R. Haslam and Martin

Lunn with contributions from locals Paul Harper. Marcus Armitage and Robert Williams. IRISH AS An active and lively Society if the newsletter is any guide. Meetings are twice monthly on 1st and 3rd Thursdays at Ely House, Ely Place, Dublin. Contact James Lynch on Dublin 202135 for more details. Speakers have included Liam Smith 'History of Astronomy', Prof P A Wayman on '1991 Solar Eclipse' and Dr Ian Griffin on 'Armagh Planetarium - the

next 25 years'. LEICESTER AS A good year has been enjoyed by the Society with good speakers and trips, John Bonell and Tony Pacey have maintained against Midland societies (Don't know the outcome). Speakers over the winter included Alan Mills, Martin Lunn and Konrad Malin-Smith, LAS is hosting the FAS convention on July 4th LETCHWORTH AND DISTRICT AS (Formerly Stevenage & District A.S.) Meet on the last Thursday of the month at the Plinston Hall, Letchworth starting 7.45 p.m. Contact Graham Lambert on 0438 742280 for more details. An active observing group of the society meet at the LADAS site at Standalone Farm Centre, Letchworth, The comprehensive Newsletter published monthly usually contains JAS Newsletter, BAA circulars, FAS Newsletters, in fact, almost anything that is relevant to astronomy. Lectures on many topics

seem to attract a reasonable turnout. Speakers

LIVERPOOL AS Meet on the third Friday of

the month at 7.00 n.m. in the City Museum. For

more details send a SASE (30p stamp please) to

Mr Dave Whittle, 17 Sandy Lane, Tuebrook,

Liverpool, L13 OBT, LAS seem to be having a

busy time - speakers in the recent past have

have included Eric Hutton on 'Asteroids'.

the LAS interest in astrophotography having

both won Astronomy Now's Picture of the

Month, A visit to the Cotswolds was organised

(with Newbury AS) but the weather didn't

cooperate. The society defended their astroquiz

included Lt Cdr Dougherty on 'The Sun' and Dr Clark of Glasgow. The solar observer Eric Strach has been busy and articles in the newsletter show that others have too. particularly the occultation specialists. A new member of the editorial team is P. Moore but it turns out to be Miss Patricia Moore, Welcome! Observing notes figure prominently in the Circular. MANCHESTER AS The Society had an observing week at Wincle which included the Aurora weekend. The night of the 8th started as a Taurid observing session and turned into a fantasy of light. Thirteen members had the night of their lives. NE LONDON AS Meet on the third Sunday of each month between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. at

Wanstead House, 21 The Green, Wanstead. Ring Bernard Beeston on 081 363 5696 for more details. Speakers in the Winter session have included Dr Andrew Lawrence on 'The Farthest Corners of the Kingdom', Bernard Beeston, John Fisher and Alan Drummond. NORWICH AS Meet at the Observatory, Colney Lane, Norwich. Open EVERY Friday from 7.30 p.m., Contact Malcolm Jones 0508 78392 for more details. Peter Rea's talk on 8th November was treated to a garnish of Aurora. The Society needs to move its site due to lighting and building problems. The Society have started a series of classes for the WOBAST (would be astronomer) to take place

on normal club nights.. Comprehensive observing notes and Space notes are published in the Newsletter. An interesting talk to come is David Dewhirst talking about 'Recent Advances in Cosmology' on 24th April. ORWELL AS Meet at the Observatory. Contact R.Gooding on Ipswich 462977 details. PONLAF Meet in Room 11/3 Tower Block, Gallery and Museum, Stirling, on the second

Meet at the Smith Art

Polytechnic of N. London on first Friday of the

month (during term time). Contact on 071 607

2789 Ext 2100. A new group with a full

lecture programme, Speaker in December Piers

PORT TALBOT AS Formerly the

Astronomical Society of Wales. Meet on the

first Tuesday of the month in Room 5 of Port

Talbot Arts Centre at 7.15 p.m. Contact John

Minopoli on 0792 580395 for more details.

SALFORD AS Contact Kath Redford on 061

The Winter session has been busy. Starting on

15 Nov a public meeting was held with five

speakers. Observing spoilt by cloud. The

Christmas dinner and Christmas Lecture were

both successful the speaker for the lecture

being the Vice-President Allan Chapman

talking about 'Victorian Amateur

Astronomers'. Tony Sullivan won the

Astromind Competition. Cliff Meredith and

Ray Smith went to St Monica's School to talk

and help the children with observing on a

couple of occasions. The 20th anniversary of

the SAS Observatory was celebrated with a

Public Open Day. Many visitors attended

between mid-day and midnight, Observing

sessions met with mixed fortunes. The Society

celebrates its 25th Anniversary on 6th

September. A visit is planned in May to ROE.

SOLENT Amateur Astronomers Meet at

Oaklands (Southampton area) Contact Ken

Medway on 0703 582204 for more details.

Speakers have included Neil Bone on

'Meteors', 'Galactic Evolution' by Dr Victor

Clube with plenty of activity at the Societies

SOUTH WEST HERTS AS Contact Brian

Bloomfield at 58 Whitelands Ave.

Chorleywood, Herts. WD3 5RG for more

SOUTH EAST KENT AS Meet regularly at

Walmer Castle Car park for observing sessions.

Contact Joe Waller 0304 823301 for more

details. Obviously active as observers with a

good magazine ECLIPSE. More in future when

two observatories.

details of meetings.

I learn more.

STIRLING AS

794 3179 for information about events.

Corbyn on 'Galaxy Formation'.

Friday of the month Contact Roger Lynn on 0786 832689 for more details. Over the past few months Open Lecture Meetings have featured an interesting range of topics including "The Aurora" with Dr Alistair Simmons, "Will the Universe Collapse" by Dr A. Heavens, "Supernova 1987A" by Prof. John Brown. Future speakers will include Dr J. Davies on "Infra-red Astronomy from Earth & Space" and Brian Kelly on "Binocular

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

September 26th 1992 **FAS Autumn Convention**

at Cambridge.

More details in July Newsletter.

Even if your Society closes down for

the Summer persuade your Secretary

to let you have the details

Astronomy Observing sessions and members evenings are also held. A joint meeting was held with Dundee AS on 22nd November and it is hoped that more links will be forged with other Societies. WEST OF LONDON AS Meet at The Nave,

Windsor St, Uxbridge. Ring Arthur Davis on 081 866 3858 for further details. The Society has had talks from Konrad Malin-Smith on 'Pulsars' and Piers Corbyn on 'Formation of Galaxies' plus the usual galaxy of Society speakers talking about their work and travels. An observing trip to Tenerife is mooted.

WEST YORKSHIRE AS The Society weekly meet at the Rosse Observatory, Carleton Centre, The Grange, Carleton, Contact Ken Willoughby at 0977 795535 for more details. PHOBOS the Newsletter of WYAS gives me much pleasure. as good as most of the book-stall mags (without the pretty pictures of course!). Meeting weekly as they do there is always something going on in the Society. Speakers galore many homebred but outside speakers such as Les Wooliscroft as well. The Sky Diary is always just that bit too late for me but it is excellent. Maybe Gordon Ward could let me have one sooner. Keep them

coming anyway. WOLVERHAMPTON AS Meetings are held at 7.30 p.m. on alternate Mondays at the Beckminster Methodist Church Hall, Birches

Barn Rd, Wolverhampton. Contact Malcolm Astley on 0902 782212 for more details. The Society celebrated its 40th anniversary and Mike Bryce sent me a photo of the event but pressure of space... The Society has a full programme of lectures with the winter session having talks ranging from Thales & Aristotle, Islamic Astronomers, Sun Dials through to 30 years of Americans in Orbit. As you can see comprehensive, as is the nicely produced Newsletter LYRA.

WORCESTER AS Meet Second Thursday of the month at Worcester City College of H.E. Contact Ian Gray for details Tel: 0386 47352. The Society has had its usual full winter program with the highlights including a super Hewish. Several observing evenings have been held at the Worcester Countryside Centre and another joint meeting at the Lickey Hills is in the pipeline. WORTHING AS Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month. Contact Paul

visit to the KAL and Pulsars by Dr Anthony

Carter on 0903 213001. A really active Society - I don't know how they find the time to organise the events (6 in December, 7 in January, 9 in February and 5 in March) many of them being outdoors. The speakers have included Owen Brazel and many of the Society's stalwarts. The work done by the various sections of WAS is extremely well done and well documented in the excellent newsletter which contains much original and exciting

material. If I continue in the post of FAS Editor

for a few more years an Anthology of WAS

and WYAS newsletters could prove very ************************ ** PLEASE NOTE **

THERE WILL BE NO PHOTO COMPETITION AT COVENTRY THIS YFAR. BRING THEM ALONG TO LEICESTER AND EXHIBIT THEM THERE!

interesting and saleable.

Don't forget that the F.A.S. has publications which are available now.

THE HANDBOOK full of useful information special price to members £3.00 The ASTROCALENDAR at 90p and **OBSERVATIONAL ASTRONOMY by Steve** Lubbock £2.00 all prices include p&p Obtainable from Alan Drummond.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME Issued by Palace Video (13th April 1992)

VIDEO REVIEW

The Video of Stephen Hawking's Life. When I first put the tape on I wondered what I had agreed to review - the electronic voice and what looked like a series of disconnected clips promised 80 minutes of hard watching. Within 10 minutes I was grabbed by a story told partly by the man himself and anecdotes

from family, friends and colleagues. We saw the development from the gawky slightly officious schoolboy, through the laid-back beer drinking casual student with a self-confessed 1000 hours of study to get his First at Oxford (work that out for yourselves - yes that's right - one hour a day). On to his post-graduate work at Cambridge and then the horror of the two year death sentence. We saw the young woman who 'took on' the ill man and admired her courage but wondered how this man could fight back against the disease and still get on top of the ideas that were just being developed about 'gravitationally collapsed objects', 'black holes' to you and me. We watched enthralled as his ideas were refined and were appalled as he deteriorated physically. I had a little laugh when his mother said that 'he sometimes talked rubbish', only the mother of a genius is allowed to say things like that. I thoroughly enjoyed it the first time through and have spent

the IBM voice and wasn't aware of it at all. Ken Sheldon ERRATA IN HANDBOOK

p 22 line 13 should read '.. Infra Red Pulse' p 23 line 15 should be '..both bear tight' p 23 line 35,36 should have '..azi(muth)' not '..a21'

an hour or two since just picking out snippets

and am still enjoying it. I shall have to buy a copy when it appears on the shelves in April.

I would certainly recommend it as a Society

purchase. Oh, by the way, I quickly adjusted to

p 54 should have Ian Welland as Chiltern Group Rep. My Apologies, just poor proof reading! Ken

COSMIOS NOIRTHIJEAST To be held at

TEESSIDE POLYTECHNIC MIDDLESBOROUGH CLEVELAND on

SATURDAY 25 APRIL 1992 10.00 a.m. - 6 p.m. SPEAKERS ARE:

Prof Arnold Wolfendale - Astronomer Royal on the New Astronomies

Dr David Malin: - Things to see and do in the dark. Dr Allan Chapman: - A World in the Moon - 17th Century

Ideas about Spaceflight. Peter Rea: - This New Ocean David Graham: - An Observer' Guide to the Planets Admission £5.00 by advance tickets only.

Tickets from: Mr N.M. Haggath, 5 Fountains Crescent, Eston, Middlesborough. TS6 9DF

4 - 6 September 1992

To be held at University of Stirling and hosted by Stirling AS

Speakers to include

Prof Arnold Wolfendale Astronomer Royal

Dr Paul Murden Director of ROE Iain Nicholson Hatfield Poly

Others Alistair Simmons, Colin Steele, Neil Bone, David Gavine and Sandy Mackenzie. Some topics are Solar Activity, Aurorae, Noctilucent Clouds, Space Exploration and Cosmology.

SCOTTISH ASTRONOMY WEEKEND

Cost £75 Fully Residential £35 non-residential. More details & bookings by 15 May through Roger Lynn,

Secretary Stirling AS, 25 Pullar Ave., Bridge of Allan, Stirling, FK9 4TB Tel No. 0786 832689

Derek Allen, 1 Ogilvie Road, Stirling FK8 2HJ Tel. No. 0786 72771 or Fax 0786 64081

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