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Issue 41

FEDERATION OF ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETIES

EDITORIAL

The AGM is over (it was on a scorching Saturday) and the "summer" with its milky skies and warm, wet nights is with us! Don't mind me being grumpy but it seems as if Murphy or Sod or whatever you call the law that gets in the way of astronomy in the UK really has it in for Chris and I. If we are at a meeting the sky is great - if we are at home it is cloudy. I'm not sure what the explanation is but obviously we are doing something that is wrong. Having said that we stopped late at night on the Cotswolds on the way back from a meeting and it really was a "WOW!" sight. Of course we didn't have any binos or a camera with us!

Even the Sun is being a little miserable with no spots (there has been some comment about that on Fidonet) but on the other hand there are things happening since we are aware that the hams are finding the odd aurora.

Are you familiar with the Post Office addressing system? I'm totally boggled that our new Treasurer has a 2 word address, plus a postcode. He lives in London along with about a quarter of the population of the UK, Chris and I live in a village of about 600 souls and have an address that fills all the available lines on most forms plus a postcode! Amazing!

The Autumn Convention planning is underway and we are to receive a degree of help financially from *Astronomy Now* who are to sponsor the event.

By the way! I'm not totally stupid taking on the Membership Secretary job - after all with the mailing of the Newsletter and all the various flyers etc I do have the address database on my computer. It makes sense to make sure that it is up-to-date as possible.

Don't forget that I shall be pestering budding authors for material for the Newsletter and articles for the Handbook which should be underway shortly. If you have any good ideas get them down on paper (or even better on a PC disk!). Start writing.

Clear and dark Skies.

Ken Sheldon

FAS AGM KETTERING

My View by Ken Sheldon

Saturday 1995 6th May

After a longish and extremely murky journey in a Los Angeles type smog (I think that it might

have converted me to being anti-car except that I won't be able to go to astronomical events) we arrived at Kettering in time to help with the organising of traders - I must admit my attempts were really minimal and basically consisted of saying "Hello" to the people I knew, Rosemary obviously. Pete Williamson of Starbase 4, Ian Gray of Graytel (please note the change of name - those of you who talked to Ian at Winchester will know why!), David Hinds spring readily to mind as well as greeting Society reps who appeared in good numbers prior to the AGM.

Spot on time the AGM started and proceeded smoothly with most of the proposals from the platform receiving "nem con" votes.

As I show below there have been few changes in the Council - the main one being the sad departure from Treasurer of Alan Drummond but the plus is that Graham Bowden Peters has moved from being the SPA observer on the FAS Council to Treasurer and we must welcome Mike Hurrell who is to be Minutes Secretary and hopefully will succeed Chris as Secretary. To lighten the load on the Treasurer I have taken the job of Membership secretary. Hopefully that will help - at least I will have the pleasure of knowing that my address database is correct!

The lectures are a bit of a blur since I was involved in door-keeping. The only one I really had time to listen to was Prof Ken Pounds - since I had been asked to do the vote of thanks. I found this extremely interesting and was pleased to hear the speaker say that the UK had a real involvement in Space Astronomy for the foreseeable future - at least that means the amateur has a role in the astronomy of the future.

I enjoyed the day especially the short get together at the pub afterwards - the journey home was much more pleasant since the breeze that sprang up as the evening came on cleared the atmosphere. I must thank Kettering and District Amateurs for providing a good day spoilt slightly by the difficulty in blacking out the hall. Possibly the blame if there is any lies with the Local Education Authority who moved us from the original venue.

Anyway we must gratefully say thanks to the workers/members of KADAS.

Ken.

FAS AGM and CONVENTION 1995.

This report has been taken from the Aylesbury AS Newsletter.

Several Aylesbury folk supported the F.A.S. Spring Convention and AGM hosted by Kettering and District Amateur astronomers.

Following the Annual General Meeting, which saw Pam Spence re-elected as President, with Tony Balfour as Vice-President, the rest of the day was devoted to splendid lectures and shopping around the excellent array of trade stands. David Hinds Ltd set up a Celestron C8 to observe the Sun using a Mylar filter and several members assisted by Alan Smith and Ian Welland observed the faculae. Regrettably the Sun is at Solar Minimum presently.

Jerry Workman (Secretary of the Astronomical Society of Haringey) gave the first lecture entitled "The Voyager Missions", which was approached from a Chemistry-Geological point of view. Jerry's talk was extremely interesting with many original interpretations. (Note: Jerry will be a visiting speaker to Aylesbury in September).

Bob Forrest (University of Hertfordshire), presented a talk entitled "Astrophotography versus CCD Imaging". Recognising the merits and disadvantages of both, Dr Forrest showed some visual comparisons, while lightly providing the technical background to the processes involved.

Dr Janet Drew (University of Keele) presented a theoretical and observer combined analysis talk entitled "Cataclysmic Variables". These variables are stars which show dramatic and sudden bursts of brightness, possibly ending as novae or supernovae. Sometimes known as Eruptive Variables, this category is for stars that are active over very short periods (even hours).

The Ken Marcus Memorial Lecture was by Professor Ken Pounds (Chairman of PPARC), who presented a talk entitled "Astronomy in Space", focusing on the British space contributions to space projects, including those to Russian, ESA and NASA missions (i.e. The Hubble Space Telescope). Future missions such as Cassini were also mentioned. Ken's mention of the Football (and Cricket) results was also welcomed by some in the audience!

****TREASURERS****

Please remember that if your FAS Public Liability Insurance becomes due shortly, you will not be covered if the premium has not been paid.

We hope to be able to rationalise the Insurance premium payment and Subscription date to coincide. Hopefully I shall be able to include the information with the Renewal notice to Treasurers (or Secretary if we do not know the Treasurers address) next month.

FAS AUTUMN CONVENTION

Saturday September 30th 1995

Pippard Lecture Theatre, Cavendish Laboratory

Madingley Road, Cambridge

Sponsored in 1995 by Astronomy Now

Programme details will be sent to Societies in July/August

The following persons were elected to the Council of the FAS for the session 1995/96

President	Pam Spence Worthing AS
Vice President	Tony Balfour Aylesbury AS
Secretary	Christine Sheldon Worcester AS
Treasurer	Graham Bowden-Peters Docklands AS
Asst Secretary	Mike Hurrell South Bayfordbury AS
Conventions	Mike Inglis South Bayfordbury AS
Council Newsletter	Alan Drummond Crawley AS
Editor	Ken Sheldon Worcester AS
Education	Mike Inglis
Membership	Ken Sheldon
Publications	Malcolm Jones Norwich AS
Publisher	Clive Down Brigden AS

Note

If you or your Society can produce material suitable for inclusion in either the Newsletter or the Handbook how about sending me some for future use (Handbook articles should be of use to Societies, construction or use of equipment would be ideal - notes on running of special events could also be useful).

The Handbook goes into preparation in September/October so I would like material in August/September to enable me to think through what I have got to put together.

The Perseids (and their essential Full Moon) are only a couple of months away and I thought that the article by David Geldart of Bedford AS might give you some seeds for thought

I AM GREEN WITH ENVY

I was leafing idly through the December edition of the American magazine *Astronomy*, when I came across some photographs taken during the Perseid Meteor shower last August.

Was I sick!

I spent a good two hours in the middle of the night, last August the 12th, pointing my camera at the heavens up near Thurlough airfield. It was dark and clear. The Milky Way leaped in a big arc from horizon to horizon. I waited patiently. There were loads of meteors - well enough at least to make me think the trip worthwhile. I pointed the camera in different directions at different times, even remembering to open the shutter for longish periods.

Did I capture any meteors on film?

Did I heck!

It is funny how they always appear in that part of the sky where your camera is not being hopefully directed. I thought I had at least one, but it must have been just outside the edge of the frame. And although I packed up on the night fairly happy, I was very disappointed when the film came back from Fuji.

So you can imagine my reaction when I saw no less than six different pictures of Perseids in *Astronomy* magazine. How did they manage to get them? I mean, they must have been extremely lucky, mustn't they?

I mean, I could perhaps forgive someone who,

like me, was just standing there with his 50mm lens - if you do that more or less for hours on end you increase your chances - but one of them is really a deep sky picture of galaxy M33, with a meteor just happening to flash past during the 45-minute driven shot! And he took this with a 7.9 inch f/4 hyperbolic astrophotograph, whatever that may be when it is at home. (I always thought that hyperbolic was something to do with exaggeration on speech!).

I suppose the lesson is that you have to be patient. If those people can get out there with their 50mm lenses and Fuji Super HG400 film (which you can buy in any chemist's), then I reckon I can do it too!

See you out in the depths of Bedfordshire next year.

David Geldart

Bedford AS

"TALKING SCIENCE+"

I have mentioned it before but we have recently heard again from the organisation Talking Science+.

Talking Science+ is a joint venture by COPUS/British Association for the Advancement of Science. They wish to create a database of speakers on science, medicine, technology or engineering. If you wish to know more or if you think that you have something to offer to the scheme, or if you need help from the scheme, then please contact:

Jane Mole,

Administrator

Talking Science+,

British Association,

23 Saville Row,

London,

W1X 2NB.

or by phone on 0171 287 0980

FAS HOME PAGE ON WWW

Thanks to Nick Stevens the Federation have a Home Page on the World Wide Web. The URL on Internet is:

<http://www.emoticon.com/emoticon/astro/fasmain.htm>

Incidentally Nick's base page contains home pages for all the national societies. The URL is <http://www.emoticon.com/emoticon/astro>

If you or your Society have material to go on the Home Page - Special Events etc please contact Nick Quinn (S.A.G.A.S. rep. on FAS Council) at:

15 Newham Lane, STEYNING, West Sussex, BN44 3LR or on Tel: 01903 814090.

Nick has an E-mail address which is:

Nick@nquinn.demon.co.uk

Incidentally other FAS E-mail addresses are:

Mike Inglis:

m.d.inglis@csv.warwick.ac.uk

Graham Bowden-Peters:

on Compuserve as 100125,2033 or via

Internet on:

Compuserve100125.2033@compuserve.com

Graham is also available directly at Astronomers Den, Starbase1 and Starbase4

Ken/Chris Sheldon:

cake@kcseldon.demon.co.uk

We are also available on the Starbases.

SOCIETY NEWS ROUNDUP

Don't forget Neil Bone would like your Society News for AN.

One real problem for me when extracting information from newsletters which carry the dateline APRIL is knowing which of the slightly odd stories are true and which are for a laugh. I trust that I haven't been "had" by too many in my roundup! Mind having said that I have had a few good laughs about some of the things I have read in the last month. I hope that Society Science Editors keep up the "good" work!

AYLESBURY AS The contact is Peter Biswell on 01296 85125 for programme. AAS are lucky in having a combined Observatory complex which has a cosy lecture room. The society meet regularly and have good speakers. The observatory is used for public viewing sessions but as with all such ventures the weather has last say! Recent talks have included one by John Smith talking about 'Astronomy in Prague' which sounded very interesting.

AYRSHIRE AS is the newest member society of the FAS but has been around for some time. At the AGM in April the new committee was elected and moves are under way to call a Regroup Meeting to discuss what the membership wants from the Society. Contact the Chairman Douglas Hunt on 01294 552250 or write to John Bone, 15 Smith Avenue, Longbar, Glegarnock, Ayrshire, KA14 3BN for the latest situation.

BEDFORD AS A nice friendly newsletter with all sorts of different snippets ranging from cartoons (yes, I know your society uses cartoons too!) to poetry. I pinched a short article on Perseids, which I hope you read. It is clear that the Society does do astronomy and has good talks. They meet in a pub! (or at least the committee do!) Contact Peter Cox on 01234 354552 for Society info and an up-to-date programme of events.

BIRMINGHAM AS Over the last 6 months the BAS has been very busy with 5 lectures, three observing trips to Wales, a Family Astronomy Day at the Birmingham Science Museum, a Public Star Party with 300 visitors plus 4 society star parties. We have also unveiled the BAS 16" reflector (new). The next 6 months sees three more lectures one by Gary Poyner of the BAA Variable Star Section on *Variable Stars*. Three visits are planned to Wales on 23/9, 21/10 and 25/11 plus society star parties. We have another Family Astronomy Day at the BSM on 16/9 and a Public star party at the Midlands Art Centre (Edgbaston) on 14/10. A trip to Jodrell Bank and Orion Optics is planned for 15th July. Plans are afoot for a Society Observatory, a Midlands Group and on-line computing for the 120 members with a WWW Home Page. Meetings are Wednesdays and one Saturday a month at Aston University. Contact Peter Bolas, 107 Ashby Road, Burton-on-Trent, staffs, DE15 0NX or phone 01283 568512.

BRIGDEN AS Contact Clive Down on 01656 740754 for details of meetings which take place on alternate Fridays.

CAMBRIDGE AA and CAMBRIDGE YOUNG ASTRONOMERS. The Association are very, very active with all sorts of meetings. Browsing through the nicely produced and well

the *Capella* I discovered that Ca²⁺ have been donated another telescope for loan to members, just a 9" reflector from the now defunct Fenland Museum at Haddenham. I really have lost count of the CAA's inventory of instruments! One of the really good things about the CAA is the CYA and looking at some of the pictures in *Capella* I realise what can be done with children - they were creating models of things such as Hubble and the MRAO aerial arrays. Simple idea but a lot of fun. The March/April issue also described a CCD Camera Project for Schools which I think was brilliant. Keep up the good work, CAA! Contact David Herbert at 67 Howard Close, Cambridge, CB5 8QU for membership and programme info.

COCKERMOUTH AS The CAS is a very informal group of amateur astronomers, sky-watchers and armchair enthusiasts, all of whom share one thing a love of the night sky. We were formed in September 1992 and meet at Cockermouth Scouts Centre on the final Thursday of every month (except June/July). As the birthplace of the 18th century astronomer, the Rev. Fearon Fallows, who established the first Observatory at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, Cockermouth already had a link with the science of astronomy. Our membership is currently around 30. We have widely varying levels of experience. We have a few telescope owners but most members are "Absolute Beginners" - Linda Davidson is our most active astrophotographer.

We have an 8" which is being renovated. We also have good relationship with our neighbours (Border AS of Carlisle) and plan some joint activities in the future. We are informally twinned with the Sonoma County Astronomers Group in Northern California.

We are active and reasonably successful in the CIDS.

Contact Stuart Atkinson on 01900 826139 for details on programme.

Edited from a report by Stuart Atkinson.

COTSWOLD AS After the AGM CAS have new Coordinator (chairman) in Ian Birrell. The programme has included several top speakers including Dr Morrison from Jodrell Bank and Dr Mark Bailey talking on 'Shoemaker-Levy 9 @ Jupiter'. Possibly the highlight of the Spring/summer programme will be the joint effort with WAS as Jack Newton speaks. Contact Irene Hatton on 01242 673923 for more details of the programme.

LA SOCIÉTÉ GUERNÉSAISE ASTRONOMY SECTION One of the really exciting things that I saw in the VE Day TV pictures were the ceremonies in Guernsey. During those pictures of the Memorial were shown. I have been lucky enough to have been able to read David Le Conte's write-up about this and think that if David approves I will copy it to the Handbook as a piece of history. Apart from that the Société have continued to spread the word about Astronomy and about the CIDS. If you are going to Guernsey on holiday you should contact Geoff Falla the Hon. Secretary on Guernsey 724101 for details of the Spring and Summer programme.

HAMPSHIRE AG THE HAG Observer carried a lot of stories with emphasis on the visit to HAG by the Société Astronomique du Havre. As a result members of HAG are honorary members of the SAH and vice versa. Of course all the other things that HAG are good at such as CIDS battles still go on but new problems are arising to do with Sports Fields. Golf Driving ranges and Football pitches seem to be the worst offenders but I suppose the Local Lighting Engineer's response is almost always "How

many astronomers have you? 100 ... there are 500,000 wanting to watch football or play golf!" (Our local reaction!) The person to contact for details of the programme is Roy Dodd on 01705 646875

AS OF HARINGEY The Society continue with their excellent programme - now complete until May 1996. The programme now includes a regular bi-monthly series on constellations and star types when topical areas will be discussed. Speakers include Peter King (*Asteroids*), Jerry Workman (*Solar system Satellites*), Dr Derrick McNally (*Light Pollution*), Dr Monica Grady (*Meteorites from Antarctica*), Dr Steven Miller (*Shoemaker-Levy and the Jupiter Impact*) with visits several observatories planned (upto next January) Contact Jerry Workman on 0171 607 7751 for more details.

HIGHLAND AS

Write or phone J.F.Dick, 8 Holm Park, Inverness, IV2 4XT. Tel/Fax 01463 224036

J.F.Dick

IRISH AS The Irish AS have survived the Contact James Lynch on 820 2135 (dialling code is 010 353 1 I think) for information on meetings and publications.

ISLE OF MAN AS

Enquiries to J.W.Martin Tel: 01624 842954

KETERING & DISTRICT AAS Apart from having hosted the FAS AGM and Spring Convention KADAS have got an exciting ongoing programme which includes visits from Jerry Workman "Jupiter", Paul Money "The Triumphs of Voyager", Iain Nicholson "The Big Bang - Inflation and the future" and a real coup, Jack Newton "Astrophotography", a trip to Greenwich, followed by Dr Peter Andrews with "Celestial Collisions". Things are also planned for the Northampton Town Show. Contact Stephen Williams on 01933 277972 for more.

LETCHWORTH & District AS Recent speakers have included Dr Simon Mitton who stood in at short notice for Dr Jacqueline Mitton. He talked about 300 years of Astronomy at Cambridge and it seems to have been very well received. LAS had a visit to the UoH Observatories at Bayfordbury. Lots of star parties have been held or are planned. Like many other Societies LAS went to Blue Peter about their stupid Light Up Britain competition. Obviously the more complaints the better when something daft appears on the TV. Contact Eric Hutton on 01462 431988 for further details of meetings.

LEICESTER AS I don't know whether LAS went to France with Newbury AS in April (May?) but it was on the cards when I spoke there a few weeks ago. I shall look forward to hearing about the Astronomy - or the wine-tasting if that's what they did. If you want the LAS programme talk to Ann Bonell on 0116 239 4481 for details.

LIVERPOOL AS The LAS have a very active Campaign for Dark Skies programme led by Gerard Gilligan. Of course you would expect this when you consider that they have just built a new Observatory and the Museum service are rebuilding the Lascelles refractor. Reading Gerard's notes in a recent Newsletter makes me glad that I live in the 'country'.

The Widnes/Runcorn Bridge lighting is one big issue where a lighting scheme has been installed with apparently little regard for the environment. It was interesting to see that BS5489 has been changed to read that all lighting in rural areas should be of full cut-off type. On straight astronomy seven LAS members went to Brengin in North Wales for an observing session. Despite the cold some reasonable observing was done. Contact Ken Clark at 31 Sandymount Drive,

Wallasey, L45 0LJ with an SAE for more details of the LAS programme

MANCHESTER AS MAS have a Home Page on WWW. For more contact Mike Oates on e-mail: mike@phelctro.win-uk.net or on Compuserve>>mike@Compuserve100255.3300. For details of the regular Thursday meetings at UMIST contact J Davidson on 0161 2004977.

John Davidson

MIDLANDS SPACEFLIGHT SOCIETY The MSS is a group of about 40 space enthusiasts who keep in touch by means of a bi-monthly magazine *CapCom*, by phone or by attending meetings in the Midlands. 1994 was dominated by the Apollo 11 anniversary and Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 impacts. There were talks by David Hardy, David Shaylor and Andy Salmon and two children's events at local libraries. July 20 was a joint Apollo/SL9 party.

A MSS group welcomed astronauts Joe Allen and Claude Nicollier and cosmonauts Helen Sharman and Georgi Grechko. Exhibitions of the "Race to the Moon" game and space models have been held in Museums and Libraries in Birmingham. If you want more information about MSS and to receive a sample of *Capcom* send a stamped self-addressed A4 envelope to Andy Salmon, "Olympus Mons", 13 Jacmar Crescent, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B67 7LF

From a report by Andy Salmon

NORWICH AS Seething is starting to seethe with action. Contact Malcolm Jones on 01508 578392 for more details.

NOTTINGHAM AS Contact Carl Brennan on: 0115 938 4521 for details of programme.

NOTTINGHAM AS has offered to host the AGM in 1997 (their centenary year) Council has accepted. If anyone wants to think about 1998 they should be doing so!

ORWELL AS Contact Peter Richards on 01473 644828. I receive the Orwell Newsletter regularly and am always impressed by the activity in the Society with something happening at the Orwell Park School Observatory most nights and I was interested to read an account in the Guernsey AS magazine *Sagittarius* by a member of GAS who now works in Ipswich of his contact with OAS. Keep up the good work, you certainly deserve to get some public interest.

SCOTTISH ASTRONOMERS GROUP (SAG) Dave Gavine of SAG and the BAA Aurora Section is hoping to receive reports of Noctilucent Clouds occurring this Summer. His address is 29, Coillesdene Crescent, Edinburgh, EH15 2JJ

Note that the Scottish Astronomy Weekend is taking place on the Weekend of October 13/14 at Stirling. Speakers include Prof Sir Arnold Wolfendale, past Astronomer Royal and the new Astronomer Royal for Scotland Prof John Brown. There will also be a hands-on workshop. At £37.70 for the full weekend including accommodation at Stirling YHA Hostel but not including lunches it seems a real bargain. Contact Ken Mackay at Hayford House, Cambusharron, Stirling FK7 9PR for more details of programme.

SALFORD AS Contact Kath Redford on 0161 794 3179 for Society news. SAS have recently launched a World Wide Web (WWW) Home Page with the help of Manchester University. The pages will provide information about the Society, its observatory and activities, with a practical emphasis showing a range of CCD images and drawn observations by members, as well as links to our other sources of astronomy

information on the Internet. It is our intention to ask as many of our members as possible contributing, so that the data can be changed on a regular basis and to produce a set of pages that people can refer to again and again for observational ideas and information. The URL is <http://axp2.ast.man.ac.uk:8000/~salford/sashome.htm>

During the summer SAS meets each Wednesday at 8.00pm with a public meeting on the first Weds and a weekly Messier meeting on Fridays at the SAS Observatory Chaseley Road, Salford. *Kath Redford*

Thanks Kath, for the magnificent "Salford Astronomer 95" I wish I had as much space!!!! **SAWTRY & DISTRICT AS** Another new group who are very keen. One major project in which they are involved is the "Into Orbit" exhibition planned to be held in Peterborough in the Autumn.

SHROPSHIRE AS Some high class lectures have whetted the SAS appetite for listening but like many Societies the Observing secretary has problems getting people to take up his challenge. This is a pity since the Shropshire skies are somewhat better than the Midlands or South of the UK. Don't despair though Pete, something exciting such as a -5 magnitude comet might get 'em out! I must claim that if the skies are clear I'm at a meeting or it is, as usual, Full Moon! SAS are holding a barbecue and observing session during the summer. The contact is still David Woodward on 01743 872991

SOUTH WEST HERTS AS The Society continues to hold regular Lecture/discussion meetings at the Royal Masonic School. A quiz earlier in the year was won by Arthur Davis. The Observatory at High Top is scheduled for observing most weeks on Saturdays. Contact is Mr Tom Walsh, The Hermitage, London Road, Bourne End, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, Herts HP1 2RJ

SOUTH EAST KENT AS Contact Andrew McCarthy at 25 St Pauls Way, Folkstone, Kent CT20 3NT or on 01303 241933.

STRATFORD-U-AVON AS The Spring/Summer session is now well under way. The programme has been arranged until the Winter and consists of a regular lecture on the 4th Tuesday of each month with informal talks on the second Wednesday. A recent trip to Cambridge IOA, RGO and MRAO was enjoyed by all. The Society observatory planning and discussion continues. Contact John Harrison on 01789 268775 for more information on the society.

SUNDERLAND AS Contact Don Simpson on 0191 5670151 for details.

VECTIS AS VAS have applied for planning permission to build an Observatory at Winsford. They have also taken the step of applying for charity status which is a really wise thing to do if you intend to build an observatory since it helps with the business rate - read Ian Welland's article in the last couple of Handbooks. The society are active with an interest in Variable stars. Contact John W Smith on 01983 865451 for more details.

WEST CORNWALL AS Contact Robin Wadding on 0136 366981 for details of the coming programme of events.

WEST YORKS AS The latest edition of *Phobos* contained some very interesting material on observing Variable Stars with special emphasis on Chi Cygni and a trio of really good articles on Historical Astronomy, Olbers Paradox, The Verification of Newton's Theory of Gravitation and John of Halifax. I found the latter very interesting since I had not read anything about him although I had heard of his

principle book *De Sphaera*. Contact Peter Lunn on 01924 360064 for programme of meetings. **WOLVERHAMPTON AS** As usual WAS are busy organising meetings and providing speakers. Mike Bryce the WAS editor quotes an Internet address for communication with him. It is 100120.2355@compuserve.com The summer break is now on but if you want to know about the oncoming programme call Malcolm Astley on 01902 783212.

WORTHING AS I was lucky enough to be asked to talk at WAS a few weeks ago and found an active and enthusiastic society. I was surprised that when Pam Spence said that she would like to give up the WAS Newsletter job (which she has had for several years) by the fact that there was an instant volunteer. Many Societies seem to find editors hard to get (or maybe just to keep!). Contact Nick Quinn on 01903 814090 for full details of the programme.

PRODUCT REVIEW

The Expert Astronomer For Windows.

Anyone who has used a menu driven program, will like the Expert Astronomer. It is so simple to use, just point with the mouse and click on the control button you require. In fact one good test of any new software, is to try and use it without looking at the instructions! It passed the test, very well.

The manual is concise and well thought out, installation is very simple, being carried out through Windows Program Manager and the single 3½" disk fits in A or B drive. You need a 386sx or higher PC, Windows, a hard drive and at least 4Mb of RAM. VGA or higher graphics are required, 256 colours recommended. The Introduction to Astronomy in chapter 3, is interesting, although I feel that most people will skip to chapter 4, the Tutorial, which teaches some of the basic concepts and controls available. One thing you must do is to select the Location menu to enter your Latitude and Longitude, if you cannot find your city on the in-built list, it is easy to add it to the list. The Expert Astronomer can automatically take the date and time from your computer, by simply clicking on the "Now" button next to the clock. The + and - controls to change the month on the calendar were tricky at first, and the Field of View control took some getting used to. You have two levels of control, Basic and Expert. Basic is good for browsing around the night sky, the Expert setting allows you to enter settings for Azimuth, Altitude, RA and Declination, as well as Diameter of field of view.

Regardless of which setting you use, you can select information on screen, by using drop down menus. Planets, Deep Sky Objects and stars up to 12th magnitude. Realistic features include, Telescope View, which limits your field to that of a telescope, Reference lines, including, Ecliptic, Galactic Equator and Constellation Lines together with Celestial Poles, Zenith and Nadir.

The Search menu will try to find anything in it's database, all this for £14.99.

There may be more powerful packages on the market, but the Expert Astronomer for Windows is excellent value. There is also a CD ROM version, packed with more features at £39.99. If you cannot find a local stockist, the contact Software Partners Publishing on 01954 206626 for details.

Thanks to Caroline for the review copy.

Graham Bloodworth, V-President, Sheffield AS

GrayStel Star Atlas

I'm not reviewing this in this issue but I have been fortunate to have been "playing" with a

Beta version of this program which is the Windows version of Ian Gray's StarWatch, which I have been using and enjoying for a couple of years. It fills my need since it uses the Windows printer drivers and allows us to produce high quality star maps for observing sessions. More to come!

Ken Sheldon

Have you registered the fact that Earth & Sky (Rosemary Naylor) has moved and that her new address is

74 Sutton Springfield,
CHESTERFIELD,
Derbyshire, S44 5XF
Tel/Fax: 01246 850665

WHATS ON

July 8th BAA Meteor Section

Castilian Rooms, Northampton

July 29 Manchester AS

ASTRODAY 1995

Sashas Hotel, Manchester

Contact Mike Oates on

mike@pheleetro.win-uk.net

or on Compuserve

>>>mike@Compuserve100255,3300.

or

J Davidson on 0161 2004977

The list of Speakers is

Dr Allan Chapman, Dr Eric Strach, Paul

Doherty

July 29 Boston Astronomers

"Eyes on the Universe III"

At Boston Arts Centre

Contact Lorraine Kendall on 01507 524037

September 30 FAS Autumn Convention

Pippard Lecture Theatre,

Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge

October 13/15

SCOTTISH ASTRONOMY WEEKEND Stirling.

Contact Fiona Vincent at

23 Strathkinness High Road, St

Andrews, Fife. KY16 9AU for booking

form and more details.

FAS May 1996 AGM & Convention at

Liverpool AS. Details later.

N.A.W. 1996

If you haven't started to think about this please start now.

The week begins on 21st September 1996.

A copy of The NAW Newsletter was sent to your Secretary with this Newsletter

Publication dates, 1995

Autumn late August Deadline 31st July

Winter late November Deadline 31st October

1996

Spring late February Deadline 31st January

Please try to get material to me in good time.

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