

Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting of the Cape Centre at the South African Astronomical Observatory, Cape Town on Wednesday ~~August~~ September 12th at 8 pm.

Apologies were received from Messrs Allen, Ulley, Harding (overseas) and Bondiotti.

The minutes were taken as read.

Mr Hurley made a number of announcements.

1. On Friday October 5th Dr Mahan (?) of CSIR would speak in UCT Beattie building on his work connected with the earth resources satellite. All would be welcome.

2. A spectacular grazing occultation will occur on 4th October near Darling. A practice evening for interested parties was arranged for Saturday ^{September} October 22nd at 8 pm at the Observatory using a flashing simulator.

3. Details of times and elevations of satellites appearing on 13th, 15th and 16th Sept. were given.

4. From Brian Marsden of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory comes the news that Comet Kohoutek was observed on March 7th after being photographed earlier. By 4th November it may be magnitude 6.5 or 6.2. At maximum brightness it may be -6.4 or even -10, as it will pass closer to the sun than Bennet's Comet. It will be a morning object virtually all the time, and will be 0.8 astronomical units from the sun on ~~the~~ January 5th.

President Mr Molyneux then made several announcements:

1. The MINASSA centre pages for amateurs will be called "CENTRE-PIECE". Contributions are encouraged.

2. The program for the February 1974 meeting will be decided at the October 1973 meeting. Will the tradition that the Observatory staff show us round in February be maintained?

3. The Treasurer is keen to receive outstanding centre subscriptions. Please cooperate.

4. Mr Hawarden was unable to speak on telescope making at this meeting. A list of names of interested persons was ~~idea~~ to be compiled by the Secretary who would convene a renewal of the telescope making section of the Society.

5. The next Centre meeting would be on October 17th as Wed. 10th would be a public holiday.

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Dr Andrew Duncan of the UCT Geochemistry Department, an Apollo mission co-investigator, spoke on "Some Comparison and Interpretations of Terrestrial, Lunar and Martian Morphology". This most comprehensive talk was illustrated with the latest slide photographs, and summarized our latest knowledge of the geology of the moon maria, craters, wrinkle ridges, volcanic effects, lunar soil, lava lakes, fissures, collapsed lava tubes, radioactivity, and rock fractures and maria colour changes. Many of these lunar features were compared and contrasted step by step with corresponding geological features photographed on earth.

Dr Duncan then went on to ~~relate~~ and unfold the story of Mariner 9 as it relayed back to earth photographs and other data about Mars. Again geological features such as volcanos, collapsed lava tubes, rills, craters, seasonal dust ^{distributions} patterns accounting for the variation in the albedo patterns observed on Mars, erosion processes, straight groins, labyrinth patterns, valleys, canyons and fluting features were described. Evidence for ancient water erosion on Mars was advanced in the form of dendritic patterning on the face of the planet: Tributary channels joined main trunk streams. Nothing like this was on the moon. A great canyon was described, and the shrinking and abrupt stabilizing of the south polar cap was discussed in terms of a hypothetical core of ice water below solid CO_2 . Laminated plates 40-100 km thick were shown on photographs, perhaps indicating the earlier occurrence of water or CO_2 trapping. A ^{young} volcanic age of 40 M - 100 M years for Mars seems feasible, compared with the moon which has dead for the last 3000 M years.

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Mr Lamuth thanked Dr Duncan for his outstanding address, after many questions had been asked, and the meeting adjourned at 9.40 pm for tea.

Julius
17.10.73.