

# Astronomical Society of Southern Africa Cape Centre

P O Box 13018  
Mowbray, 7705  
Cape Town

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Home Phone (Secretary) (021) 64-2401

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17 August 1997

The Honorary Secretary  
ASSA  
P O Box 9  
OBSERVATORY 7935.

re. Cape Centre, New committee.

Dear Sir,

At their Annual General Meeting which took place on 13th August 1997, a new Committee was elected as follows:

Chairman;	A B Mohammed.	6
Vice Chairman;	A Gray	4
Honorary Secretary;	S J Kleyn	5
Honorary Treasurer;	C Forder	3
Council Representative;	P Booth	1
Committee Members;		
	G Bosch	2
	R Sessions	8
	B Wagner	9
	J Kotze	
	G Quick	7

A Jones has been re-appointed as Editor of the Cape Centre Newsletter, (which now incorporates the Cape Observer).

Yours sincerely,

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

CAPE CENTRE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 13 AUGUST 1987

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of AGM held on 10 July 1996
  - Matters arising, if any
3. Chairman's Report *Gordon Bosch*
4. Treasurer's Report *Chris Forder*
5. Trust Report *Cliff Turk*
6. Any other urgent business
7. Election of Officers and Committee members:
  - Chairman
  - Vice Chairman
  - Hon. Secretary
  - Hon. Treasurer
  - Members (Not less than 3, not more than 7)  
*NB. A member of the Centre is eligible for election to the Committee after having been a fully paid-up member for at least one year.*
  - Hon. Auditor
  - Other appointments to be made are:
    - Centre Rep. on ASSA Council
    - Editor of "Cape Observer" newsletter
8. Welcome from new chairman
9. Outgoing chairman's address *Gordon Bosch*

## ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

### CAPE CENTRE

#### Report to the Annual General Meeting for the year 1996/97

##### MEETINGS

Ten formal meetings were held during the year, plus the annual social function in December. The formal meetings were addressed by the following speakers:

1996	August	K. Pollard and M. Albrow	Astronomy in New Zealand.
	September	Dr. P. Whitelock	A Galaxy Collides With the Milky Way.
	October	Dr F. Bash, Mr T. Sebring and Dr Larry Ramsey	A 10 metre class spectroscopic telescope for South Africa?
	November	Douglas and Audrey Arnold	Astrophotography Contest. Display of Entries and Prize Giving.
1997	February	Dr. P. Martinez	Update on the Boyden Observatory.
	March	Dr J. Patterson	The golden age of binary stars.
	April	Mr T. Cooper	Meteor showers and the collection of data.
	May	Prof. H. Stein and Mr P. Oosthuizen	The SUNSAT satellite program of Stellenbosch University.
	June	Prof. Feast	The Hipparcos satellite mission and the age of the oldest stars and of the universe.
	July	Prof. G. Ellis	Cosmology - where do we stand?

The average attendance according to the book signatures was 31 members and guests. Total membership of the Centre currently stands at 129.

Committee members continued to hold informal meetings on all the remaining Wednesday nights. These kept us entertained and informed about a broad range of subject matter, such as observing (artificial satellites as well as the comets Hale-Bopp and Encke); the practical amateur (the manufacture and use of home-made CCD camera's, telescopes, theodolites, sundials, and various items to assist with observing); the theoretical (near earth asteroids, the asteroid belt, origins of life on earth, the human eye, general relativity and the formation of the elements); historical (astronomy at the Cape, Bernard Schmidt, the Palomar giant, and Egypt at the time of comet Hale-Bopp's last visit); members own photographs; updates on digital cameras and film formats; astronomical sites observed while travelling abroad; and evenings to bring one's own equipment to the Centre to talk to others about. In addition, Bernard Wagener, a member, demonstrated his computer planetarium program, which he wrote himself.

Both formal and informal speakers were well advertised through the local media, which I feel sure was at least partly responsible for the small but steady stream of new faces seen on Wednesday nights.

##### Astrophotography Contest

A members astrophotography contest was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> November. A total of 51 entries were submitted by 15 members, and an additional 25 photographs were submitted for display only. Entries were judged by Douglas Arnold, the British author and astrophotographer. Prizes were awarded by Audrey Arnold at a cheese and wine social evening. Douglas then captivated the audience with his review of the prize-winning entries, after which he received his thank-you gift with enthusiasm - a reproduction of the photograph of the Great Comet of September, 1882, taken by David Gill from the Cape Observatory on the 7<sup>th</sup> November of that year, and capably reproduced for the occasion by Joe Joubert. Awards were given in several categories, both for first place and for highly commended, divided further into beginner and advanced. The prize for the best overall photograph went to Joe Joubert for his entry of Maclear's Western Beacon, and the prize for best achievement by a beginner went to Jaco Eygelaar for his entry of a lunar eclipse.

##### OBSERVING

Star parties for members have been held approximately once a month during the summer months and every second month during winter, at a quarry located a few kilometers north of Cape Town; notably in October, November and December of 1996, and February, March and May of 1997. These have proved popular with both beginners and seasoned observers alike, as well as with friends and family, and have normally attracted 15-20 people and a range of telescopic equipment. We were extremely fortunate in that despite several close calls, only the November meeting was abandoned due to bad weather. During the December party counts were made of the Geminid meteor shower, which were then submitted to the Comet and Meteor Section of the

ASSA. A few members attempted to observe the Centaurid shower during the February party, but unfortunately none were seen. If a few stalwarts can be identified my guess is that it should be Chris Forder, for being the only member to valiantly arrive at the November meeting after it had finally stopped raining rather late in the evening, and Brian Skinner and Pat Booth for persevering in the Centaurid meteor count well into the wee hours.

### **VISITS**

About ten members visited the CSIR's Magnetic Observatory in Hermanus in early May, where they were guided around the facilities by staff member and ASSA colleague Daan Nagtegaal, after which they were treated to a braai at Daan's farm. Some of the members then stayed overnight in Hermanus in order to observe the eta Aquarid meteor shower the following morning, which was unfortunately clouded out. In early July Ryno Noack hosted about twenty members at his private Table View Observatory. The evening began with a braai and ended with observing through the observatory's excellent facilities. In July the Centre made a group visit to the planetarium, which was attended by about eight members.

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Two "sidewalk astronomy" evenings were planned for the Cape Town waterfront, of which one was cancelled due to cloudy weather. The other attracted the normal large crowds who queued until after midnight for views of the moon, Mars and Alpha Centauri. The waterfront has extended the normal invitation for us to return. However, concerns over the rowdiness of the crowds towards the end of the evening and the safety of members' private equipment, as well as other issues, resulted in a decision to hold the public observing evenings at a variety of quieter venues, and to advertise them in advance. Two attempts were made (April and June) to host public evenings at the Alphen Common in Constantia, both of which were cancelled due to poor weather.

Cape Centre members have continued to assist at the SAAO visitors evenings on the second Saturday of each month. A total of 628 visitors were recorded in the visitors book.

### **LIBRARY**

The library has been enthusiastically managed by Charles Allen and Abe Mohamed, and has been open most Wednesday evenings from 7.45pm, with the exception of the formal lecture evening. Several volumes of old magazines were laboriously catalogued during the year. Pat Booth provided satellite tracking software for Mir and Hubble which is sold at R5 per disk to cover costs, and a copy of "Skywatching" by David Levy was purchased. The library is currently trying to obtain a glass fronted bookcase so as to make the collection more visible to members. The following material was very kindly donated to the library during the course of the year:

- Video of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Patrick Moore's "The Sky at Night" by Gordana Bischof (ASSA).
- Photostats of missing Telescope Making volumes were privately donated by Chris Stewart of the Johannesburg section.
- Several books by Cape Centre members.
- Scientific American (10 years), donated by Brian Redmile, a non member.

### **NEWSLETTER**

The editorship of the newsletter was taken over at the start of the year by Tony Jones, who has punctually brought to us a more community orientated version. The biannual "Cape Observer" has been discontinued due to a lack of articles being submitted by the members, with a resultant heavy load on the editor. The name has been taken over by the monthly newsletter.

### **EQUIPMENT**

The late Frank Robilliard's telescope was donated by his daughter. It is currently being repaired, and the mirror is awaiting aluminising by the SAAO.

### **PRIVATE ACTIVITIES**

Several private observing trips were made by members, and are worth noting here for the level of enthusiasm they have generated. Most significant were observations of the September 1996 lunar eclipse, a deep sky and photography session in the Bokkeveld which was attended by about 8 members, a group of about 10 members who observed the South Delta Aquarids in late July from Silvermine, and the small groups who observed Comet Hale-Bopp in May and June from Signal Hill and shared their enthusiasm with the public. Most recently, a group met on the morning of 10 August to observe Hale-Bopp before dawn. This was achieved between bouts of rain. Thanks to Brian Skinner, Richard Sessions and Pat Booth who seemed to be the chief initiators. Well done also to Richard who had several of his astrophotographs published in local newspapers.

### **THANKS**

On behalf of the Cape Centre I would like to extend our thanks to the Director of the SAAO for the use of various facilities throughout the year. Our thanks are also extended to both our formal and informal speakers who, without exception, delivered excellent presentations. The astrophotography contest would not have taken place without so much help from those who gave of their time, and if I may single out some individuals, special thanks should go to the SAAO librarian, Ethleen Lastovica, for her help with obtaining the original old photographs of the Great Comet of September 1882; to Douglas and Audrey Arnold for the judging and awarding of prizes; to Steve Kleyn and Joe Joubert for having put in so many hours, and to all those who made donations towards the prizes. This includes Kodak, and XVXVCX for having silvered the winners trophy. The Centre's thanks are also recorded to Caspir of Plantflow Engineering for permission to use their quarry for our star parties. Site visits were made particularly pleasant thanks to the efforts of Jeff Groom who permitted members to use his personal accommodation in Hermanus, and of Ryno and Vicki Noack, and Daan and Mikki Nagtegaal who made our members so welcome in their homes by their exceptional hospitality. Thanks also to Ryno, and to Daan and the CSIR's Magnetic Observatory for sharing their facilities with our members.

My personal thanks as chairman go to all the committee members for their support of our activities during the year. My thanks would not be complete without including my wife, Delene, for all her encouragement and support. And finally, should I have omitted anyone, please know that it is unintentional, and that everyone's contributions have been important.

Before ending, I would like to take this opportunity to propose to the new committee that the roles of Field Trip Coordinator and Public Outreach Coordinator be recognised as portfolio's, with a committee member assigned to those tasks for the year.

Gordon Bosch  
Chairman  
13 August 1997

# **ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

## **CAPE CENTRE**

### **1997 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the S.A.A.O. in Observatory Cape, on 1997  
August 13.

#### **1. Welcome**

Gordon Bosch welcomed 34 members and 5 visitors and declared the proceedings open at 20h05.

#### **2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from R Noack, MA Gray and A & J Joubert

#### **3. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the previous AGM were published in the Cape Observer, and taken as read. The above was proposed by D Duprez and seconded by S Kleyn.

#### **4. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

#### **5. Chairman's Report for 1996 - 1997**

See attached sheet.

#### **6. Treasurer's Report**

The financial report was read by Chris Forder. The Centre is financially stable and will be able to maintain subscriptions at the same cost (R12.00 per annum) for another year. A member who wishes to remain anonymous donated R1000 towards the running of the Centre during 1997. The Members recorded their sincere appreciation for this generous gesture.

The acceptance of the report was proposed by S Kleyn and seconded by B Skinner.

**7. Report of the Cape Centre Endowment Trust**

This report was read out by the Trust Secretary, Cliff Turk.

The acceptance of the report was proposed by B Skinner and seconded by CD Allen.

**8. Election of new Committee Office bearers**

Chairman	: Dr Abe Mahomed
Vice Chairman	: Mr M Andrew Gray
Secretary	: Mr Steve Kleyn
Treasurer	: Mr Chris Forder
Members	: Mr Gordon Bosch : Ms Pat Booth : Mr Richard Sessions : Mr Bernard Wagener : Ms Gwynneth Quick Honorary Auditor : Mr Cliff Turk Centre Representative on ASSA Council : Ms Pat Booth

The above were proposed by B Skinner and seconded by R Hurly.

**9. Chairman's Address:**

The outgoing Chairman, Gordon Bosch gave an illustrated talk on the geological composition of the rocks on the Earth and their counterparts on the planet Mars.

**10. General**

Rupert Hurly, on behalf of all the members, proposed a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chairman Gordon Bosch and his Committee for their sterling work during his term of office. This was adopted unanimously.

**10. Closing**

The meeting was adjourned at 22h06 for refreshments.

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    - Editor of "Cape Observer" newsletter
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9. Outgoing chairman's address *Gordon Bosch*

Chair. Abe Malan.  
Vice. Andrew Gray.  
Secy. Self  
Treas. Chris.  
Comm. Pat Booth. - Council Rep.  
Gordon Bosch  
Richard Sennott  
Bernard Wagner  
Johan Kotzé.  
Lyognet de Quince