

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

Minutes of Council Meeting held at the Royal Observatory, Cape on Monday February 16 at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Mr. Churms (in the Chair), Messrs Atkins, Bentley, Corben, Grimwood, Harding, Molyneux, Orpen, Russo and Simenhoff, *Wimberg*.

Apologies: for absence were noted from Prof. Jarrett, Mr. Allen, Dr. Cousins and Mr. Hurly.

Minutes: of the previous meeting held 24th November 1969 read and confirmed.

Matters arising:

(a) No further progress had been made in the matter of the re-issue of the extracts of the earlier out-of-print Volumes of MNASSA. The University of Cape Town which prints MNASSA, was not in a position to undertake the task. It was desirable to obtain the services of a typist or typing agency at a price the Society could pay. There was some urgency in the matter as the Business Manager reported the receipt of many applications for back issues. Mr. Churms and Mr. Molyneux both stated that they would explore two possible sources.

(b) Mr. Atkins reported the receipt of welcome reports of meetings of the Transvaal Centre, and also of their recommendations for the amendment of Art. XII of the Constitution. These recommendations will be considered by the sub-committee consisting of Mr. Churms and Mr. Russo together with those received from other centres, and a composite report presented at the next Council Meeting. It was also decided that a copy of the Transvaal proposals should be circulated with the draft Minutes of this meeting.

(c) Mr. Atkins read a letter received from Dr. Thackeray (addressed to Mr. Hurly, as Alternate). Dr. Thackeray remarked upon the decision of Council regarding the McIntyre award, and expressed the opinion that a joint award should have been made. Further he asked whether Council had considered widening the field of the award. Regarding this latter point Council had indeed considered this aspect. The decision to limit the award to contributions in the field of History of Astronomy was due to the deep interest the late Mr. McIntyre had in the subject, and whose bequest provided the necessary funds. However, should Dr. Thackeray be prepared to make a formal proposal to amend this clause of the Regulations governing the Award, Council would re-consider the matter. It was felt however that if the scope were widened there should be limits, which should be very clearly defined. In the present case Council would be glad to re-open the question for an award for "Herschel at the Cape", should Dr. Thackeray make a formal proposal on the lines he had suggested.

(d) On the question of interpretation of the Rules governing the voting, it was agreed that the 2/3 majority referred to would be the requisite majority of members of Council plus Alternates voting for principals, or in the absence of directives, in their own right, present at the meeting plus those absent members who had voted by letter.

(e) A misapprehension had arisen regarding the position of the Norrman Clock unit received by the Pretoria Centre from the Smithsonian Institute.

The Secretary had had the pleasure of discussing the matter with Mr. Sterling when he visited Cape Town recently. While that Centre had negotiated to obtain this clock for use with its own observing programme, the gift had been made to the Society and not the Centre. The Society therefore possesses equipment some 1000 miles away from its headquarters, equipment for which it had not negotiated, and which would require maintenance and safe keeping. After some discussion

it was decided that it would be in the best interests of all concerned if ownership were invested in the Pretoria Centre. The Constitution covered this point, and the Secretary was directed to write to the Smithsonian Institute, after consulting Mr. Sterling, with a view to obtaining its agreement.

New Members: The following were elected subject to the usual proviso of publication of the names in the Notes and no objection being received.

Mr. R. K. Briggs, 6 Acacia Avenue, Libanon GM. Co. Ltd., Westonaria, Tvl.
 Mr. B. N. Griffiths, 1 Eugenia Road, Wychwood, Germiston, Tvl.
 Mr. R. R. Kelly, 15 Iffley Road, Greendale, Salisbury, Rhodesia.

The Secretary asked Council for formal approval for the re-instatement of Mr. Ian Newlands to membership. Mr. Newlands ceased to be a member in 1965, but had now applied for re-entry and had paid his current subscription plus the entrance fee. This was agreed to.

Finance: The following statement was presented by Mr. Orpen and adopted.

Financial Statement as on 16th February, 1970

Expenditure	R. c.	Receipts	R. c.
Purchase of "Sky and Telescope" for period July to December, 1969	536 99	Credit Balance at 1/7/69	50 73
Cost of production of MNASSA, May to December 1969, including reprints (R59.15) and of Handbook	637 10	<u>Subscriptions</u>	
Cost of reproduction of missing issues, Vol 16 of MNASSA	13 50	Arrears 39. 00	
Postage on publications, including reprints (R3.84) June to December 1969	75 28	Current 1586. 50	
Stationery and Equipment	6 10	Advance 26. 00	1651 50
Postage, other than above	12 53	Entrance Fees	55 00
Essay Competition Prizes	29 00	Sale of MNASSA (including reprints - R55.00)	196 50
Transferred to Savings Bank A/c, September 1969	500 00	Sale of Handbooks	7 75
Bank Charges	26 49	Donations	6 00
Credit Balance 16/2/70	146 40	Advertisement in MNASSA	5 00
		Interest on Building Society Shares	7 00
		Commission on Cheques, etc.	4 11
	R 1983 39		R 1983 39

In addition to the above there is an amount of R1624. 53 held in the Savings Bank Account, as detailed in the last statement. The balance in the McIntyre Award Account remains at R312. 71.

Garrett Orpen,
 Hon. Treasurer.

Sky and Telescope: Mr. Bentley reported that a letter received from the Publishers stated that the Council had the right to re-sell copies of Sky and Telescope at a price to be fixed at its own discretion. Many old copies were in storage and one way of disposing of these would be to offer them for sale on Public Viewing nights at the Royal Observatory at a price of say 20c each. This was agreed to.

Miscellaneous: Two of the members present remarked on the extremely poor condition in which recent publications were received. Stock of the envelopes being used were nearing exhaustion, and the Secretary was directed to ascertain the cost of a further supply of a better quality paper. Also the question of the use of wrappers instead of envelopes.

Reference was made to the approaching 150th anniversary of the Royal Observatory at the Cape. Mr. Harding stated that a commemorative booklet was in course of preparation and also that ways and means of celebrating the occasion next October were being considered. All plans so far were tentative and would require the sanction of the Science Research Council. Council Members expressed the view that with such a long association between the Society and the Royal Observatory, it should give the latter all the support it could. It was suggested and agreed that if need be the Council would order 400 of the booklets envisaged at a cost of 30 cents each for issue to its members and for possible re-sale to interested parties.

Mr. Grimwood on behalf of the Cape Centre applied for the loan of two of the Society's telescopes for observing the grazing occultation of Antares at the end of the month at Touws River. He was asked to put in a formal application.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.59 p.m.

T. W. Russo,

Hon. Secretary.

W. A. Bentley

Journal
Edinburgh
Bonus
Bentley

Annexure to Minutes

The following suggestions are based on the premise that a system of voting relying on a postal ballot is not satisfactory in practice, as a considerable amount of work is involved and the percentage of votes received is invariably small. As it is accepted procedure that the office bearers of any organisation be elected at the A.G.M., it would seem desirable that the Constitution be amended to this end. If the election of the Council is to be finalised at the A.G.M., it would be advantageous to hold the meetings at the Centres before this date.

Delete Article XII in toto and substitute the following:

Article XII: Annual General Meeting

VENUE The Annual General Meeting of the Society shall be held at the Royal Observatory, Cape, unless otherwise decided by Council. Should the venue be changed for any reason, all members shall be advised at least one calendar month before the date of the meeting.

DATE Unless otherwise decided by the Council, after consultation with the individual centres, the A.G.M. shall be held on the fourth Wednesday of July of each year. The A.G.M.s of the individual Centres shall be held on the second Wednesday of July in order that the results of voting at these meetings may be forwarded to the Secretary of the Society before the A.G.M.

VOTING All members of the Society, whether members of the Centre or not, shall have the right to vote at these meetings. Members who have already voted at a Centre meeting may not vote again at the A.G.M. of the Society. (Associate members - see article III).

PROXIES Any member entitled to vote at the A.G.M. may appoint in writing a proxy to speak and vote in his stead. (Delete "Such proxy must be a member or wife or husband of a member".)

PURPOSE The purpose of the A.G.M. shall be to receive the report of the Council, the Treasurer's audited financial statement to the previous 30th day of June and the reports of the observing sections. Officers and members shall be elected at this time and such other business transacted as may be necessary.

Article XIII: Election of Council and Auditor

NOMINATIONS Nominations must be signed by at least two members of the Society and forwarded to the Secretary to reach him not later than the 15th day of June. All nominations shall be forwarded by registered airmail to the Secretaries of the various Centres in time for voting on the second Wednesday of July. Should a vote not be necessary, Centres shall be advised to this effect.

PROCEDURE The election of officers and members of Council shall be by secret ballot during the July meetings. A single ballot slip, from each Centre showing the total number of votes cast for each nominee and signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Centre concerned, shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the Society to reach him before the A.G.M. of the Society. These votes shall be added to those taken at the A.G.M. and the results published in the Monthly Notes of the Society. (No provision is made for the appointment of an Auditor. It is suggested that this be done during the A.G.M., without consulting the Centres). Should the overall voting result in a tie for any single office, a second vote shall be taken during the A.G.M. to decide the issue, the Chairman having a second casting vote if necessary. (Retain last two clauses of section A).

ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF CENTRES (Delete "This representative, who will be a full member of Council, ((this has already been stated in Article IV)) shall be selected by the Committee of the Centre after the publication of the results of the ballot for the officers and other members of Council. The name of the representative so selected must be communicated to the Secretary of the Society by the 20th day of August."). Substitute:

This representative shall be elected at the July meeting of the Centre and his name forwarded with the ballot slip forwarded by the Centre.

Article XVIII: Amendment of Constitution

(Delete "The Constitution of the Society shall be amended only by ballot of all members entitled to vote.") Substitute:

The Constitution of the Society shall be amended only at the A. G. M. by a procedure as laid down for the election of members of Council.

After "Proposed amendments must be forwarded to the Secretary of the Society" add "before the 15th day of June of each year." Such proposals, together with such comment as the Council may deem necessary, shall then be posted to the Secretaries of the various Centres"

(Delete "Any proposed amendment shall be posted to every member who has the right to vote" and "Voting shall be by postal ballot.")

It is desirable that proposed amendments be accompanied by an explanation as to why they are considered necessary.