

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held at the Royal Observatory, Cape on Wednesday 1970 July 22 at 8.00 p.m.

Present: Mr. J. Churms (in the Chair) and about 22 members. Prof. S. Skewes, a former Secretary of the Society in 1930 received a warm welcome.

Apologies noted: Drs. Cousins and Fairall, and Messrs Allen, Bentley, Grimwood, Harding and Miss Parker.

Minutes: of the previous Annual General Meeting held 1969 July 23 were read and adopted on the motion of Mr. Lagerwey and seconded by Mr. Molyneux.

Matters arising: Nil.

Finance: Mr. Orpen presented the following financial statement.

Financial Statement for Year ended 30th June, 1970

Expenditure	R. c.	Receipts	R. c.
Subscription to "Sky and Telescope" for the year	1071 58	Credit Balance, 1/7/1969	50 73
Cost of production of MNASSA, May 1969 to March 1970 (including reprints - R126.65) and of Handbook	854 80	<u>Subscriptions</u>	
Cost to date of reproduction of missing issues of MNASSA for which there is a demand	18 50	Arrears 39.00	
Postage on publications (including reprints - R8.37)	130 44	Current 1679.00	
Stationery and Equipment	81 32	Advance 85.00	1803 00
Postage, other than on publications	22 39	Entrance Fees	90 00
Essay Competition Prizes	29 00	Sale of MNASSA (including reprints - R105)	423 20
Fire Insurance Premium	4 04	Sale of back and extra numbers of "Sky and Telescope"	2 40
Transferred to Savings Bank A/c. September 1969	500 00	Sale of Handbooks	32 80
Bank Charges	50 99	Advertisements in MNASSA	8 00
Credit Balance, 30/6/1970	340 64	Donations	18 40
		Interest on Building Society Shares	14 00
		Interest on Savings Bank A/c for period November 1966 to March 1970	155 87
		Withdrawn from Savings Bank A/c March 1970	500 00
		Commission on Cheques	5 30
	R 3103 70		R 3103 70

An amount of R1000.00 was transferred to a Savings Bank A/c in November 1966. It has been necessary from time to time to withdraw a portion of this amount temporarily to meet commitments; but at date the amount held in the account is still R1000.00. The interest accrued since the account was originally opened (with the exception of R6.06, which was regarded as interest on the McIntyre Award receipts during the period amounts received from the Estate of the Late D. G. McIntyre were held in the account) has now been transferred to the current account as shown above, and the interest accrued will be transferred annually in future.

Unfortunately the accounts from the University of Cape Town for the production of MNASSA are still being received late, with the result that costs for only eleven months are again shown this year. The account for April 1970 was received after the close of the Financial Year and amounts to R55.00.

The balance in the McIntyre Award Account is now R349.12, held in a Savings Account with the United Building Society, having been increased during the year by R72.84 Interest on Capital, R9.40 refund of Estate Duty overpaid and R9.12 Savings Bank Interest.

The Society also stands possessed of four shares in the South African Permanent Building Society to a total value of R200.00, per Certificate C.15778 dated 18/5/1960, and equipment and apparatus insured against fire under Policy 134760, dated 27/2/1962, in the amount of R1000, with the Southern Insurance Society.

Hon. Auditors: M. Raphaely
H. B. Molyneux

Garrett Orpen
Hon. Treasurer.

Mr. Hurly thanked the Hon. Treasurer for his valuable services and all the time devoted to the office of Treasurership.

Forbes Essay Competition: Mr. Lagerwey read the following report.

Senior Section: The standard achieved by the various entrants varies somewhat. We were, however, particularly impressed by the standard achieved by the entrant whom we have judged to be deserving of the first prize. His essay is rather more advanced than the next two essays, neither of which, in our opinion, is worthy of the second prize. They are similar in standard and should be awarded third prizes.

Unfortunately four good essays, all of which were submitted from the same school, dealt with general stellar astronomy and not with stellar spectra. This debarred them from consideration.

1st Prize : P. McCarthy, St. Alban's College, Pretoria
3rd Prizes : Felicia Stock and Brenda Ford, Wynberg Girls' High School,
Wynberg, Cape

Junior Section: We were much impressed with the standard achieved in the junior section and experienced some difficulty in deciding upon the prize winners. In a few instances entrants spoiled their chances by copying fairly extensively from books on astronomy.

The entrant whose essay is judged to be the most worthy for the first prize is superior to the next two essays. Because of difference in ages and manner of presentation we experienced difficulty in deciding between the next two entrants and recommend that two second prizes be awarded instead of one second and one third prize.

1st Prize : Jennifer Douthwaite, Diocesan School for Girls', Grahamstown
2nd Prizes : Desiree Dreyer, Hoerskool La Rochelle, Paarl, Cape
Suzanne Duchon, Rosebank Primary School, Johannesburg.

Variable Star Section Report: Director Mr. R. P. de Kock. This was also read by Mr. Lagerwey. Observations during the year totalled 3640.

Comet and Meteor Section Report: Director Mr. J. C. Bennett. This was presented by Mr. Lagerwey. The latter part of the year proved to be extremely interesting from the aspect of the several comets which appeared, particular the bright one 1969i discovered by the Director.

Correspondence: A letter received from Mr. Hurly was read. Mr. Hurly has donated the greater portion of payment received from the "Cape Argus" to the Society for the first of his monthly articles on Astronomy.

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Annual Report of Council: was read by Mr. Churms, and a copy is attached to these minutes. Mr. Churms thanked Council Members and Alternates for services rendered during the past year.

New Council 1970/1971: As only sufficient nominations were received, no postal ballot was necessary and the following were declared elected:

President	Mr. W. C. Bentley
Vice-Presidents	Mr. J. Churms Mr. K. J. Sterling Prof. A. H. Jarrett
Members of Council	: Mr. J. C. Bennett Mr. G. A. Harding Mr. J. Hers Dr. A. D. Thackeray
Hon. Secretary	: Mr. T. W. Russo
Hon. Treasurer	: Mr. G. Orpen

In view of Mr. Bentley's absence, Mr. Lagerwey then took the Chair, and called upon Mr. Churms to deliver his Presidential Address. The subject was the contribution of the Royal Observatory, Cape to the determination of the distances of the stars since the first meaningful parallax determined by Henderson in 1831-1833. Mr. Churms has been and still is intimately connected with this aspect of astronomical investigation and his coverage of past history showed an intimate grasp of the subject and evidence of painstaking research into Observatory records.

Mr. Lagerwey expressed the appreciation of all members present for the talk, and also thanked Mr. Churms for his services to the Society as President and as the senior Editor of MNASSA consequent upon Dr. Wild's departure to the U.S.A. on temporary leave of absence from the U.C.T.

The meeting closed at 9.25 p.m.

T. W. Russo,
Hon. Secretary.

*not attached will appear in MNASSA

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

Report of Council for the Session 1969/1970

Five Council Meetings were held during the year. 31 new members, 10 Associates and 9 Student members were elected.

Membership now totals 318, of which 14 have been suspended through non-payment of subscriptions, leaving an effective membership of 304, an increase of 6 over last year's total. To date however 5 applications for membership from July 1, 1970 have been received. Individual and Institutional subscribers to MNASSA total 159.

The subjects chosen for the Forbes Essay Competition were:

Mars in the Junior Section

Stellar Spectra in the Senior Section

A total number of 35 essays were received, being made up of 13 in the Senior Section and 22 in the Junior Section. This was a gratifying increase over the number received last year.

Council decided to award the Gill Medal to Mr. J. C. Bennett of Pretoria for:

"his cometary searches prosecuted with great perseverance, and in particular for his discovery of Comet 1969i and his remarkable detection of a supernova in the nucleus of M 83 in July 1968; also for his activities as Satellite observer and general encouragement of amateur astronomy."

Council had re-considered Article XII of the Constitution which lays down the procedure for the Society's Annual General Meeting. Briefly this entailed the A.G.M. being held simultaneously at all Centres, each meeting being deemed to be part of a Single Annual General Meeting of the Society. This procedure had not always been followed completely leading to some confusion. It was generally felt that there was decided room for improvement. It was eventually proposed that Article XII should be amended to read as follows:

"The Annual General Meeting shall be held at a Centre chosen by the Council. The date of the meeting shall be the fourth Wednesday in July or such other day as the Council, after consultation with the Committee of the Centre at which the Annual General Meeting is to be held, shall direct.

All members, honorary members and corresponding members (if resident in South Africa) shall be advised of the date and venue of the meeting at least one calendar month before the date of the meeting. They shall have the right to vote whether members of a Centre or not. Associate members are not eligible to vote.

Any member entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting may appoint in writing a proxy to speak and vote in his stead. Such proxy must be a member or the wife or husband of a member.

The purpose of the Annual General Meeting 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, and to transact any other business.

This proposal was put to ballot to all members, with the result that 90 voted for, 1 against and spoilt papers numbered 5. This amendment will come into effect with the 1971 Annual General Meeting.

Mr. A. Morrisby of Salisbury, Rhodesia has signified his willingness to act as Director of an Occultation Section.

Mr. W. G. Grimwood, while on leave in the U.K., agreed to convey in person the Society's congratulations to the Royal Astronomical Society on the occasion of its 150th anniversary celebrations.

Council are happy to report the revival of an active Durban Centre, and congratulate the local Committee on its achievements during the year and its healthy membership.

Dr. P. A. T. Wild, senior Editor of MNASSA, left South Africa for a 12 months stay in the States. His departure left a gap hard to fill; however Council is indebted to Mr. J. Churms, Mr. H. C. Lagerwey, Mr. W. P. Hirst and Dr. A. P. Fairall for so ably carrying on the compilation and despatch of MNASSA.

Mention must again be made of the following to whom the Society are greatly indebted.

Mr. T. W. Russo as Hon. Secretary,

Mr. G. Orpen for his efficient Treasurership,

Mr. W. C. Bentley as Business Manager of MNASSA,

Mr. G. A. Harding, Officer-in-Charge of the Royal Observatory for affording so many facilities to the Society,

Miss Y. Z. R. Thomas for willing assistance given so often and so unobtrusively.

Council regrets to announce the passing of Dr. H. Knox Shaw on April 11, 1970. He served the Society as President for the session 1941-42, and was elected Honorary Member in 1958. He was also the first recipient of the Gill Medal.

The Society is maintaining its membership at about 300. While each year new members join, we also have an almost equivalent loss through resignations and suspensions. It would be desirable if instead of a static position, Council could report a healthy continuous and appreciable growth in membership, but this is largely through Local Centres and Observing Sections that the individual can be reached. Therefore it is urged that through these channels the interest of existing members should be stimulated and new members recruited in ever greater numbers.

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Chairman

W. C. Bentley
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Hon. Secretary.

1970 July 22.