

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1977

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the  
Teachers' Centre, 49 Lambert Road, Durban on  
Friday 1977 July 29th at 20.00 hrs

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- PRESENT** Mr S.S. Booysen (President) in the Chair, three Council Members three Centre Representatives, seventeen other Members, six Centre Members and twenty-one Guests, totalling 51 persons.
- APOLOGIES** for absence noted from Cape Town Council Members, Mr Arthur Morrisby (Salisbury) Mr and Mrs R. Dale (Natal Midlands Centre) and Guests of Honour : Prof Stock (Un. Natal), Prof. Clarence (Un. Natal), The Mayor, Mr Jenkins (Un. Natal), Mr Webster (Dept. Educ.) Mrs L. van Schalkwyk (U.S. Inf. Service).
- OPENING AND WELCOME** The President declared the Meeting open at 2005 hrs and made special welcome to Pietermaritzburg Members, Cape Town Council Members, Mr Vincent (Rhodesia), Mr Theo Russo, Mr Jan Hers from Pretoria, Mr T. Hilton (Salisbury), Guests of Honour Mr Alan Pittendrigh (Director, Technical College) and Mrs Pittendrigh, Mrs Daphne Strutt (Curator, Local History Museum) and Mr Strutt.
- MINUTE SECRETARY** Mr M.A. Gray had agreed to act as Minute Secretary for the Meeting in order to give Mr T. Russo a chance to relax and enjoy the proceedings.
- MINUTES** of the Annual General Meeting held in Cape Town on 1976 July 28th having been published in 1976 October issue of M.N.A.S.S.A. were taken as read. Proposed by Mr K. Harrison, seconded by Mr G. Hobson. Agreed. The Minutes were then signed by the President.
- MATTERS ARISING** There were no matters arising from the Minutes.
- OBSERVING SECTION REPORTS** were received as follows, and presented to the Meeting :
- "Variable Stars" from Mr J. Hers who presented them and paid special tribute to Mr D. Overbeek for his excellent contribution to this section.
  - "Grazing Occultations" Also presented by Mr J. Hers who encouraged members to make greater efforts to observe these.
  - "Comets & Meteors" by Jack Bennett, read by J. Vincent who brought greetings from the Salisbury Centre to the Council and Natal Centre
  - "Occultations" by Mr A. Morrisby, read by J. Vincent
  - "Nova Search" by Jack Bennett, read by J. Vincent
- FINANCE** Mr A. Gray was called upon to present the Financial Statement which had been circulated to all present. He read portions of the second page of the Statement (~~see page~~) which covered the session ended 1977 June 30th. Proposed by Dr H. Campbell and Seconded by Mr K. Danbrook that the Statement be adopted. Agreed.

*a copy appears as an appendix to these minutes*

AUDITORS

Mr Theo Russo proposed and Dr H. Campbell seconded that Mr Raphaely and Mr Molyneux be re-appointed. Agreed.

RESULT OF  
FORBES ESSAY  
COMPETITION

The President called upon Mr Russo to announce the winners of the Competition. Mr Russo mentioned that for three years no competition had been run owing to lack of support. However on this occasion some ten entries had been received and these were all of a very high standard. School Principals would be informed of the names of the winners who would receive the awards. The 3rd prize of R5 awarded to Irene Hitchin (15) of La Rochelle Girls High School, Cape. A joint second prize of R10 each was awarded to L. Maree Botha (16) and Leone Hofmeyer (16), both of La Rochelle School. The 1st Prize went to Natal, valued at R20 it was awarded to Paul Kent (15) of ~~AMANZIMTOTI HIGH~~ ~~School~~ ~~(applause~~ ~~drowned name of school~~). The President thanked Mr Russo and stated that he was proud that a Natal boy had won the competition. He then handed the proceedings over to the Natal Centre for the next item on the Agenda.

STOP

PRESENTATIONS BY  
NATAL CENTRE

Dr Hamish Campbell, Chairman of the Natal Centre then called upon Paul Kent to come forward and receive a special presentation of an inscribed book as a token of our esteem.

Dr Campbell then called upon Mr Gray to make a special presentation. Mr Gray stated that he had been presented by Nigel Kane with two rare books written by Edmund Nevill (Neison) the Astronomer to the Government of the Colony of Natal. These were "Astronomy" published in 1886 and "The Moon" (his magnum opus) published in 1876. These were far too valuable to be left in a private library and should therefore be placed in a far safer custody. The Natal Centre, at its Annual General Meeting had therefore approved the handing over of these valuable additions to the existing collection of "Nevillania" to the citizens of Durban. He then called Mrs Daphne Strutt forward to receive the books from the Natal Centre and the A.S.S.A. Council.

Mrs Strutt received the books and thanked the Members of A.S.S.A. and the Natal Centre for their enthusiastic interest and support.

REPORT OF  
COUNCIL

for the year ended 1977 June 30th. This was read by the President (see page) and appears as an appendix to these minutes.

The President then addressed Members of A.S.S.A. stating that the finances of the Society are not as healthy as they should be. He appealed for the help and support of every member. The Society has a library but no real home for it. The Society is only a tenant of the Astronomical Observatory and if there is a call for financial assistance, that call must be supported by all the Members. The President then thanked the Natal Centre, its Chairman and Members for the efficient way in which the Annual General Meeting had been arranged. This was the first time that A.S.S.A. had held its A.G.M. In Durban, and this was, to his mind a most auspicious occasion.

NEW COUNCIL

for the session 1977/78. This was read by the retiring President.

President	Professor B. Warner
Vice Presidents	Mr S.S. Booysen
	Mr R.F. Hurly
	Dr M. Feast
Members of Council	Mr A. Gray (Natal)
	Mr J. Vincent (Salisbury)
	Mr G. Muller (Bloemfontein)
	Dr E. Baart (Grahamstown)
Hon. Secretary	Mr T. Russo
Hon. Treasurer	Mr G. Orpen

Mr Booysen then vacated the Chair which was taken by Mr J. Vincent in view of the President being absent in the United States.

Mr Vincent thanked the outgoing Council for the hard work that they had put in during the past year, stating that <sup>to</sup> those who felt that a small telescope was not of much use, he <sup>^</sup> appealed to owners of these instruments to use them. Of all the lunar occultations reduced at Herstmonceaux, seven per cent of these had come from Southern Africa. This figure could have <sup>ve</sup> reached 9% by now.

He thanked Dr Campbell and the Natal Centre for their hospitality and called upon Mr Booysen as the past President for the "Amateur Year" to present his Address.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

(AS SUBMITTED)

*appears in MNASSA.*

VOTE OF THANKS

Dr Campbell thanked Mr Booysen for his Address, to which he and all the Members present had listened with fascination.

CLOSURE

Dr Campbell, on behalf of the Retiring President, invited all present to join him at a cheese and wine social in the lounge of the Teachers' Centre and declared the meeting closed at 2146 hours.

(A most enjoyable social gathering then took place, during which all present were able to meet each other and enjoy a thoroughly sociable occasion, which finally broke up at about 2300 hours.)

SECRETARIAL NOTES: Please complete the odd blank spaces such as "Page numbers" and the name of Paul Kent's school which I couldn't hear. If you care to note also in MNASSA the meeting and inspection at the Local History Museum and the Inauguration of the Foucault Pendulum, please do so. If you want a "write-up" for either or both, let me know.

*Andrew*

*Brian Warner.*

Five Council meetings were held during the year with an average attendance of 13 members/alternates out of a possible 18.

#### MEMBERSHIP

The total membership as at June 30 was 533 of whom 50 are still suspended for non-payment of their 1976/77 subscriptions. Comparative figures for 1976 June 30 are 529 with 20 suspensions. On October 31, the expiry of the 3 month period of grace before suspension, the number in default was 79 as opposed to 65 for the previous year. As stated before now the problem of persons allowing their membership to lapse without the courtesy of notifying the Treasurer of their intention to resign is still with us. No doubt there has been some repercussion from the unavoidable increase in subscription mentioned in the last annual report. The loss of members through suspension and resignations is being offset to an extent by an inflow of 57 new members. It is not anticipated that any more of those suspended will at this stage pay their dues and their names can be regarded as deleted from the membership roll.

#### PUBLICATIONS

Receipt of Sky and Telescope from U S A is still irregular. This was referred to in the last annual report. Efforts are still being made to improve matters.

Publication of "Monthly Notes" has continued on a bimonthly basis with the total number of pages per annum, including "Centrepiece" remaining approximately the same. (see MNASSA 35, 79). This practice has the drawback that some items are not published as quickly as formerly, but there is a considerable financial saving to the Society. As it is, publication costs are kept exceptionally low since the typing (which is directly reproduced photographically) is undertaken gratis in the Astronomy

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

REPORT OF COUNCIL FOR THE YEAR ENDED 1977 JUNE 30

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Department, University of Cape Town, through the kind cooperation of Professor Brian Warner.

A new feature of the year was a Christmas Star Competition in Centrepiece, December 1976, (for results see Centrepiece, June 1977). It is planned to organise another Competition for December 1977.

The active Natal Centre has supplied copies of its circular, 'Ndaba' to the Editors, who have been glad to reproduce some articles of special interest to amateur astronomers. Other Centres are urged to supply any reports of their local activities which may be of interest to readers of NMASSA.

#### FORBES ESSAY COMPETITION

The topic "The Exploration of the Solar System" was chosen for the resumption of the competition this year. In an endeavour to encourage entrants, prize monies were increased, and the hitherto practise of having an under and over 15 year division with two sets of prizes was abolished. However, the age of the entrant was taken into account when assessing the merits of his work. It is regretted that only two schools sent contributions, La Rochelle of Paarl CP 7 essays, and Amanzimtoti High School of Natal one essay.

#### GILL MEDAL

No award was made.

#### MCINTYRE FUND

No award was made.

#### FINANCE

Under the Budget presented in Parliament in April, the Society are affected by the 1 1/2% Customs Levy imposed on imports. This means an estimated annual increase in the cost of the Sky and Telescope to the Society of 400-500

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Council is in the process of establishing a Society Trust Fund. It is envisaged that all capital thus voluntarily accumulated should be invested, and the interest only be made available for any unexpected onslaught on the Society's finances. The following have agreed to act as Trustees. Further details will be published in due course in MNASSA :-

Mr J.C. Bennett - Pretoria  
Mr M.A. Gray - Durban  
Dr. P. Wild - Cape Town

#### GIFTS

The Society received a magnificent Lunar Globe as a free gift from the United States Government through the U.S. Information Service.

#### PERSONAL

Council regrets to record the death of Dr. H. Haffner, an Honorary Member of the Society and a former President in 1958-1959. Dr. Haffner served as Director of the Boyden Observatory in Bloemfontein for a number of years.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Once again Council wishes to place on record its appreciation of the work done by the Directors of Observing Sections and also by many members who have assisted in the various observing fields. Mention should be made of Mr. M. Overbeek who has left South Africa to spend three years in the USA. Mr. J. Hers has kindly agreed to care for the Variable Star Section during his absence.

The position as regards Directors is as follows:-

Comets & Meteors	Mr J.C. Bennett
Ordinary Occultations	Mr A. Morrisby
Grazing Occultations	Mr J. Hers
Variable Stars	Mr J. Hers
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It should be noted that three enthusiasts are carrying the burden of five sections.



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The wellbeing of the Society depends mainly on the keenness of the individual member, and where possible, this is channelled through the local centres, and enhanced by the enthusiasm of Centre Committees. Council records its appreciation of this and also thanks its various office bearers for the voluntary time spent in the services of the Society.

A special vote of thanks is due to the Director of the SAAO for affording facilities for meetings and for providing office accommodation for secretarial duties. Mention should be made of Prof Warner of the Department of Astronomy at the UCT for making a generous amount of staff time available for the production of MNASSA.

T.W. Russo  
HON. SECRETARY

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE 1977

EXPENDITURE.

RECEIPTS.

	R. c.		R. c.
Subscription to "Sky & Telescope for the year	3336-90	Credit Balance at 1/7/1976	360-43
Cost of production of MNASSA, May 1976 to April 1977	1454-64	<u>Subscriptions.</u>	
Expenditure on reproduction of Back Nos. of M.N.A.S.S.A.	5-88	Arrears	8-00
Expenditure on production of Summary Volume of Back Nos. of M.N.A.S.S.A.	50-00	Current	5255-50
Cost of reprints of Articles in M.N.A.S.S.A.	189-72	Advance	<u>280-00</u>
Cost of production of Handbook for 1977	538-51	Entrance Fees	142-50
Addressing and despatch of publications	168-66	Sale of M.N.A.S.S.A.	864-83
Postage on publications	521-33	Sale of reproduced Back Numbers of M.N.A.S.S.A.	97-00
Stationery and Equipment	35-23	Page charges for articles in M.N.A.S.S.A. and sale of reprints	322-50
Variable Star Charts	9-60	Sale of Handbooks	296-60
Postage, other than above	79-07	Sale of back and extra nos. of "Sky & Telescope"	103-80
Repayment of loan made on Fixed Deposit, April and May 1976	895-00	Donations	12-35
Interest on above loan	18-65	Advertisements in MNASSA	8-00
15% Customs Surcharge on "Sky & Telescope", March to May 1977	120-00	Interest on Building Society Shares (Forbes Bequest)	19-00
Advance to establish Endowment Trust	30-00	Interest on Fixed Deposit	100-00
Centrepiece Christmas Star Competition Prizes	12-00	Interest on "Plusplan" Savings Bank Account	108-13
Fire Insurance Premium	20-00	Withdrawn from "Plusplan" A/c., February to June 1977	1200-00
Transferred to "Plusplan" A/c, July, August & September 1976.	1500-00	Commission on cheques, air-mail postage paid and exchange gains	95-64
Bank charges and exchange losses	130-21		
Credit Balance at 30/6/1977	68-88		

R.9184-28

R.9184-28

An amount of R1000-00 is on Fixed Deposit with the United Building Society at an interest rate of 10%. An amount of R800-00 was held in a "Plusplan" Savings Account with the Standard Bank, Heerengracht Branch. This amount varies according to requirements: during the first half of the Financial Year it was ~~R2000-00~~ R2000-00. The interest rate is 8%

The Society also stands possessed of four shares in the S.A. Permanent Building Society to a total value of R200-00, per Certificate C. 15778, dated 18/5/1960, and of equipment and apparatus insured against fire under Policy A.01/01314, dated 27/2/1961, in the amount of R1000-00 with the Southern Insurance Association. The Society's Telescopes are also insured against all risks under Lloyd's Policy no. DCP no. 278 with Messrs. Hogg, Robinson and Rennie of Durban. The Centres which have telescopes on loan to them pay a pro-rata share of the premium.

The balance in the McIntyre Award Account is now R998-15 (of which R450-00 is on Fixed Deposit with the United Building Society at an interest rate of 10%). It is proposed to place a further R550-00 on Fixed Deposit as soon as the total exceeds R1000-00. There has been no award during the year.

HON. AUDITORS.

*Garrett O'Keefe*  
HON. TREASURER.

*M. Raphael*  
*[Signature]*

*[Signature]*

~~SUGGESTED ADDENDUM~~

SUGGESTED " ADDENDUM" TO GO WITH THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The following amounts were advanced to Dr. P.A.T. Wild, of the Dept. of Astronomy, University of Cape Town, for the purpose of the production of a Summary Volume of the older Back Numbers of M.N.A.S.S.A., which are not considered suitable for reproduction in full

Financial Year	1974/75	R250-00		
"	"	1975/76	R250-00	
Plus Savings Bank Interest	March 1976	3-49		
"	"	"	March 1977	5-10
Financial Year	1976/77	<u>50-00</u>		
		<u>R558-59</u>		

Dr. Wild has submitted details of how these amounts have been expended on typing and stationery: at the close of the current Financial Year he had a balance of R46-00 on hand.

(Perhaps it would be better to put the interest after the R50-00 and not as I have done above, which is the order in which the receipts appear in his book &)