

Minutes of A.G.M. of the Astronomical Society held at The P.M.B. Museum Longmarket St on 16 July 1987

There were 11 members present. Apologies were received from 4 members.

The chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.

The chairman then asked all present to stand for a few minutes silence in acknowledgment of Mr Tommy Coetzee, who passed away on 8 March 1987.

Minutes of the 1986 A.G.M. held on 16 July 1986 were read and accepted (proposed R Dale seconded Bianca).

Chairman's Report: Mr. Jermans gave an excellent chairman's report highlighting some of the events of the year which included a talk by Prof Jackson on Compact Stellar Objects, the Essay Competitions for High Schools, a slide show by Mr Dave Bodens on Antarctic, a memorable quiz evening hosted by Ron & Sheila Dale and a Viewing evening at the home of Mrs Brenda Lane. Mr Jermans also thanked the members of the committee for their support and enthusiasm during the year.

Treasurer Report B Hoogdalen handed out a statement of income and expenditure

Showing a balance of R450-15

Miss Hoogdalen pointed out that several members still had not paid their 1986/87 fees

It was suggested that a harder line be taken by the incoming committee on this matter

It was proposed by R Dale and seconded by G Prosser that fees be increased for single members to R10.00 couples R15.00 and students R5.00

Election of New Committee

The following members were nominated

D Kirk

R Jarman

B Hoogdalen

J Lawrence

G Prosser

J Watson

S Dale

Other Business

① There is to be a viewing evening at Montrose on 25/7/87

② Project Palomar; - A special projects meeting will be held on 27/8/87

③ It was recorded that J Watson showed the film "450 Tons of ^{Precession} ~~of~~ to 70 pupils at Woodlands Sec School. for their first Astronomical meeting. They plan to have 3 more meetings this year

- ⑥ It was proposed that we make use of the museum venue for future meeting.
B Hordale offered to investigate this.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was closed at 9.15 and tea coffee and cake was served. This was followed by the film 450 tons of glass precisions

Rufani:-
Chairman

Secretary

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

NATAL MIDLANDS CENTRE

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 1987

1987 will no doubt go down in the astronomical annals as the Year of the Supernova. I trust I will be forgiven if I confess to a vague and altogether illogical sense of pride in the fact that my term of Chairmanship of the Natal Midlands Centre happened to coincide with this momentous event.

The year under review has been characterised by a small but nonetheless gratifying increase in our membership and by an interesting diversity of meeting programmes and activities. It is regrettable, however, that the concepts of special interest groups and joint viewing sessions continue to evoke little enthusiasm, and in this regard I must admit to my full share of guilt. It is to be hoped, though, that our decision in principle to work towards ^{the} establishment of a fully equipped Society observatory will inject into the centre a sense of purpose and commitment which will elevate us to a group of amateur astronomers who are seen to be active, inventive and imaginative. "Project Palomar" represents a challenge which is both ambitious and daunting, but if we have the will to succeed it can become a reality which will be of immense value and benefit both to ourselves and to our community at large. I hope I am not being too presumptuous when I urge the incoming committee to waste little time in taking the first concrete steps towards realisation of our dream.

Activities during the year included a combined excursion to Monteseel with ~~the~~ members from the Natal Centre to count meteors, and a viewing evening which proved to be by far the most successful that I have attended since joining the Society. The fact that only four of our number attended the meteor count was no doubt attributable to the less-than-ideal weather conditions laid on for the occasion. The night was cold and blustery, but some excellent viewing was done under Ray Field's expert guidance and six meteors were tallied during the critical hour.

Despite the bitter cold, we had an excellent turn-out for the viewing evening at Mrs Brenda Lane's home in June. For once the usually inevitable "Murphy's Law" failed to prevail, the stars shone with almost awesome brilliance and for two pleasurable hours no fewer than seven telescopes probed the wonders of the heavens. The presence of a group of pupils from the Laddsworth Primary School added a welcome measure of youthful exuberance to the occasion, and a very warm word of thanks is due to Brenda for the use of her delightful home and lawn space.

Among the more memorable programmes arranged during the year for our monthly meetings was a quiz evening organised by Ron and Sheila Dale, who also did joint duty as inquisitor, judge and jury - and, as far as my pride in my knowledge of matters astronomical is concerned, Lord High Executioner! It is my fervent hope that the day will not be long in coming when we are able to exact sweet revenge by way of a "Brains Trust" evening with Ron and Sheila in the hot seat.

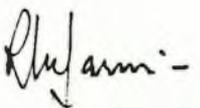
Mention must be made too of a showing by Mr Dave Boden of his excellent slides taken during a term of duty some years ago in the Antarctic. Not an astronomical topic in the usually understood sense of the phrase, but well worth the deviation when we consider that the scenes depicted are as inaccessible to most of us, are the frozen wastes of Charon.

Another highlight of the year was provided by Professor Paul Jackson of the Dept of Physics at the University of Natal, who presented an excellent talk on "Compact Stellar Objects". Especially pleasing was Prof Jackson's ability to translate the most complex concepts and theories into terms that could be readily understood even by the least scientific mind.

The essay competition for high school pupils organised in April 1986 in celebration of the return of Halley's Comet met with disappointing response. Only 15 entries were received, all of them from Indian Schools. The standard ranged from good to frankly poor, and for once the adjudicators had little difficulty in deciding the winners. Head and coma above all the others were the entries of Arveena Badul of Stanger Secondary School and Judy Michael of Northdale. Both girls received postal orders for R30.00 for their efforts.

Unfortunately my discourse on the year's successes has to be tempered by a note of sadness. Mr Tommy Coertze, our eldest and certainly one of our most enthusiastic members, passed away during the night of 8 March. Tommy served with distinction and dedication as the Centre's treasurer during 1985/86, was reappointed for a further term and held the office until he was compelled by failing health to relinquish it shortly before his death. Our thoughts and sympathy go out anew at this time to Beth and her daughters.

In closing, ladies and gentleman, I wish to express my sincere thanks to the members of the committee for their support and enthusiasm during the year. I must confess that I accepted the office of Chairmanship with a generous measure of trepidation, but backed by their encouragement and the quiet efficiency with which they went about their various tasks, feel that I can look back over the year with at least a modest sense of satisfaction.


R M JARMAIN

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

NATAL MIDLANDS CENTRE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE JULY 1987

INCOME

Brought forward from 1986	R476.09
Teas	26.04
Membership fees	253.00
Interest from Barclays bank	13.15
Sale of ties	75.00
Total	<u>R843.28</u>

EXPENDITURE

Stamps and envelopes	90.95
Post box rental	15.00
Tea, coffee, sugar, milk	18.99
Cups and mugs	67.20
Xmas dinner guests	21.28
Subs to ASSA	50.00
Receipt book	8.39
Transparencies	26.32
Flowers for Beth	25.00
Publicity subs	10.00
Prize vouchers	60.00

Total R393.13

In cash box 43.68
In savings account at bank 406.47

Total R843.28

J. Y. Lawrence

Treasurer 16. July 1987