

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

NATAL MIDLANDS CENTRE

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the home of Mr & Mrs J. Lawrence  
on 28 July 1988 at 7.30 pm

1. The meeting was attended by 18 members and 6 visitors.  
No apologies were received.
2. The Chairman, Mr R. Jarmain, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.
3. Minutes of the 1987 Annual General Meeting held on 16 July 1987 were read and accepted (Proposed Mr R. Dale Seconded Mrs B. Lawrence)

4. Chairman's Report

In presenting his report, Mr Jarmain made reference to

- a) the start of 'Project Palomar' in the form of the grinding of a 16 inch glass disc for a new telescope
- b) the increasing activity of members involved in local school Astronomy clubs
- c) the participation of several members in the biennial Izinkanyezi conference at Everglades
- d) joint activity with the Natal Centre in the form of meteor counts at Monteseel
- e) our failure as a Centre to complete our plans for National Astronomy Week due to the severe floods
- f) his gratitude to all those who had participated in the monthly meetings of the Centre and to the members of the outgoing Committee.

5. Treasurer's Report

Mr Watson presented the statement of Income and Expenditure for the previous year which reflected a closing balance of R 430,68, this being a shortfall of some R 20,00 mainly due to expenses totalling R 112,47 incurred at the previous year's A.G.M.

6. Election of new Committee

The following members were nominated and elected

Mesdames S. Dale and V. Collingwood

Messrs R. Jarmain, R. Dale, J. Watson, G. Prosser and C. Lake

7. Other Business

- a) Woodlands Secondary School outing to Albert Falls on 8/8/88.
- b) Congratulations to Mrs V. Collingwood on her recent marriage
- c) 'Project Palomar' proceeding slowly but surely - funds will be needed to build the telescope - regular work parties to

be held on Wednesday evenings at Dr G.Prosser's home

d) Monthly Centre meetings to be held on the second Wednesday of the month in future.

e) Mr R.Jarmain has concluded negotiations to purchase a second-hand Celestron 8(with many extras)from a member of the Cape Centre

f) Mr C.Lake proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman

8. The meeting closed at 8.15 pm, after which everyone present enjoyed a 'pasta party' and social evening together.

  
CHAIRMAN

  
SECRETARY



# ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

## NATAL MIDLANDS CENTRE

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

1987/88

Ladies and gentlemen : Coming to the end of my second consecutive term as chairman of the Natal Midlands Centre, I look back on a year characterised, perhaps, by a paucity in the field of joint activity.

It was, nevertheless, rich in its promise of bigger and better things to come. " Project Palomar", although still in its infancy, is alive and well and living on the verandah of Dr Geoff Prosser's home in the form of a 16-inch glass disc, an ingeniously adapted washing machine motor and a vigorously swinging watering can. Our thanks and commendation are due in full measure to Geoff for his initiative in acquiring the glass and to Mr Ron Dale for devising and building the mechanised turntable. We owe them both a vote of thanks for their hard work and enthusiasm in grinding the mirror surface to its present state of near-readiness for commencement of the next stage towards fulfillment of our dream. Much work lies ahead, though, and in recognition of the fact that this is a joint project, it is essential that a programme of work parties be drawn up with a view to involving as many members as possible.

A gratifying feature of the year has been the interest shown in astronomy by pupils at several local schools. Here I must commend John Watson, Sheila Dale and Chris Lake for their efforts in nurturing this interest and guiding it away from the realm of airy-fairy mysticism towards an appreciation for the infinite richness which our hobby has to offer. One of the most memorable occasions during the year was, for me, an evening spent on the shores of the Midmar Dam with a bus-load of pupils from the Woodlands Secondary School. Their infectious enthusiasm and delight at making first personal acquaintance with the glory of Saturn was an experience which will linger for many a day to come.

Another excursion which will not soon be forgotten by those who participated was our trip to the Everglades in April to attend the biennial Izinkanyezi conference. Inevitably, on the day when I made the trip the setting of the sun coincided with the curtaining of the heavens by blanket of cloud; and the opportunity of viewing under the guidance of some of the true experts in the field was lost - at least until 1990. Nonetheless, the occasion was memorable for the excellence of the lectures, many of them illustrated by slides of outstanding quality; and in this respect it is gratifying to record that the Natal Midlands Centre was more than adequately represented via a talk by Geoff Prosser, who demonstrated the computer programme he devised and wrote to assist with the configuration of our 16-inch primary. Our warm congratulations are due to the Natal Centre for organising yet another highly successful conference.

Twice during the year members of our group joined our friends from Durban to count meteors at Monteseel, and on both occasions success was only partial owing to less than ideal viewing conditions. However, inter-centre contact is always enjoyable, and, however infrequent, the occasional glimpse of a white-hot flash across the blackness of the heavens carries a reward all of its own.

Despite our very best intentions, our participation in the National Astronomy Week never really left the launch pad. Rather than mount the ambitious, service club-supported programme of public viewing sessions earlier envisaged, it was agreed that our regular meeting for September should be shifted from the third to the fourth Thursday in order more closely to coincide with the dates prescribed by Council, and to arrange a public viewing evening at

World's View. As it transpired, the decision was a wise one. The evening was duly held in conditions at best only marginally suitable for successful viewing; the last star (Arcturus, I think it was) disappeared behind a mantle of cloud at 21h20 and before another would be seen Natal would be all but drowned by the worst floods in the province's history.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to record my thanks to all members of the Centre for their support during the year, and especially to those who contributed to proceedings at our monthly meetings by arranging programmes or presenting talks. In this regard especial mention must be made of José Campos who travelled up from Durban in January to give us a talk on meteors and Meteorites. I must also express my sincere admiration for the enthusiasm of Ds Gerrit de Beer and Dr Vic Vaughan, who regularly travel all the way from Ladysmith to attend our meetings. I thank the members of the committee for the efficient and always timeous execution of their different tasks and duties, and wish the incoming committee every success for an enjoyable and rewarding year in office. And finally, on behalf of all present at this meeting, I thank our hosts Bianca and John Lawrence for providing us with a thoroughly delightful venue.

R M JARMAIN

ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

NATAL MIDLANDS CENTRE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AS AT 30 JUNE 1988

INCOME

Brought forward from 1987	Bank	406.47	
	Cash	43.68	<u>450.15</u>
Membership subscriptions		387.00	
Sale of ASSA Handbooks		36.00	
Interest on Savings Account (First National)		5.65	
Refreshments		1.90	<u>430.55</u>
	TOTAL		<u><u>880.70</u></u>

EXPENDITURE

A. Annual payments - ASSA subscription		50.00	
- Publicity Assoc		15.00	
- Post Box rental		15.00	<u>80.00</u>
B. A.G.M & Xmas - Advertising		35.84	
- Projector hire		33.60	
- Refreshments		43.03	<u>112.47</u>
C. Purchase of ASSA Handbooks			<u>80.00</u>
D. Monthly meetings - Postage and Stationery		160.55	
- Refreshments		17.00	<u>177.55</u>
	TOTAL		<u><u>450.02</u></u>

Carried forward to 1989	Bank	390.12	
	Cash	40.56	<u>430.68</u>
	TOTAL		<u><u>880.70</u></u>

Jul Watson

SECR/TREASURER

28/7/88