

Touching History

Jack Bennett - a link to the past

by Neville Young

INTRODUCTION

- Trace a line through South African astronomy History
- Illustrate the link Jack Bennett forms in the chain
- Explain the role everyone of us plays in creating history

South Africa has played a strong role in the story of astronomy

- We are situated in the southern hemisphere
- Southern extremity needed to be sailed around
- Scientists were finding out more about the world
- European weather is not noted for its clear skies
- The push to southern Africa brought a long line of brilliant, dedicated, hardworking people here.

Father Guy Tachard

- 1685
- French Jesuit priest
- Aimed to determine the longitude of the Cape



Peter Kolbe

- 1705 - 1710
- Sent by a patron in Germany
- Specific intention to study the natural history of the Cape
- As well as to determine its geographical position.

Abbe Nicolas Louis de la Caille

(1713 - 1761)

- 1751- 1753
- Determine if the southern hemisphere was also slightly flattened at the poles
- Named constellations Horologium, Sculptor, Fornax, Reticulum, Telescopium, Octans
- Mensa named after our own Table Mountain
- Measurements surprisingly showed that southern hemisphere was actually round and not oblate as the northern hemisphere was.

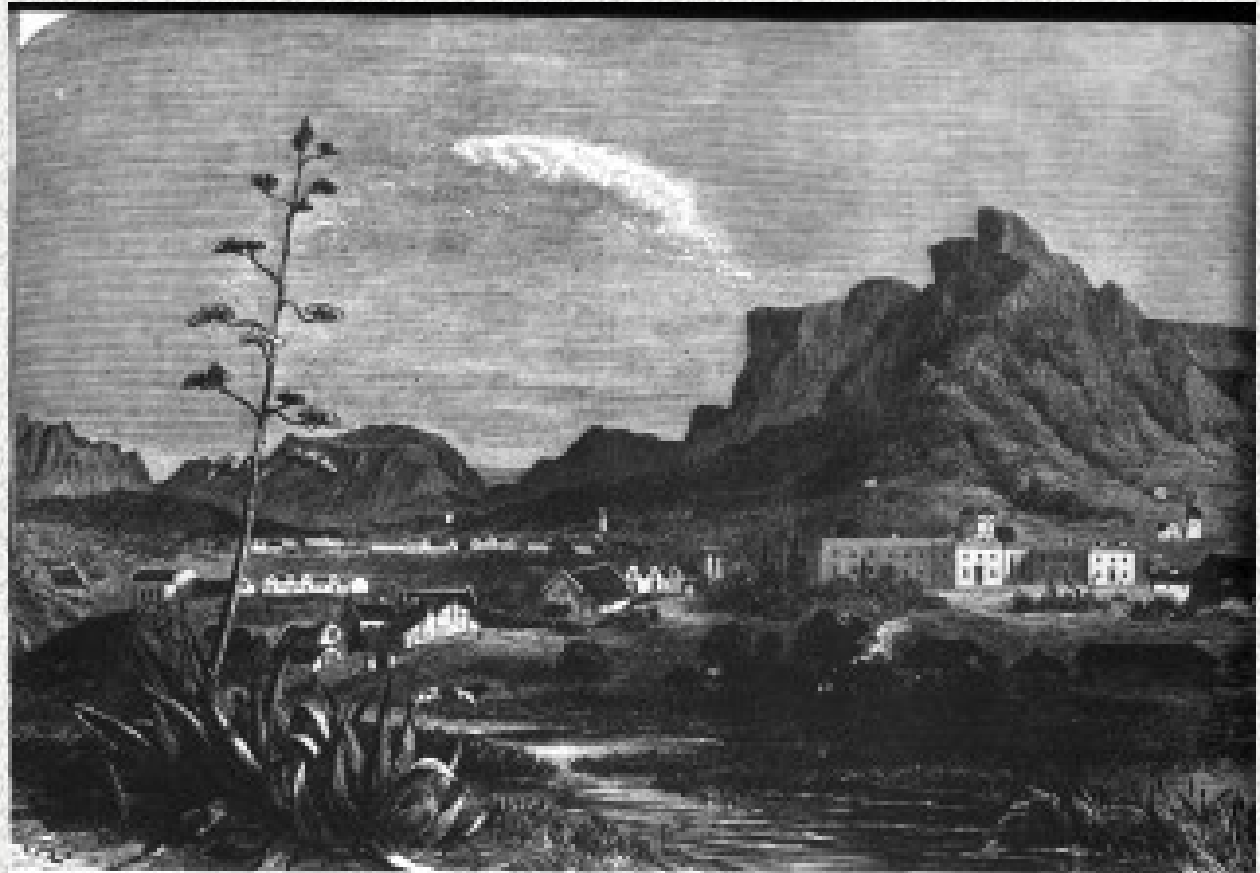


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- Buried in the observatory grounds at age 42

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- Dismal Swamp
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- Observed a transit of Mercury



The Royal Observatory, Cape Town, in 1865.

— Courtesy of African Museum, Johannesburg

Sir Thomas Maclear (1794 - 1879)

- 1833 - 1870
- Medical doctor by profession and an astronomer only by inclination
- Land surveys, magnetic, meteorological and tidal observations
- Remeasure southern hemisphere shape
- Town of Maclear and its district were named after him





The Herschel Monument during building operations at the Grove Primary School, Claremont.
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Gill's 1906 Support Staff



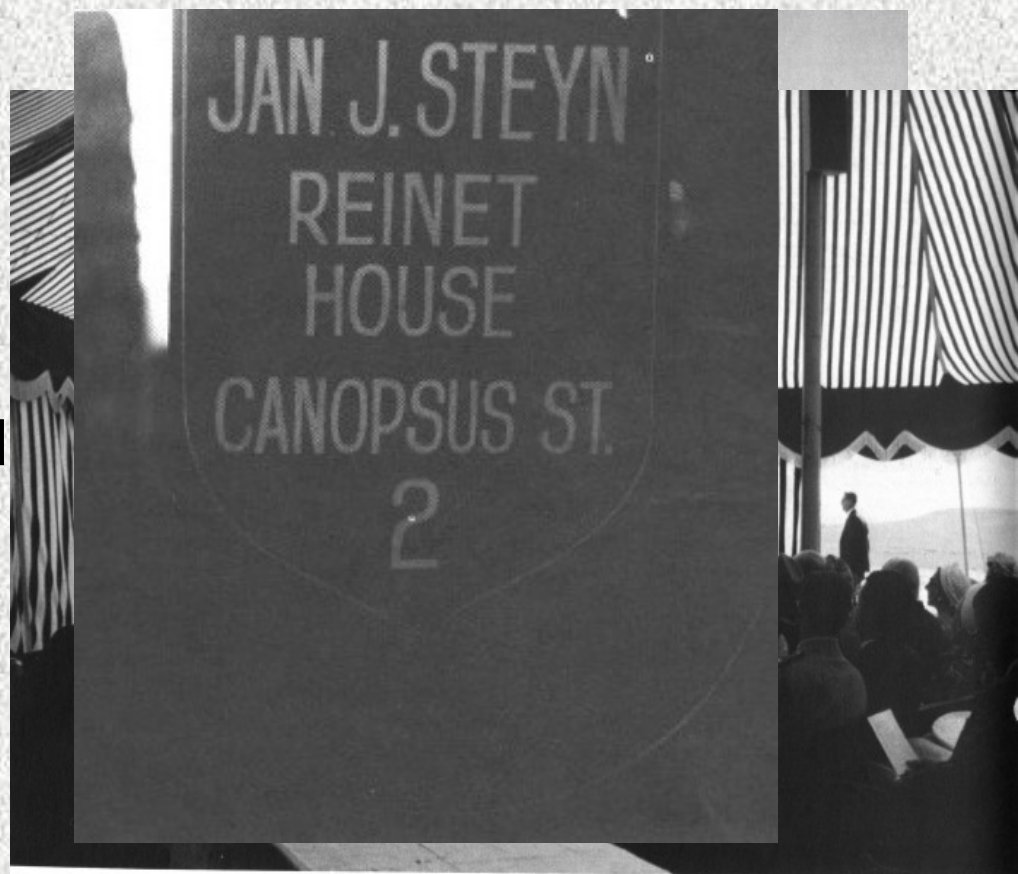
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The Official Opening of the Sutherland Observatory, 15 March, 1973. Mrs Margaret Thatcher, Minister of Education and Science in the British Conservative Government, addresses the congregation.

— Jack Bennett

The Age of Satellites

- Superpower race into space
- CSIR and Roy Smith and Moonwatch Program



Jack Bennett and Moonwatch

- 27th June 1957

45947

REGISTRATION FORM FOR MOONWATCH OBSERVERS.

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RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS... 90 MALAN STREET

..... RIVIERA, PRETORIA.

RESID. PHONE NO. 70-4895

BUSINESS PHONE NO. 34081 ext 37

OCCUPATION... CIVIL SERVANT - Transvaal Provincial Administration.

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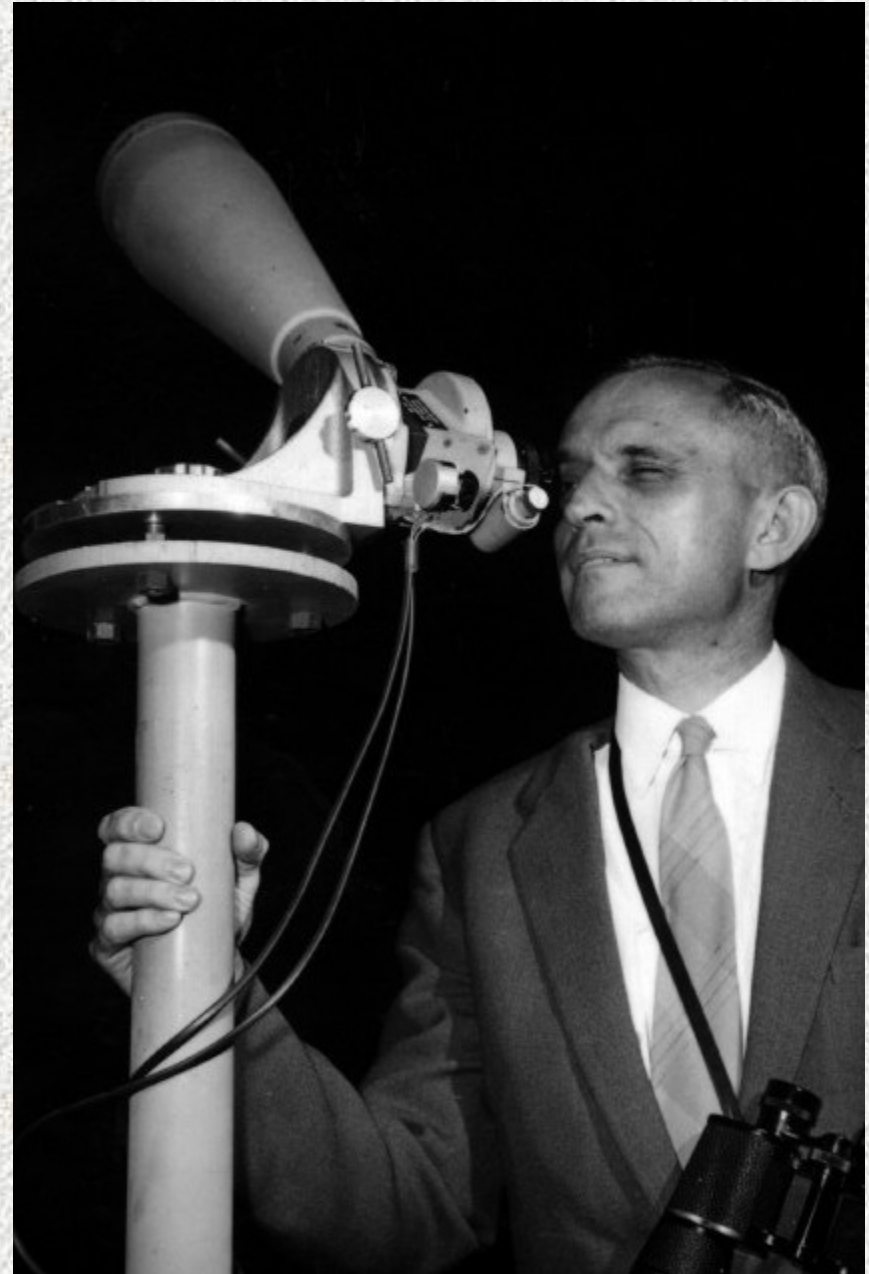
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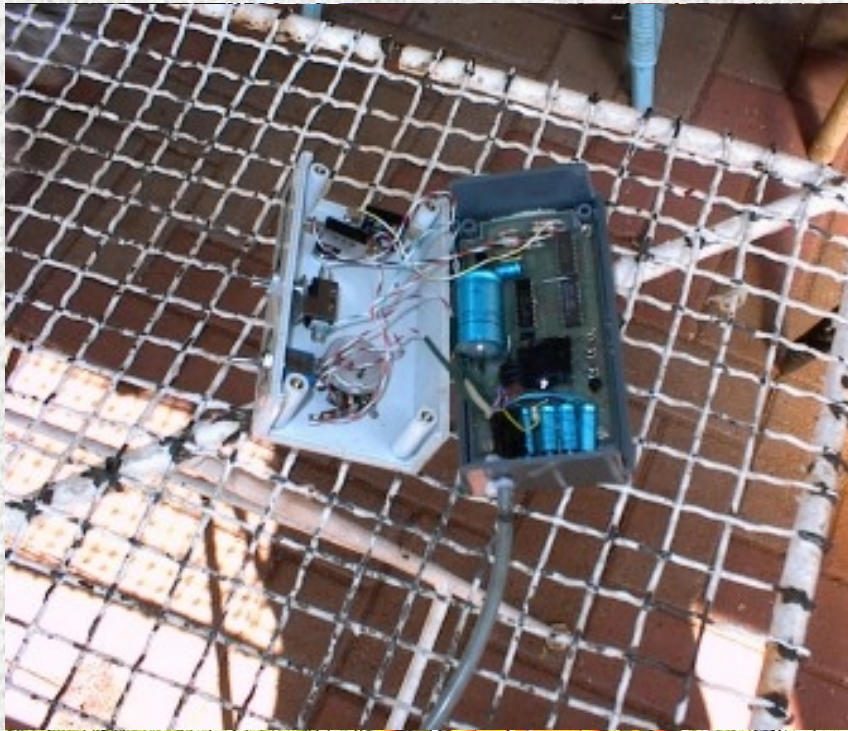
John Caister Bennett

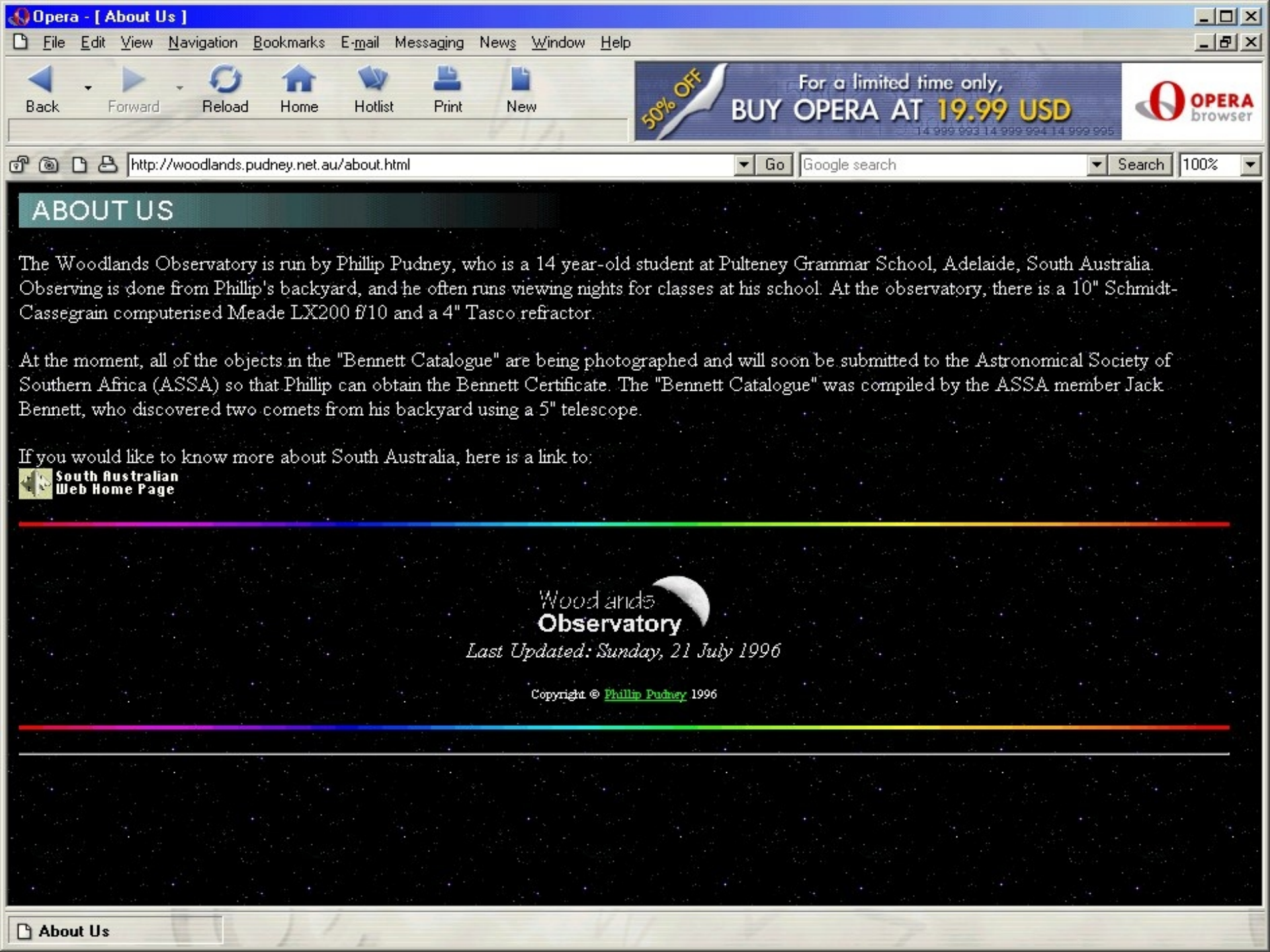
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His Telescopes

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ABOUT US

The Woodlands Observatory is run by Phillip Pudney, who is a 14 year-old student at Pulteney Grammar School, Adelaide, South Australia. Observing is done from Phillip's backyard, and he often runs viewing nights for classes at his school. At the observatory, there is a 10" Schmidt-Cassegrain computerised Meade LX200 f/10 and a 4" Tasco refractor.

At the moment, all of the objects in the "Bennett Catalogue" are being photographed and will soon be submitted to the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA) so that Phillip can obtain the Bennett Certificate. The "Bennett Catalogue" was compiled by the ASSA member Jack Bennett, who discovered two comets from his backyard using a 5" telescope.

If you would like to know more about South Australia, here is a link to:

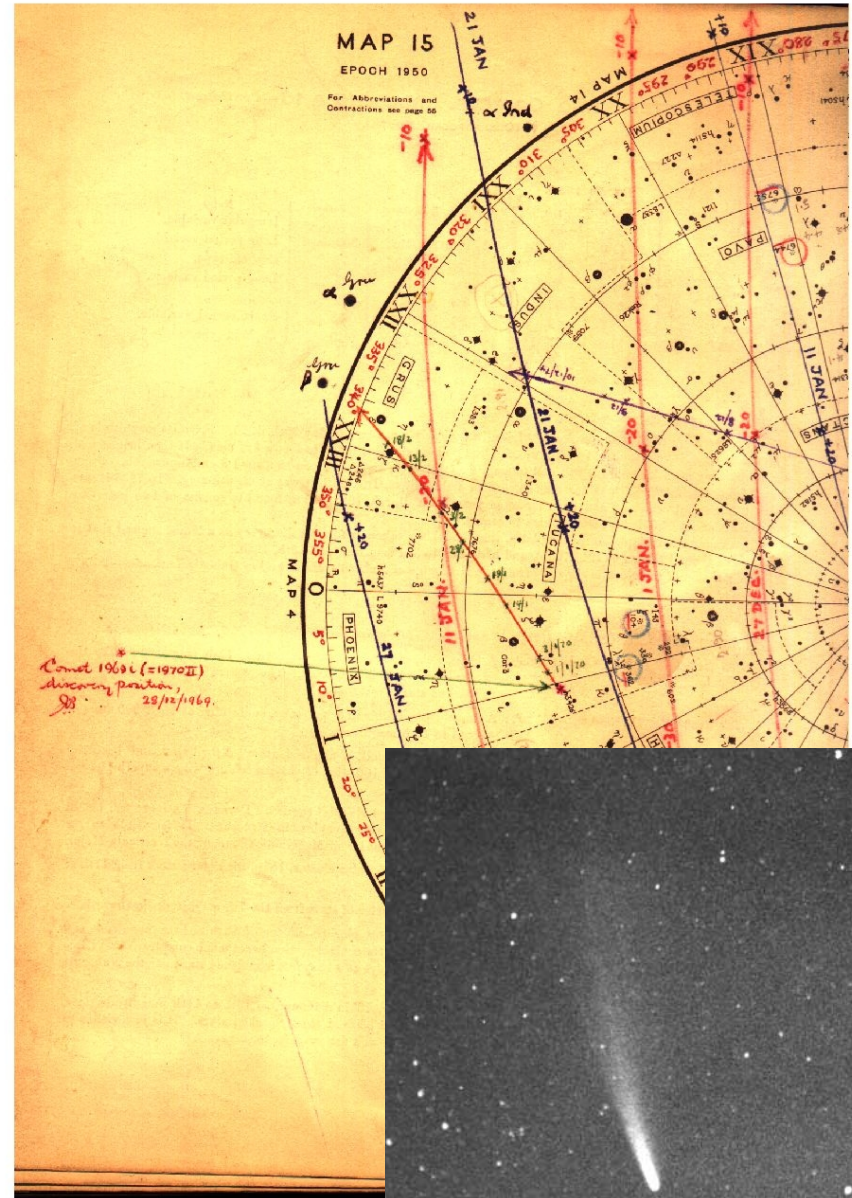
South Australian Web Home Page

Woodlands Observatory
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Discovery position of Comet Bennett II (Comet 1969I)

An extract from his Norton's Star Atlas 1954

His 1st Comet



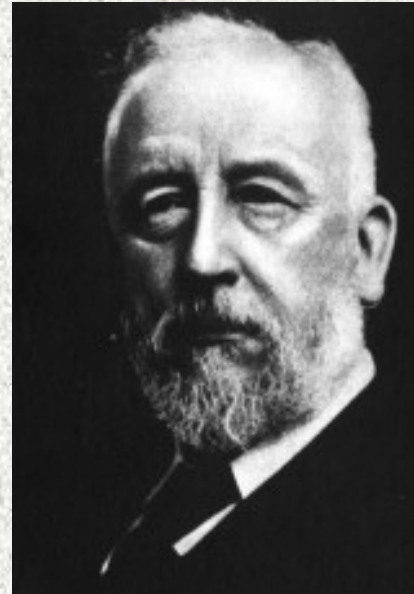
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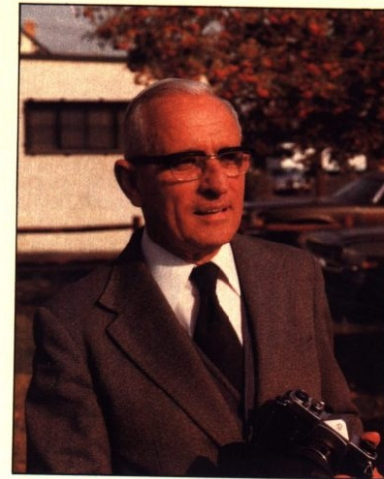
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Sky & Telescope June 1991

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Honorary Master of Science

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Honour for SA comet spotter

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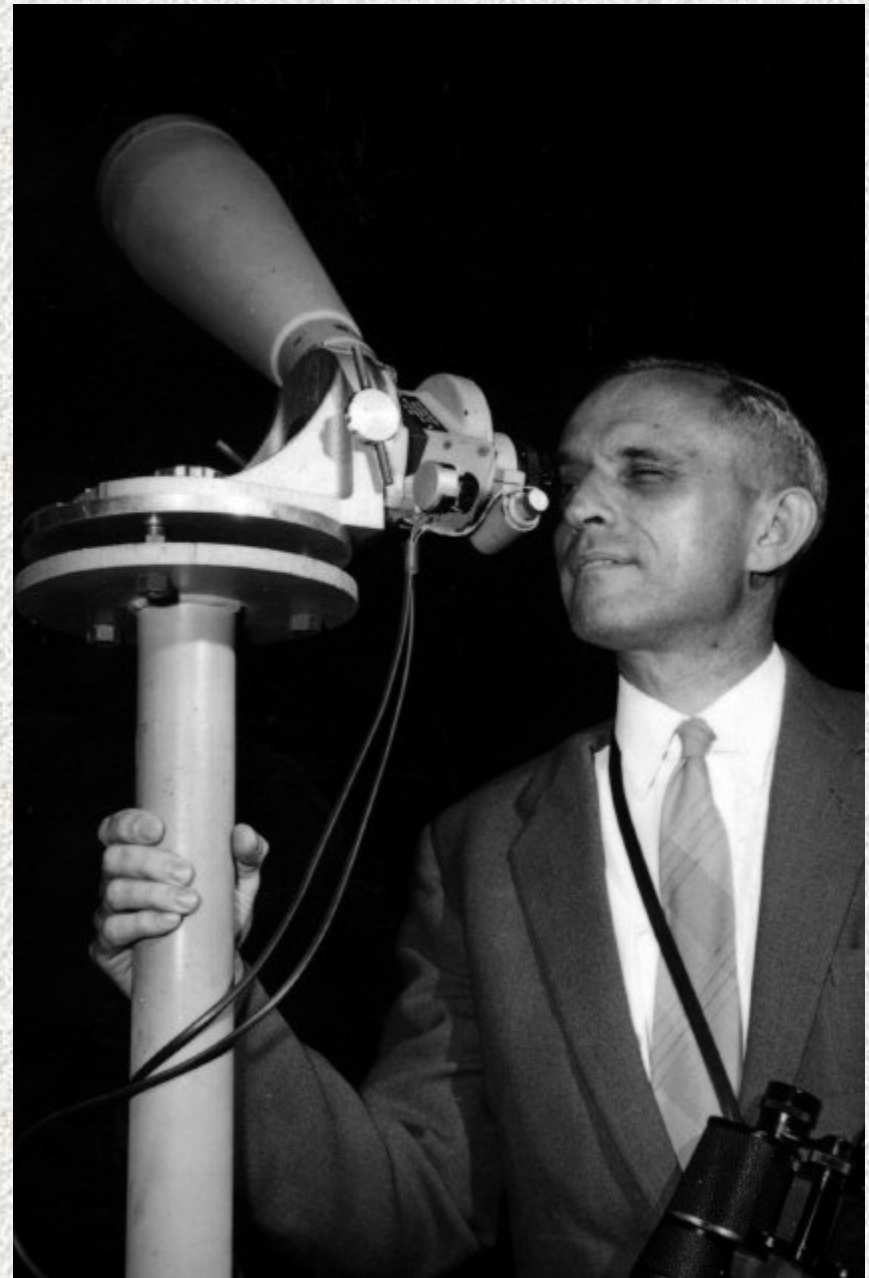


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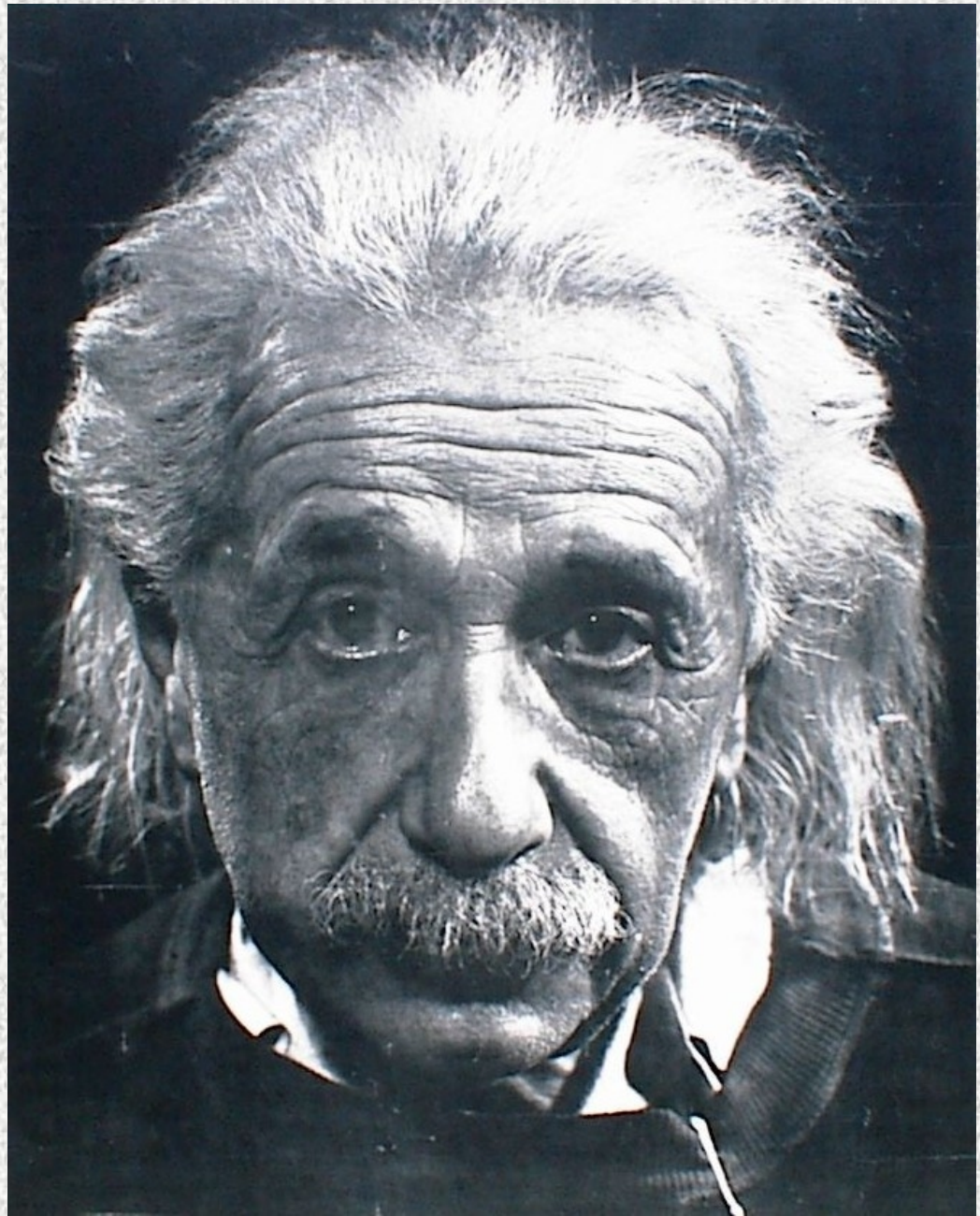
(1914-1990)



A Link in the Chain

- Former member of this very society
- Jack's 1970 comet is the logo on the Pretoria Centre newsletter
- We are linked through Jack to this astronomical chain of special people who have contributed to astronomy
- Patrick Moore has captured Jack on video tape

**Albert
Einstein**



**Ernest
Rutherford**



Our Personal Roles

- We all contribute to astronomy in our own particular ways -
 - by being interested,
 - by attending centre meetings,
 - by attending this symposium,
 - by being a member of this society,
 - by reading astronomy books and magazines,
- we all make the science of astronomy worthwhile for those at the forefront.
- This society has been and will surely again be the breeding ground for another Bennett, Block, Gill or Herschel.

TOUCHING HISTORY

By your membership of this society and your presence at this symposium, you are taking part in history; you are busy making history; you areTOUCHING HISTORY.

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With comments made by Prof Brian Warner

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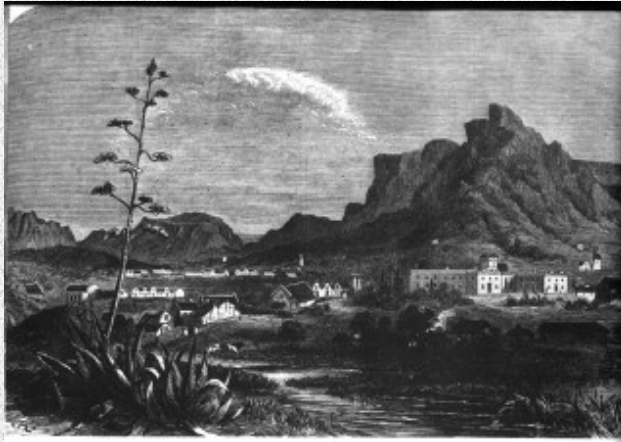
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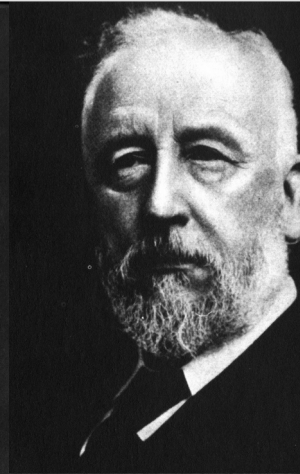
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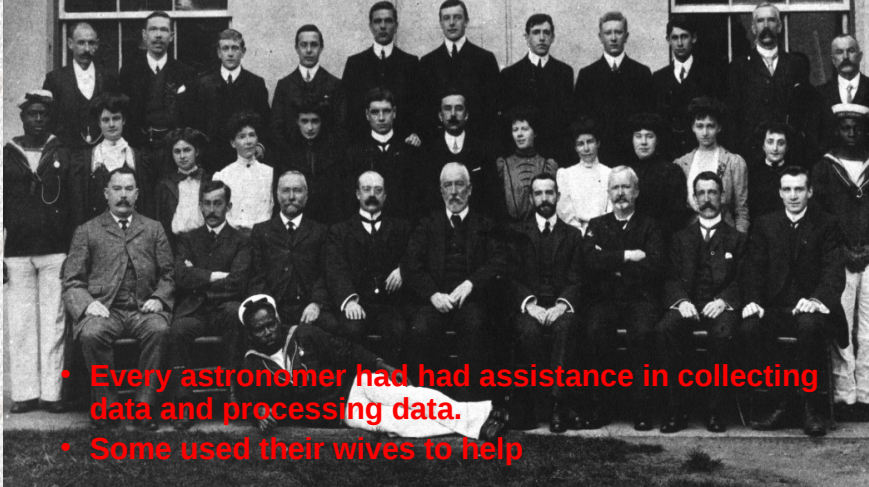
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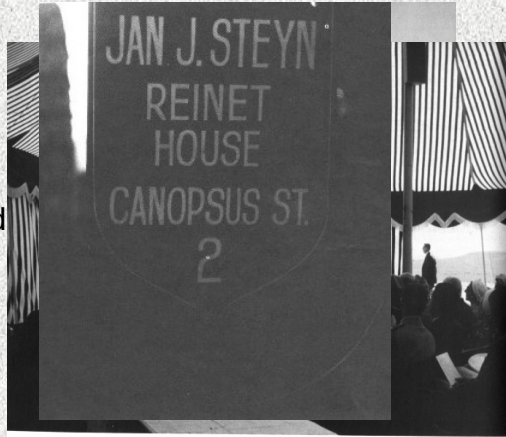
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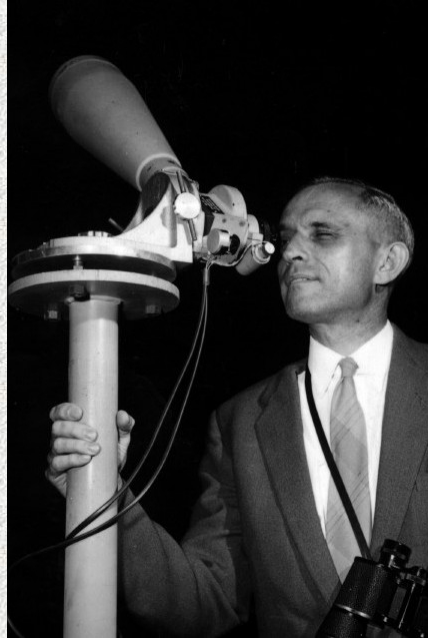
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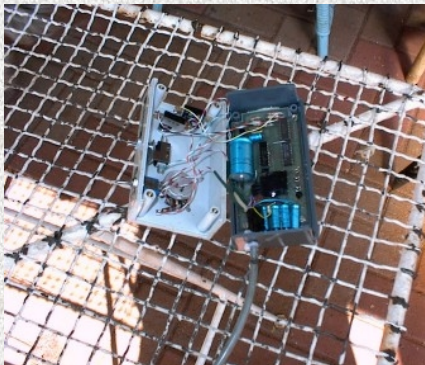
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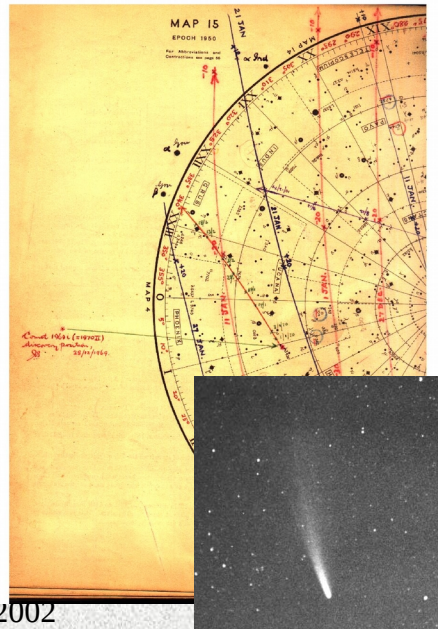
About Us

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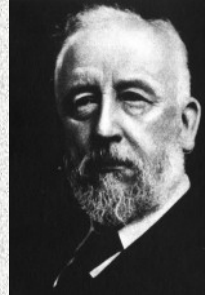
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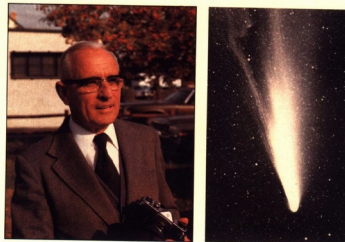
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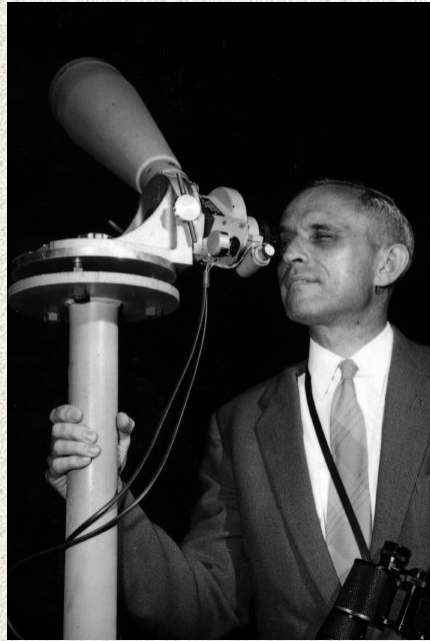
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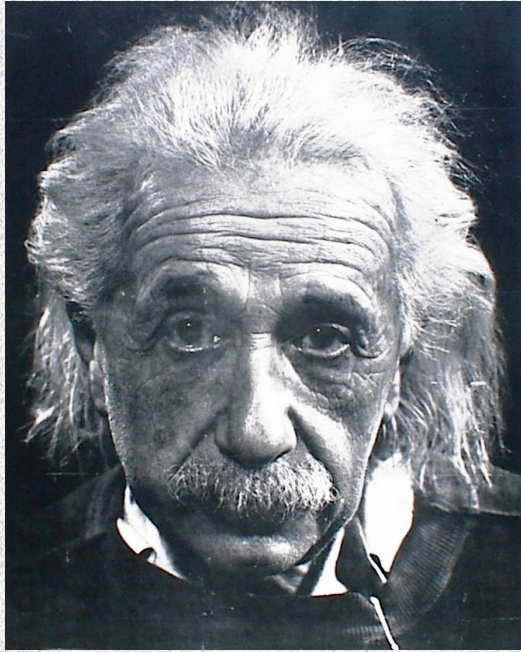
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**Albert
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Our Personal Roles

- We all contribute to astronomy in our own particular ways -
 - by being interested,
 - by attending centre meetings,
 - by attending this symposium,
 - by being a member of this society,
 - by reading astronomy books and magazines,
- we all make the science of astronomy worthwhile for those at the forefront.
- This society has been and will surely again be the breeding ground for another Bennett, Block, Gill or Herschel.

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