

Win Jones (JRW) – 396  
 Michael Poll (PMO) – 115 visual.  
 Tom Lloyd-Evans (LTE) – 789 visual.  
 Berto Monard – timeseries photometry (part or full night) on cataclysmic variables (CVs).

Peter Wedepohl (WPT) – 98 visual.  
 Jan Smit (SJX) – 5 visual.

**Special Awards of Merit**

Christopher Middleton – for the field of study in W Ursae Majoris and cataclysmic variable stars, AAVSO states him as Top Observer, list in thousands of numbers.  
 Brian Fraser – in recognition of his unconditional and dedicated contributions and observations of occultations over many years. ☆

**Eighth Biennial ASSA Symposium: Durban 2008**

Mike Reid (Chairman, Organising Committee)

It is with a sense of great pleasure that I can report on the 2008 Biennial ASSA Symposium, which was held in Durban on 7-9 August, hosted jointly by the Durban and Midlands ASSA Centres. The venue was the Durban Country Club which, in spite of its as-yet-incomplete refurbishment project, was a delightful haven, providing good food, fantastic views and a very comfortable suite of rooms in which to explore and absorb the theme of the Symposium: *The Interaction between Astronomy and Cosmology*.

The proceedings were opened by the outgoing ASSA President, Mrs Magda Streicher, followed by the first keynote address. This was by Prof Phil Charles (Director of the SAAO) on the history of SALT since its inauguration. In all a total of 24 papers were presented, ranging through amateur and professional subjects, from an amusing account of



(Above) The first symposium delegates to arrive on Thursday, 7 August, were welcomed by Mike Reid (Symposium Chairman), Roger Bond (Durban Centre Chairman), Nigel Wakefield, Wayne Hutcheon and Ken Pullock.

Keynote addresses were given by Prof Phil Charles, Director of SAAO (bottom, left) and Prof George Ellis, University of Cape Town (bottom, right). Pictures: P. Cramb



astronomy in cartoons by Michael Poll, to the modelling of W UMa-type variable stars by Patricia Skelton. The second keynote address was ably presented by Prof George Ellis (of the Department of Mathematics at UCT), on *Cosmology Today: Questions and Answers*. The Symposium, which attracted 55 delegates from all over South Africa, included a visitor from Canada, Mr Ed Reid, who presented a paper on the testing of a gravitational hypothesis using engineering computer software.

Friday night saw the delegates participating in the annual "Star Party", hosted by the Durban Botanical Gardens. There they mingled with a large crowd of public visitors and were entertained to popular talks by Hilton Ratcliffe and Auke Slo-tegraaaf as well as being given the opportunity to view the night sky through a number of telescopes provided by members of the Durban Centre.

Saturday morning saw the delegates visiting "UShaka", the Durban Aquarium, and the Oceanographic Research Institute where two further papers

were presented by Brian Fraser and by Jone Porter, the latter being on the influence of the solar system on life under our oceans.

I would like to repeat my thanks to the members of the organising committee, Peter Cramb, Don Slatter, Frikkie de Bruyn, Jake Alletson, Logan Govender, Stuart Thomson and Ooma Ramilass. Without their assistance it would have been impossible to organise the Symposium. Thanks must also go to all the speakers, the session chair-persons and the sponsors, all of whom were essential for the successful running and financial success of the Symposium. ☆



(above) Ray Field and Mike Reid with Ed Reid (right) from Canada, during the star-party on Friday evening in the Durban Botanical Gardens.

(below) The Symposium attracted 55 delegates, gathered here for a group photo. Pictures: P. Cramb

