

inch telescope. He also presented series of broadcasts on the SABC in 1967 and again in 1977 for the tenth anniversary of the Space Programme.

He has been active in the preservation of astronomical landmarks. For example, he arranged for the Maclear cannon used for the re-survey of Lacaille's arc of meridian in the early 19th century, to be erected in the Golden Acre shopping mall in the centre of Cape Town after its displacement by building activities in 1989. He also arranged for Maclear's cairn on the summit of Table Mountain to be restored on the hundredth anniversary of his death and gave an address on the occasion of its re-inauguration. He also made sure that visitors to the upper cable station on Table Mountain are reminded that (Mons) Mensa is the only constellation named after an earthly geographic feature. He helped in finding the location of

Maclear's end station (for his arc of the meridian measurement) at Aurora. The location now carries a National Monument plaque. Rupert likes to point out that his office in central Cape Town was not far from the observing sites used by Mason and Dixon (of US Mason-Dixon line fame), by Captain James Cook's team and by the first director of the Cape Royal Observatory, the Rev. Fearon Fallows.

Although his occupation was, and indeed still is on a part-time basis, that of surveyor, Rupert has always found time for civic-minded activities. He has been a stalwart of liberal politics as a member of the Progressive Party and later of the Democratic Party, in which he is still active. He was a member of the Provincial Council 1977 - 1986 and the City Council of Cape Town 1978 - 1995, and is still active in the Ratepayers Association of Rondebosch, of which he served as chairman for eight years.

ALAN D B CAMERON 1917 - 1999

It is with sadness that I learned of the death of Alan Cameron on 23 July 1999.

I met Alan Cameron at the Cape Centre meetings and soon learned that he was a gentle person of many talents. We served on the Centre committee together, where he served as Secretary for the years 1985 to 1988. His reviews of the talks given by visiting lecturers were so detailed that the committee asked him to shorten these because members had no need to attend the meetings themselves, as his reports were almost as good as being there in person. It was felt that members would rather read the reports than attend meetings!

On one memorable occasion the Cape Centre went on an excursion into the Swartland to see the baseline measured by Thomas Maclear between 1837 and 1847. I travelled by car with Alan and enjoyed his company as we covered the dirt roads of the farming area north

of Darling. This was when I learned of Alan's career as a roads engineer. He modestly told me that at the start of his career the route north to Johannesburg was a dirt road with gates at the boundaries of each farm in the Karoo; and when he retired all the 1400 Km of road was paved. This appeared to be a source of great satisfaction for Alan.

At the time we did not realise that the baseline trip was the start of a passion which would drive Alan for about two years. Alan was so impressed by Thomas Maclear's work that he decided to locate the northern terminal of Maclear's Arc of the Meridian, a task which had consumed some ten years of Maclear's life and was the basis of the trigonometrical survey of Southern Africa. The precise location of the northern end of the Arc was uncertain due to local changes in the area since 1847.

Maclear's documentation was thorough;

and despite the threshing floor having migrated a few metres due to a new road having been built between Aurora and Redelinghuis, a village some twenty kilometres away, Alan was able to positively identify the site after much research. Much of this preliminary work was accomplished by interviewing old folk in old age homes who knew farms in the district.

With the assistance of the Surveyor General's office and the National Monuments Council, Alan inspired the Stellenbosch University Department of Archaeology to assist him in his efforts to locate the missing northern terminal.

When the day of the dig arrived the stone so carefully placed over the northern terminal peg by Maclear was found within two metres of where Alan indicated. The stone was positively identified and below it was found a sealed bottle placed there by Maclear. The position was accurately surveyed before the party placed their own bottle alongside that of Maclear and covered everything again.

Since then a small monument bearing the National Monuments Council plaque has been erected between the road and threshing floor

so that this important piece of our country's history will not be lost again. To find this, the reader need only go to Aurora, a town some 180 Km north of Cape Town. The monument is less than one kilometre out on the dirt road north to Redelinghuis where the road passes between a farmhouse and a barn.

In recognition of his sterling work on this project Alan received the Cape Centre's Reginald de Kock award in 1992 and his name is on the Centre's roll of honour.

Alan also loved mountain climbing. He walked on Table Mountain every weekend. On a few occasions I accompanied his group on Saturday rambles in the Peninsula. On chatting to one of the other hikers I discovered that this group had been hiking every weekend for over fifty years, with Alan leading them for the last thirty-six of these. This, surely, was a display of an innate love for the mountain we Capetonians regard as our own.

Alan led a full life which included much work for his church and has earned the rest he is now able to enjoy at the feet of his Saviour. I am proud to have been counted as one of Alan's friends. (Brian Skinner)

ASSA IMAGING SECTION – CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Anyone interested in either CCD or conventional photographic work is invited to contact Mr Dany Duprez, the director of the newly-formed Imaging Section.

Mr Duprez would like to establish an overview of what is being done countrywide, and would appreciate interested members providing details such as what equipment they use, what their general interests are, difficulties experienced, etc.

Contributions, suggestions and comments can be e-mailed to him at gsdd@infoseek.co.za.

ORDERING SKY & TELESCOPE

Sky & Telescope may be ordered through the Society at a current cost of US \$50 p.a. instead of the normal \$59.95 and will always run for 12 months from whatever time of the year it is ordered. Because of foreign exchange fluctuations, the Rand amount required to be paid to the Society has been set at R 305.00. This figure will be updated in every issue of *MNASSA*.