
PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2002

MINUTES OF THE AGM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at SAAO, Cape Town, on 2002 July 31.

1. Opening

Thirty members were present and were welcomed by the President Dr D M Kilkeny who called for a moment of silence in memory of Dr Bob Stobie and the Rev Edward Carey who had died during the past year.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from the following members: Messrs Case Rijs-

dijk, Tim Cooper, Maciej Soltynski, Dany Duprez, Mike Christianson and all Council members from other parts of the country.

3. Special thanks

The President called on Mr Rupert Hurly who thanked Mr Cliff Turk who had taken on the duties of Secretary at very short notice and had obtained the reports of the Directors of all except one of the various sections, had drawn up the agenda for this AGM and had written the report of Council for the year now ending.



Present at the AGM was the outgoing President Dr Dave Kilkeny (above), Mr Cliff Turk and Dr Ian Glass (right,top) and Mr Rupert Hurly and Mr Peter van Blommestein (right,bottom).

4. Minutes of the previous AGM

The minutes of the 2001 AGM as published in *MNASSA* were accepted on a proposal by Mr Andrew Gray, seconded simultaneously by about 17 members!

5. Matters arising

None had been received in writing and none were raised at the meeting.

6. Financial report

This was brought forward by the President due to the ill health of the Treasurer who had made a special effort to attend. The Treasurer, Mr Colin Gray, commented on the unaudited accounts to the year end and was loudly applauded for his efforts. When audited, the accounts will appear in *MNASSA* but in the meantime members can be assured that the Society is in a very healthy state financially.

The Treasurer's report was accepted unanimously on a proposal which noted the role played by overseas income in the end result. Proposed Mr Rupert Hurly, seconded Mr Andrew Gray.

7. Election of Auditor

Mr Colin Gray asked for this item to be also brought forward so that he could have the pleasure of proposing that Mr Ron Glass CA(SA) of Horwath Zeller Karro be re-elected to this position. He also proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Ron Glass for all the help he has given us over many years. Both proposals were seconded by Mr Cliff Turk and were carried unanimously.

8. Report of Council

This was read by Mr Cliff Turk who asked members to comment if anything had been left out as the report had been written in haste. No such comments were raised and the report

will be published in *MNASSA* at the same time as the minutes of the meeting.

9. Reports of the Observing Sections

The Comet & Meteor report by Mr Tim Cooper was read by Mr Rupert Hurly. The Deep Sky report was read by the Director, Mr Auke Slotegraaf. The Double Star report by Mr Chris de Villiers was read by Dr Ian Glass. A brief note on the Imaging section by Mr Dany Duprez was read by the Secretary. The Occultations report by Mr Brian Fraser was read by Mr Peter van Blommestein. The Solar report by Mr Braam van Zyl was read by Mr Andrew Gray. The Variable Star report by Mr Jan Hers was read by Mr Tony Jones. These reports will appear in full in *MNASSA*.

10. Reports of the other Sections

No report had been received from the Director of the Computing Section. The Dark Sky report was read by the acting Director, Mr Cliff Turk. The Historical report was read by the Director, Mr Chris de Coning. These reports will also appear in *MNASSA*.

11. ASSA Scholarship

Dr Abe Mahomed read a report from the convenor of the Scholarship sub-committee, Mr Maciej Soltynski. This recorded the first awards made by the fund and the full report will be published in *MNASSA*.

12. ASSA Endowment Trust

This was presented as usual by Mr Cliff Turk and showed continued progress. Mr Turk invited members to apply to the Trust for assistance with specific projects which should be properly motivated. The full report will appear in *MNASSA*.

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13. Election of Office Bearers

Due to certain unforeseen problems, there were not enough nominations to fill all the vacancies on Council. No further nominations could be accepted at the meeting as the Society's constitution is clear that they must be made in writing by June 15 each year. However, Council has the power to fill any vacancies in its own ranks and has already started the necessary co-option process.

The following nominations had been received for 2002/2003, proposed by Mr Cliff Turk, seconded by Dr D M Kilkenny:

President:	Mr T P Cooper
Vice Presidents:	Dr D M Kilkenny Mr C Rijdsdijk Miss P J Booth
Members:	Dr C D Laney Mr B Skinner
Hon Secretary:	Mr C Rijdsdijk
Hon Treasurer:	Mr C D Gray

There were no objections and the above were declared duly elected.

14. Recess

The main business of the evening having been concluded by 21:03, there was a short recess to enable members to stretch their legs while a missing projector screen was found.

15. Presidential Address

The Presidential Address was delivered by Dr D M Kilkenny on the subject of the future of astronomy in southern Africa and was followed by questions.

16. Closing

The meeting closed at 22:30 at which time tea and coffee was served.

REPORT OF COUNCIL 2001–2002

Council notes with regret the deaths of Dr Bob Stobie (President 1997/98) and the Rev Ed Carey.

1. Membership

Subscriptions have remained at R80 per annum and full membership has increased to R208. Lapel badges are still being given to all new full members. There are many more members of Centres who are also automatically local members of the Society.

2. Secretary

During the year Mr Brian Skinner relinquished the post of Honorary Secretary after more than ten years of excellent service during which time he missed only one

Council meeting – and that was due to sickness. Mr Case Rijdsdijk volunteered to take over these duties and is settling in well. We wish him a similarly long tenure.

3. Finance

Our Treasurer, Mr Colin Gray, has had some health problems during the year but he has kept the health of our finances in tip-top condition for which we thank him most sincerely. Many members have again given donations to the Society or to the ASSA Endowment Trust when paying their subscriptions and we are most grateful for these. Our thanks are also due to our Auditor, Mr Ron Glass CA(SA) of the firm Horwath Zeller Karro for continued services and advice.

4. Council appointees

Dr Abe Mahomed and Mr Cliff Turk remain as Membership Secretary and Business Manager respectively and continue to bring in the subscriptions and fees which keep the Treasurer so happy. Between them they circulate *MNASSA* and the *Handbook* to all members and subscribers throughout the world. In addition the Membership Secretary handles the *Sky & Telescope* subscriptions and the Business Manager deals with all advertising in both of our publications.

5. MNASSA

Editor Mr Auke Slotegraaf keeps the standard high in this publication, which is well received both in South Africa and overseas. Contributions are welcome from amateurs and professionals. The reports from the institutions and those of the Directors of the observing sections show the volume of astronomical work being done in the region. Thank you Auke, your contribution to the Society is invaluable.

6. Annual Handbook

Miss Pat Booth continues to edit this invaluable book almost single-handed and is warmly thanked for her efforts. Centre secretaries, section Directors and other interested parties are requested to advise the editor of any changes to information relating to them. (NB E-mail addresses and telephone numbers should be checked every year please.)

7. ASSA Scholarship Fund

After being set up last year, this fund has now made its first grants to second year students studying astronomy subjects at university and we will follow their progress with interest. Mr Maciej Soltynski, Dr Abe Mahomed and

Mr Andrew Gray put in many hours of work to formulate rules and get this fund operative. We thank them most sincerely and they continue to work as the sub-committee dealing with grant applications.

8. Scholarship Fund Trust

Council has received and discussed a proposal for a trust supported by international funds to be formed to assist the study of astronomy in southern Africa at all levels. Work is continuing with this matter and members will be kept informed of progress.

9. Observing Sections

The Dark Sky section is still in need of a permanent Director, but has nevertheless made some progress during the year. The Solar section, which was revived last year, is growing in stature and Council would like to appoint a Director to lead it onwards. Assistance and encouragement has been received from the University of the Free State and the Solar Section of the British Astronomical Association. A new Director is required for the Imaging Section and any volunteer is asked to contact Council.

The reports of all sections will appear in *MNASSA*.

10. Acknowledgments

Council thanks the following for their co-operation and assistance during the past year: The Director of SAAO for the continued use of meeting facilities. The Directors of our observing sections for forwarding observations to international bodies. The Directors of the other sections for their support. All our Centres and members who helped to promote astronomy to the public throughout the region. And especially the Cape Centre for hosting this meeting.

COMET AND METEOR SECTION
T P Cooper

In my report for 2000, I concluded the level of observation had been the lowest in some years due to the poor observing weather throughout the year, and hoped that 2001 would see a turn around. I regret having to make the same conclusions this year. The level of meteor observing was poor, with all main showers obliterated or affected by cloud. Thankfully, weather conditions during the winter allowed us to obtain a good run on Comet Linear (C/2001 A2). Ten fireballs were reported.

Notes on some specific showers observed
All major showers were heavily affected by cloud. For the first time my annual coverage of the Virginids in March and April was

entirely lost. Cloud continued into May, badly affecting the eta Aquarids, and observations were only possible on the mornings of April 28, 29 and May 5, the latter terminated by cloud at 03:15. The July/August showers were lost due to atmospheric pollution from the extreme level of grass burning activity this year in the dry Highveld winter. Cape observers also reported cloud during this period. The Orionids were lost as the rain season began again in Gauteng.

It might have been expected that we would obtain some observations on the Leonids in November, with storm conditions predicted for 2001. However, it appears almost the entire country was below cloud, as reported by Magda Streicher, Brian Skinner, Jan Hers, and Tim Cooper. The latter managed only 15 minutes in a short gap, registering a single 2nd magnitude Leonid. Peter van Blommestein observed on the mornings of November

Summary of observed meteor showers

Observer	Shower	Hours
Tony Jones	Geminids	7.3
Brian Skinner	Geminids	7.0
Tim Cooper	eta Aquarids	5.0
	Leonids	0.25
Peter v.Blommestein	Leonids	3.1
	Taurids	1.0
Karen Koch	Geminids	3.1
Michael Poll	Leonids	2.0
	Geminids	1.5
Simon Walsh	Geminids	0.5
Total		30.75

Total observing time per observer

Observer	Number of showers	Total observing time (hours)
Tony Jones	1	7.3
Brian Skinner	1	7.0
Tim Cooper	2	5.25
Peter v.Blommestein	2	4.1
Michael Poll	2	3.5
Karen Koch	1	3.1
Simon Walsh	1	0.5
Total		30.75

15–17, recording a handful of Leonids, but nothing out of the ordinary.

The Geminids were observed by Simon Walsh on the morning of November 25, seeing 2 Geminids in 0.5 hours. Other mornings were cloudy. In Bredell the maximum period was entirely washed out, literally, with torrential rain on the morning of December 14. Michael Poll also managed to make a few observations of Geminids in-between the clouds He observed for 10 minutes on the morning of December 12 (2 Geminids) and 80 minutes on December 15, seeing only 1 Geminid and 6 sporadics. However, Brian Skinner, Tony Jones and Karen Koch in the Cape were more lucky, managing around 17 hours observation on the nights of December 13/14 and 14/15. Tony logged 45 Geminids and 22 other meteors in 4.4 hours on the 13/14th. This was the best set of meteor data for the entire year.

details were published in *MNASSA* (2002, **61**, February, 16–19).

Summary of observed comets

Thankfully, conditions allowed a good run on Comet Linear C/2001 A2, and observations were reported by Mike Begbie, David Pringle-Wood, Trevor Green, Tony Jones and Tim Cooper. Bill Hollenbach obtained a number of excellent CCD images. The comet reached 4th magnitude at its peak in June. All observations were combined in a paper published in *MNASSA* (2002, **61**, February, 6–15).

Mike Begbie, Jan Plomp, Peter van Blommestein and Tim Cooper also reported observations of comet Linear C/2000 WM1, the so-called Christmas Comet. The comet brightened to around 5th magnitude in mid-December, and was still under observation at the close of the year.

Summary of observed fireballs

2001 saw a total of 10 fireball reports, summarised in the table below. The full

Date of fireball	Name of reporter	m _v	UT
2001 January 10	Berto Monard	-7	18:09
2001 February 4	Tony Jones	-6	01:05
2001 February 26	Kathleen Wessels	-5	18:00
2001 April 26	Magda Streicher/Tim Cooper	-6	20:36
2001 May 2	Tony Jones	-5	20:30
2001 June 21	Tony Jones	-3	n/a
2001 July 2	Michael Poll	-5	17:28
2001 September 7	Tony Jones	-4	00:35
2001 October 5	Louis Barendse	-7	20:35
2001 December 7	John Ferraz	-7	21:15

DEEP-SKY SECTION
A Slotegraaf

The review of historical deep-sky catalogues continues.

The catalogue compiled by Sir John Herschel during his 19th century visit to the Cape presents a rich collection of observations of southern non-stellar objects. Of particular interest are the so-called “nonexistent” objects in his catalogue – a number of which do, in fact, exist.

Several of Herschel’s objects were further designated “doubtful” in the Revised New General Catalogue. Magda Streicher of Pietersburg has continued to submit observations and sketches of these “doubtful objects”. She has also started on a reobservation of the late Jack Bennett’s catalogue.

Tony Jones of Cape Town has submitted a set of observations of the somewhat perplexing catalogue compiled by James Dunlop – a great number of the entries in Dunlop’s catalogue have still not been identified.

The Director has been paying special attention to the various southern star catalogues and the one deep-sky catalogue compiled by Lacaille. This 18th century astronomer was the first person ever to observe systematically the entire sky, and his deep-sky catalogue is the first of its kind. Identifying Lacaille’s objects in modern catalogues has proven to be less than trivial. Three group observing sessions were held (in Cape Town, Franschoek and Sutherland) with between three and six observers present, ranging in skill from experienced to novice-level. They attempted to repeat Lacaille’s observations using similar telescopes (half-inch aperture, 8x magnification). The results

of these, and future observing sessions, will be reported in *MNASSA*.

Telescopic observation of dark nebulae continues to be a special interest of the Director. An investigation has also been started into the feasibility of developing software to automatically identify dark nebulae in wide-field photographs.

Also receiving attention is the general problem of cross-identification of (southern) non-stellar objects. An object receives different designations when it is included in more than one catalogue, and a comprehensive list of synonyms is desirable. So, for example, Melotte 114 is also van den Berg-Herbst 141, NGC 4755, or simply, the Jewel Box. Detecting errors in catalogues is unglamorous, and perhaps scientifically unexciting, but accurate catalogues nevertheless are the cornerstone of an observational science such as astronomy.

On a further historical note, the first southern deep-sky object that John Herschel studied with attention and produced a sketch of, was identified – it is NGC 2070, the Tarantula Nebula in the LMC. Herschel’s original drawing, in a letter to Sir Thomas Maclear dated 1834 March 2, is preserved in the Cape Archives. A digital copy of the drawing was made and is available on request (see *MNASSA*, 61, August Centrepiece).

The Director welcomes anyone who is interested in joining in the activities of the section. Three deep-sky guides were posted to members. A copy is available for the price of postage, or can be downloaded from the internet.

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DOUBLE STAR SECTION
C de Villiers

1. Observations

The digital camera mentioned in the previous report was completed and preliminary results of speckle imaging with the McClean at the SAAO were published in *MNASSA* (2001, **60**, December, 145–148). Unfortunately, this project came to a halt owing to the fact that the Section Director (who initiated the project) has since moved to Wellington, and travelling to Observatory has become impractical. It is hoped to encourage other interested observers to continue with this work by making available a similar camera. To this end a notice will be placed in *MNASSA*.

2. Observer Certificates

The requirements for obtaining observers' awards for double star work have been placed

on the official Double Star Section web site. Member Magda Streicher has completed the requirements for the General Observer's Certificate to the Section Director's satisfaction and a recommendation for an award will be submitted to Council under separate cover.

3. Double Star CD-ROM

Permission was obtained from the US Naval Observatory to copy and distribute the USNO Double Star CD 2001.0. In response to a notice in *MNASSA* a number of members requested and received the CD.

4. Expenses

The cost of CD-ROMs and postage amounted to approximately R120.00. This amount will not be claimed, but donated to the Society.

OCCULTATION SECTION
B Fraser

The year 2001 was a very mixed one for occultation observers in Southern Africa. Undoubtedly the one event that has had the most effect on this section was the passing away of Danie Overbeek in the middle of the year. Danie was the Director and driving force in the occultation section for many years and his expertise and wisdom is sorely missed. The naming of the minor planet 5028 "Overbeek" in November 2000 was a fitting tribute to Danie's contribution to astronomy in Southern Africa.

The process of getting the section running smoothly again has taken a while and is still ongoing, but with the help of people like

Edwin Goffin and Jan Manek, who provide the predictions and updates for the minor planet occultation events, and with the input of the dedicated local observers, I feel that we will soon have the network working efficiently again. One change that has been introduced is to only advise observers of events that have a reasonable chance of success for their observing location. This has resulted in far fewer events being attempted by some observers but with a much higher hit rate.

We have established a web site on the SAAO computer network and thank them for allowing us this privilege. This has resulted

in a much reduced postage bill and the ability to offer more information to more observers. There are still some members who do not have access to the internet and they have been kept in touch with important events via the traditional channels.

Once again no reports of grazing occultation expeditions have been received. Part of the reason for this may be the security situation in South Africa, but it might also be the problem of a degree of inertia setting in with amateur astronomers. It would be a sad day if Southern Africa amateurs totally abandoned this important observing tool.

The accurate timing of events has been a problem as not all observers have access to the WWV shortwave radio station and most local time sources have been found to be problematical. Some discussions are at present underway with the New Zealand observers and there may be a solution to be found in the use of the GPS satellite system. Hopefully more news on this topic will be available shortly.

Perhaps the most welcome news of the year (decade?) has been the emergence of a small group of observers in KZN, motivated mostly by Rogan Roth at the Natal Midlands center. John Watson, Harry Tunmer and Alan Hill in Pietermaritzburg and Ray Field in Durban have all been tempted to take their telescopes out. The group managed to get two successful minor planet occultation observations, one by Rogan and one by his brother Paul in the Himeville area. This is really good news and we look forward to many more "hits" from the banana boys. Well done!

When one plots the predicted shadow paths on the map of South Africa, one point jumps out at you immediately. And that is the large area lying between the coastal areas

and Gauteng where we do not have a single observer. We desperately need some observers in the Bloemfontein and Kimberley areas, and elsewhere of course.

Lunar occultations

Once again there was only a small group of observers who participated in observing of lunar occultations.

Peter van Blommestein	
Disappearances	43
Jannie Smit	
Disappearances	20
Reappearances	2
Cliff Turk	
Disappearances	23
Reappearances	12

Minor planet occultations

Danie was still keeping track of some of the results for the first part of the year, and if I omit any pertinent information here then I apologise.

The following participated during 2001: T Cooper, F de Jager, R Field, B Fraser, J Hers, A Hill, H Lund, D Overbeek, L Pazzi, C Rijdsdijk, P Roth, R Roth, J Smit, M Streicher, H Tunmer, C Turk, P van Blommestein, B van Winsen and J Watson.

The writer expresses his sincere thanks to all who helped in this very worth-while activity.

Special thanks are due to Jan Manek of Stefanek Observatory, Prague, who provided prediction updates, based on minor planet positions supplied by the US Naval Observatory, Flagstaff, Arizona. The updates enable us to concentrate on those events that are likely to occur near observing stations. Thanks are also due to Edwin Goffin and his employer Agfa Gevaert who supplied preliminary predictions.

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Predictions were received for 57 events in 2001, of which 17 were rejected for various reasons – mainly because the target stars were too faint.

Jan 04 Hebe: Cooper appulse.
Jan 08 Nanna: Overbeek altitude. Van Blommestein miss.
Jan 28 Amalia: Overbeek miss. Lund miss Smit cloud. Turk cloud. Van Blommestein cloud.
Jan 30 Philia: Cooper miss. Turk miss. Overbeek miss. Lund low. Van Winsen cloud. Smit cloud. Turk low. Fraser cloud. Van Blommestein cloud.
Feb 25 Philomela: Turk miss.
Mar 28 Aletheia: De Jager miss. Van Winsen miss. Turk cloud.
Apr 05 Edith: Turk cloud
Apr 23 Hesperia: Van Blommestein miss.
Apr 25 Alexandra: Smit miss. Streicher miss. Van Winsen cloud. Fraser cloud. Van Blommestein miss.
May 04 Meliboea: Van Blommestein miss.
May 31 Hispania: Van Winsen miss. Streicher blink.
Jun 24 Dysona: Smit cloud. Van Winsen cloud. Fraser cloud. De Jager rain. Field miss. Rogan Roth miss. Paul Roth 3 sec occultation. Van Blommestein miss.
Jul 17 Aurora: Rogan Roth 9.8 sec. Watson, Tunmer and Hill various observing problems.
Jul 28 Dysona: Smit miss. Roth miss. Van Blommestein miss.
Aug 09 Urhixidur: Roth miss. Smit miss
Aug 27 Marianna: Van Blommestein miss. Roth clouds.
Aug 28 Roberta: Van Blommestein miss. Roth miss.
Sep 10 Fides: Van Blommestein cloud.
Sep 10 Mars: Van Blommestein rain.
Sep 10 Felicitas: Van Bommenstein rain.
Sep 15 Eunomia: Van Blommestein cloud.
Sep 15 Asporina: Van Blommestein rain.
Sep 30 Kalliope: Van Blommestein cloud.
Nov 18 Cohnia: Van Blommestein miss.
Dec 19 Seraphina: Van Blommestein miss.

SOLAR SECTION

Boyden Observatory houses a 20 cm ceolostat that feeds into a 15cm horizontal telescope, with facilities for narrow H α investigation of solar features. After Boyden was closed down in 1987, the telescope was moved to the grounds of the University of the Free State. It was, however, infrequently utilized.

Since 2000 various international and local organizations have invested funds towards the upgrading and utilization of Boyden. Funds for the reinstallation of the solar telescope in its original building were allocated. The telescope was also serviced and its building refurbished. Members of the ASSA Centre requested permission to use the telescope for

observations and a few members were subsequently trained. The telescope is fully operational and is used during club as well as public meetings.

Future research projects: After recent renovations, it is intended that the telescope will be used by the local amateur group, with support from the Physics department of the University of the Free state. A spectrograph facility will be set up on the telescope to study the magnetic fields of the Sun using the Zeeman effect. This research also forms part of one of the research fields at the Physics department, namely magnetic reconnection in plasmas. (Braam van Zyl, Bloemfontein Centre)

VARIABLE STAR SECTION

J Hers

The year 2001 was a very sad one for variable star people and for South Africa particularly as we lost our greatest observer, Danie Overbeek, who died during the year.

According to the available records Danie started observing variable stars in 1951, making some hundreds of observations per year, but he really started in earnest after his return from the USA in 1979, when his yearly total rose to more than 10 000, reaching a maximum of 20 284 in 1992. His total number of observations in our records exceeds 280 000, which is almost twice the previous record achieved by Reginald de Kock, and the actual number may well be more.

After 1999 there was a steady decline, doubtless partly due to increasing difficulty in ascending the rather rudimentary ladder which led to the telescope.

Danie's home-made Newtonian was a rather basic instrument, and I do not know whether it had any accurate circles. But his profound knowledge of the night sky more than made up for any deficiencies and gave him a marvellous ability to find stars quickly.

He specialised in observing cataclysmic variables, the ones which are normally too faint to be visible but which once in a while rapidly brighten enough to become visible. VW Hydri, the best known southern example, brightens to about 9th magnitude with a period of a few weeks, and can therefore be observed by quite small telescopes, but there are very many others – some of which Danie called his “do nothing stars” – and it is highly desirable that these should be observed every clear night. As the number of observers in the far south which are doing this now cannot

Observations made during the year 2001 by observers in southern Africa

Observer	Location	Visual	PEP
T P Cooper	Kempton Park	488	–
J Hers	Sedgefield	282	–
R W Jones	Fish Hoek	–	513
L A G Monard	Pretoria	5519	–
J P L Mostert	Prieska	18	–
M D Overbeek	Edenvale	579	–
J Plomp	Pretoria	30	–
M Poll	Pretoria	51	–
J A Smit	Pretoria	1722	–
C Turk	Cape Town	68	–
S de Villiers	Cape Town	–	20
P Wedepohl	Somerset West	243	–

be much greater than can be counted on the fingers of one hand, there can probably be no better memorial to Danie than for one or more new observers to take up the challenge of this particular work.

There has overseas in recent years been a very noticeable increase in the use of CCDs for variable star work, and if we have been lagging behind this has been due mainly to two reasons: lack of the necessary technical expertise, and expense. Getting more decimal places does not come easily, and one soon gets involved with colour effects and the need for special filters and equally precise magnitudes of comparison stars, things the average visual observer scarcely worries about.

But now these problems are being overcome by two of our observers, Hugh Lund and Berto Monard. Hugh has mainly concentrated on getting more accurate measures of long period variables, while Berto, from his new dark-sky site outside Pretoria, which only became operational at the very end of the year, is concentrating mainly on CV's and supernovae. I wish them both well with their efforts as well as Win Jones with his extraordinary number of PEP measures.

Also a hearty welcome to three new observers: Jan Plomp and Michael Poll, both from Pretoria, and "Mossie" Mostert, from Prieska, a region where he can expect a large number of clear nights.

DARK SKY SECTION

C Turk

This Section is still without a permanent Director for the third year in a row, but nevertheless progress is constantly being made and it is apparent that that many people, especially in the Cape area, are becoming more conscious of the problems of bad and invasive lighting.

The early months of 2001 saw the end of our season of *StarWalks* at Kirstenbosch which drew attention to light pollution problems caused mainly by stray light from perfectly legitimate installations. In addition, our share of the entrance fees raised a useful amount of money for the development of future activities. December 2001 saw the start of our second season of Kirstenbosch *StarWalks* which are still well attended and have received much praise, especially from overseas visitors.

Cape Town Municipality is a member of the International Dark Sky Association and

we would be interested to know of any other municipalities which are also members.

The problems of light pollution continue to be drawn to the attention of visitors to SAAO and the Cederberg Observatory at every opportunity and the resultant public interest is gratifying.

Government is currently considering legislation to make obtrusive lighting an offence and we are grateful to the late Dr Bob Stobie of SAAO for his efforts in pressing for this.

The owners of three examples of obtrusive lighting were approached during the year and all listened to us with courtesy and interest. In each case the light intensity was reduced and/or its direction was altered to improve the situation. Reports of any similar incidents elsewhere in the country would be appreciated.

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HISTORICAL SECTION
C de Coning

A fair amount has happened over the last year concerning the Historical Section.

During previous years, a project was started to create a database with a historical perspective, that will be of interest to astronomers in South Africa. Progress has been slow because it was basically only myself working after hours. An archive was also initiated.

During the part year the pace picked up. Whereas most research was done on paper as a rough draft, the private acquisition of a laptop computer enabled me to do much more work. The electronic capturing of data makes it easier to share with other interested persons. The result is that there are now many more persons aware, participating and contributing to the History of Astronomy. Last year I knew of about six persons interested in the topic; at present there are approximately 16 persons.

The database has grown with leaps and bounds, and it should be available as a website in time for the Symposium in December. There are, however, still some problems to overcome.

The archive has tripled in volume, and has thus necessitated more intensive attention.

The material has been organized and I am in the process of structuring and indexing the archive.

During the last year permission was asked and received to scan all the previous copies of *MNASSA*, so that it can be available in electronic form for researchers, and as an additional way of preserving the information. This is, however, a gigantic task, and no work has been started on this project as yet.

During the past year excellent work has been done by several individuals.

- Dirk Vermeulen is about to publish a book on the Republic Observatory

- The Bloemfontein Centre is very active on the historical front. In their newsletters and website, excellent work has been done concerning the editing of the minutes of their centre meetings, and researching the history of the Lamont-Hussey Observatory. Persons to be thanked are Dawie van Jaarsveldt, Braam van Zyl and Gerrit Penning. The information is available on their website. They were assisted in their efforts by Willie Koorts (SAAO) and Dr Seitzer (Michigan University).

TREASURER'S REPORT
C Gray

The unaudited accounts of your Society's trading operations for the year just ended show a surplus of about R 9 000, a pleasing result in the face of relentless cost increases, particularly the unavoidable ones such as printing costs, bank charges and postal tariffs.

Items of note are the expenditure of about R 5 000 relating to the awards of two scholarships, constituting a first for the Society, and the massive increase in the cost to members of *Sky & Telescope* from R400 at the start of the year rising to R575 in December, now set at R520. Your finances are in good shape.

ASSA SCHOLARSHIP

M Soltynski

After many deliberations and much discussion, Council decided to establish the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa Scholarship at the end of 2001. The purpose of the ASSA Scholarship is to encourage the study of Astronomy. The Scholarship is available in support of 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate (and in exceptional cases, Honours) studies in *astronomy subjects only*, at any *Southern African* university, including those which offer astronomy courses to part-time students in distance-learning mode.

Ongoing funding for the Scholarship is from the interest generated from a capital amount especially set aside by Council for this purpose.

It was decided that criteria are a demonstrated interest in astronomy and a good academic record. Preference is to be given to members of ASSA as well as to previous holders of the Scholarship who have made good progress in their studies. Preference will also be given to applicants who are not in receipt of other scholarships

or similar funding. The Scholarship will cover academic fees for *astronomy subjects only*, as well as a contribution towards the cost of prescribed books for these subjects, and is valid for one year. Payment of academic fees will be made directly to the university concerned. The Scholarship shall be awarded based on an evaluation of the applications and the recommendations of the relevant university department. Applicants may be required to be interviewed at an ASSA Centre most convenient to the applicant (ASSA will not bear the travel or any other costs of the applicant in this regard).

It is very pleasing that the Scholarship has now been awarded for the first time. It was awarded this year (2002) to two members of ASSA, Melissa van Gend and Chris de Villiers, who are both studying 2nd year astronomy subjects as part of their BSc degree at UNISA. Chris is also the Director of the ASSA Double Star Section.

Further developments with regard to the Scholarship are under discussion by Council.

ASSA ENDOWMENT TRUST (ASSET)

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During the calendar year 2001 the Trust received donations of R 1 677.83 which increased its capital to R 1 9476.25.

Income from investments amounted to R 4 478.30 from which grants and expenses totalling R 1 502.20 were paid leaving a net increase of R 2 976.10 in disposable funds which then stood at R 3 0321.44.

Members and Centres are reminded that the Trust will consider assisting with funding of worthwhile projects. Initial enquiries should be motivated in writing to the Trust Secretary, 20 Nerine Ave, Pinelands, 7405 or e-mail to cliffturk@yebo.co.za.

During the coming year, the Trust will apply to be recognised as a Public Benefit Organisation under the new tax laws.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2002

ASSA Endowment Trust (ASSET)

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2001

2000		R - c
	Trust Capital:	
16 058.42	Balance at 31st December 2000	17 798.42
1 740.00	Donations received during the year	1 677.83
R17 798.42		R 19 476.25
Nil	Sundry Creditors	2.20
	Distributable Reserve:	
27 345.34	Balance of Income and Expenditure Account	30 321.44
R45 143.76		R 49 799.89
	Represented by:	
	Investments:	
38 000.00	ABSA Bank Ltd. Fixed Deposits	38 000.00
1 387.57	ABSA Bank Ltd. Equity Shares (at cost)	1 387.57
Nil	Sundry Debtors	2 874.00
5 756.19	ABSA Bank Call A/c	10 412.32
Nil	Cash	Nil
R45 143.76		R 49 799.89

Income and Expenditure Account for the year to 31st December 1999

	Income		
4 062.07	Dividends and interest received		4 478.30
	Deduct Expenses		
1 500.00	Grant to ASSA	1 500.00	
	Stationery	2.20	1 502.20
R 2 562.07	Excess of Income for the year		R 2 976.10
24 783.27	Excess of Income from previous year		27 345.34
R 27 345.34			R 30 321.44

Notes:	ABSA Fixed Deposits:	
	9.65% p.a. maturing 8 Oct 2002	R 18 000.00
	9.40% p.a. maturing 29 May 2003	R 20 000.00
	ABSA Bank Ltd. Equity Shares (cost)	R 1 387.57
	(Market value R 12 615.70)	R 39 387.57