

ASSA symposium 2012: *Looking back, looking forward*

The biannual symposium of the Astronomical Society of Southern Africa (ASSA) will be held **from 12 to 14 October 2012** at the **South African Astronomical Observatory in Cape Town**.

The theme of the symposium, ***“Looking back, looking forward”*** reflects the significance of 2012 for astronomy in South Africa. Among others, organised amateur astronomy in South Africa turns 100 this year, and then of course there was the momentous decision to host the major part of the Square Kilometre Array in Africa. Thus, the symposium will look back, but also towards the future.



Among the confirmed speakers lined up who will discuss topics related to the SKA and other astronomical facilities in South Africa will be Justin Jonas (Rhodes University/SKA - *The Square Kilometre Array*), Jasper Horrell (SKA - *Technical challenges of the SKA*), Renée C. Kraan-Korteweg (UCT – *Astronomy programmes with the SKA*), David Buckley (SALT - *South African Large Telescope*) and Willie Koorts (SAAO, Radio Sonder Grense - *The many new domes at Sutherland: turning photons into paper*).

Historical themes will be presented by among others Ian Glass (SAAO - *Nicolas-Louis de La Caille at the Cape*), Chris de Coning (Cape Town - *Cape Astronomical Association – origins of the ASSA on its 100th birthday*), Atze Herder (Johannesburg - *History of the Republic Observatory, Johannesburg*) and Magda Streicher (Polokwane - *Collection of old Astronomers in Pencil Sketches*).

We have also invited some other well-known speakers to address topics covering a wide range of interests, such as Case Rijdsdijk (Wilderness - *Analogies in Astronomy and Physics*), John Menzies (SAAO - *Extra-solar planets*), Bruce Bassett (AIMS - *Recent cosmological developments*) and Maciej Soltynski (Cape Town - *Galaxy Clusters*). Talks relating to practical observing include those presented by Auke Slotegraaf (Somerset West - *Some Open Clusters I Didn't Discover*), Greg Roberts (Cape Town - *Tracking Space Debris – including Spy Satellites*) and Johann Swanepoel (George - *Mirror making and testing*).

The important topics of communication and outreach have not been forgotten, and speakers will include Keith Gottschalk (University of the Western Cape - *Astronaissance: Communicating Astronomy and Space to the African Imagination*), Lia Labuschagne (Cape Town – *Talking about Astronomy in the Internet era*) and Sivuyile Manxoyi (SAAO - *The SAAO outreach programme*).

Socialising and other events

There will also be ample opportunities to socialise during the opening braai, Saturday evening dinner and other meals. In addition we have lined up a visit to the Iziko Planetarium, and there will also be a tour of the SAAO facilities.

Ready to participate?

If you want to attend the symposium, please register as soon as possible.

To find detailed information and register online to attend, visit the special website at symposium2012.assa.saa.ac.za

You may also send enquiries to our e-mail address at symposium2012@assa.saa.ac.za