

Elections At the meeting of the Council held on June 19, 1959 the following was elected a member of the Society:

Mr. H. Bohlman

The elections of the following Associate and Student Members of the Bloemfontein Centre were confirmed:

Mr. B. Bohlman

Miss C.F. Bonner

Mr. C.R. Cooper

Master C.R. Green

Master C.M. Muller

Mrs. W.L. Muller

Miss M.V. Quin

Mr. P.V. Quin

Miss M.C. Smith

Mr. H.W. Trollope

Cape Centre The Annual Meeting of the Cape Centre will be held at the Royal Observatory on Wednesday, August 12 at 8.00 p.m.

A. F. I. Forbes, M. I. A.

It is with great regret that we announce the death on May 15th of Mr. Forbes, one of the oldest and most respected members of our Society.

Alexander Forbes Irvine Forbes was born at Kinellar, Aberdeenshire on April 13, 1871 and was educated in Scotland. He came to South Africa as a young man in 1896 and worked in the Cape as a builder until 1907 when he returned to Aberdeen to study architecture and art. After qualifying in 1909 he came back to Cape Town where he practised as an architect until his removal to Hermanus in 1932. The move to Hermanus was intended to mark his retirement but, though he led a rather more leisurely life there than had been his wont in Cape Town, he kept up his architectural work until he was 82. In September 1956 the increasing feebleness of age brought him back once more to Cape Town to live with his niece, Mrs. Hewiston, and her husband whose house had long been a second home for him.

Soon after he settled at "Craigie Brae" in Liesbeek Road, Rosebank, Forbes built himself an 8-inch reflector and a small observatory to house it. Later he built a second observatory which still stands besides his former house "Blairythan" at Hermanus. Forbes inherited his love of astronomy from his father who was an amateur astronomer who had built his own telescope. This interest in astronomy had brought Forbes's father into contact with another enthusiastic amateur, David Gill, who later became Her Majesty's Astronomer at the Cape, and on whose estate, Blairythan in County Aberdeen, Mr. Forbes was living.

Forbes first joined our Society in the early days of the Cape Astronomical Association and was serving on its Council at the time that the Astronomical Society of South Africa was formed in 1922. Thereafter,

he served on the Council of the Society till his removal to Hermanus, and was also the Treasurer of the Cape Centre to which he was a regular lecturer. He was President of the Society for the year 1942-43. But his principal contribution to the life of the Society was as Director of the Comet and Zodiacal Light Section, an office which he took over when Mr. Reid died in 1928. Forbes discovered his first comet on November 19, 1928 at the end of an eight month's search. It was the periodic comet now known as Comet Pons-Coggia-Winnecke-Forbes. His second comet, 1929c. (Forbes) discovered on August 1, 1929, was also a periodic comet with the relatively short period of 6.34 years. The third, Comet 1930e (Forbes), discovered on May 29, 1930, turned out to have a parabolic orbit. His fourth, and last comet, was the long period Comet 1932n (Dcdwell-Forbes) discovered at Hermanus on December 15, 1932. These discoveries were not made by chance; they were the result of systematic and persistent searching.

Forbes made many contributions to the publications of the Society both about comets and about instruments, including several extremely practical notes on how to build simple but effective telescope mounts and domes. One of his last papers described the mounting of the 200-inch Hale Reflector in which he was particularly interested and of which he built the very beautiful scale model now in the South African Museum, Cape Town. This paper ended with a simple but ingenious design for a mount for a 400-inch $f/3.3$ reflector.

Forbes was an able but unassuming and modest person who never sought publicity. He had many gifts, a thirst for knowledge of all varieties and was blest with many hobbies. Perhaps his greatest gift was the ability to enjoy the simple things of life. It always gave him great pleasure to show interested people his observatory and to introduce to them the celestial objects he himself loved so well.

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TELESCOPE WANTED

Mr. R.H. Bicknell of "Mukora", P.O. Box 10, Shamva, Southern Rhodesia would like to buy a 4-inch refractor or a 6 to 8-inch reflector complete with stand for a price of about £50.

Would any member having a suitable telescope for sale please get into direct contact with Mr. Bicknell.

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