

A.S.S.A. Historical Section 2016 Year Report

Introduction:

During the past year (Calendar Year 2016) the following has happened concerning the History of Astronomy.

Website:

In 2013 the Council of ASSA decided to update the web presence of the society and a new format was chosen. Unfortunately the historical part of the website could not be transferred to the new format by the press of a button. Every page, layout and links had to be transferred manually. After 3 years this deadly boring waste of manpower was completed. The Historical Website is now in the new format and - at last - new material can be added.

Publications:

Special mention needs to be made of the initiative undertaken by the editor of MNASSA, Case Rijdsdijk, who initiated an article on “Private Observatories” (Mnassa Vol 75 Nos 11 & 12 December 2016.) This article forms an excellent “snapshot in time” of private observatories and is a superb historical reference.

Individuals in their private capacities wrote articles with historical content. Please note my appreciation to the following people:

- Doug Bullis: “Port Elizabeth Peoples Observatory Society”; Mnassa Vol 75 Nos 3 & 4 April 2016.
- Ian Glass: “Biographical index to MNASSA and JASSA to December 2015”; Mnassa Vol 75 Nos 3 & 4 April 2016.

NRF Historical Steering Meeting

Prof Nithaya Chetty of the NRF Astronomy Desk hosted the History of Astronomy in Africa Steering Meeting on 5th August 2107. Presentations and discussions centred around the state of “History of Astronomy” and projects to be launched. A committee was established under Ian Glass to create a “Roadmap” on how to achieve the goals.

Centre for Astronomical Heritage

A non-profit company was created in Cape Town to pro-actively approach issues of Historical nature. The Centre aims to record, preserve, and disseminate information about South Africa’s tangible and intangible astronomical heritage.

Herschel-Darwin Commemoration Dinner

As reported in the MNASSA of August 2016, on 15 June 1836 Charles Darwin attended a dinner hosted by John Herschel. A few historical minded persons gathered on 15 June for dinner to commemorate the 2nd Centenary of the event. The evening was a success and proposals were made to institute more Commemorative Dinners

Chris de Coning

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