

A.S.S.A. Historical Section 2017 Year Report

Introduction:

During the past year (Calendar Year 2017) the following has happened concerning the History of Astronomy.

Website:

A new section was added to the Archival Webpage on the ASSA Symposia as well as Obituaries of ASSA members.

Archive:

The Archive of ASSA consists of two parts.

1. The unique and irreplaceable material is curated on behalf of ASSA by the University of Cape Town special archive section.
2. Publications of ASSA such as MNASSA.

The Archive housing the Publications of ASSA was in a room at the McClean Building on site of the SAAO in Cape Town. In 2010 the room was needed for office space and the ASSA archive was moved to the basement of the 18-inch telescope. This turned out to be damp and dusty and the material was placed in boxes and “disappeared” into storage space at the SAAO. The original room in the McClean building became available again and Ian Glass negotiated that the material can be stored there again. I would like to thank Ian Glass, Ed and Lynette Foster, Auke Slotegraaf and Allen Cassels who did this hard work on 9 April 2017. The Archive is now again safe and assessable in its new old room. Because of a lack of space copies of MNASSA were reduced to 3 copies per edition (some editions had over 60 copies).

NRF Historical Steering Meeting

Sadly the NRF has scrapped the Astronomy Desk and the initiative of Prof Chetty to promote History of Astronomy (see the report of last year) did not come to fruition.

Publications:

Individuals in their private capacities wrote articles with historical content.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

- Case Rijdsdijk continued with his excellent series of privately owned observatories in Southern Africa (MNASSA Vol 76 Nos 1 & 2 February 2017)

Obituaries:

MNASSA published obituaries on the following astronomers:

- A.B. Jones by Karen Koch: MNASSA Vol 76 Nos 1 & 2 February 2017, pp. 8-10
- R.P. Olowin: MNASSA Vol 76 Nos 7 & 8 August 2017, pp. 162-3

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