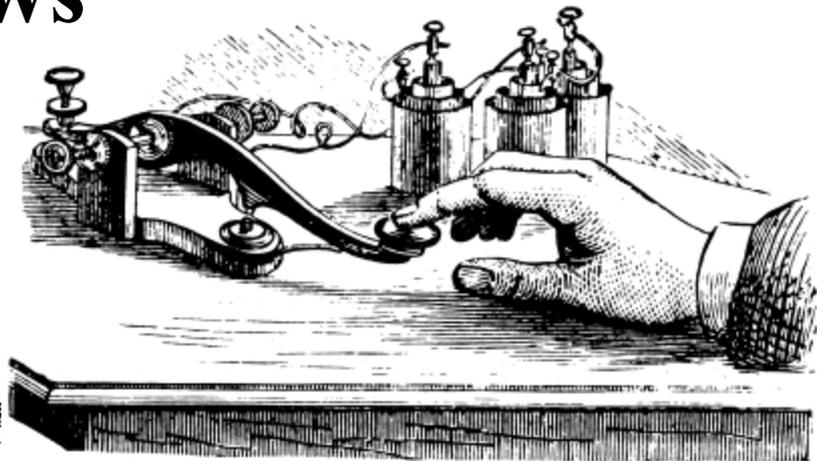


SHA eNews



Society for the History of Astronomy electronic news

Volume 3, no. 1, January 2011.

Editor: Clive Davenhall

In this issue

Dates for the Diary

SHA news

- Season's Greetings
- 2011 Programme
- Spring Conference
- Recent meetings
- Changes to the Constitution and Election of Council
- Council Meetings in 2011
- The Antiquarian Astronomer
- The SHA Bulletin
- Dr Allan Chapman
- Dr Reg Withey
- Membership subscription for 2011

Other news

- BAA Historical Section
- RAS Library Saturday opening
- Conference: *Heavenly Discourses: Myth, Astronomy and Culture*

eNews admin

- Next issue
- Contact details

Dates for the Diary

2011

Sat. 19 Mar. *Big Bang – Hoyle Day*, at St John's, Cambridge. 10:00-16:00. Entry Free. A day of talks, exhibitions and other activities celebrating the life and work of Sir Fred Hoyle. Part of the Cambridge Science Festival and St John's College Quincentenary Celebrations. See: <http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library> (non-SHA event).

Sat. 9 Apr. *SHA Spring Conference*, at the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge. Preliminary details are given in this *eNews* and further details will be circulated closer to the time.

Wed. 13 to Sat. 16 Apr. *Stephensonfest*, at the University of Durham. A conference to celebrate Prof. Richard Stephenson's seventieth birthday and mark his long and important contributions to the history of astronomy. See the separate flyer circulated with this *eNews* for further details. Contact: Wayne Orchiston (Wayne.Orchiston@jcu.edu.au) (non-SHA event).

Sat. 16 Jul. (date TBC) *SHA Summer picnic*, at the Orwell Park Observatory, which is in Orwell Park School, in the village of Nacton, near Ipswich, Suffolk. The Orwell Park Observatory is run by the The Orwell Astronomical Society who have information about it on their Web site: <http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~ipswich/>. Further details TBC.

Mon. 19 to Sat. 24 Sep. *SEAC 2011: Stars and Stones: Voyages in Archaeoastronomy and Cultural Astronomy*. Annual meeting of the Société Européenne pour L'Astronomie dans la Culture (SEAC). To be held at the University of Évora, Portugal. See: <http://www.ciuhct.com/seac2011/> or the flyer for the first announcement (about 0.6 Mbyte; PDF format) at: http://www.archeoastronomy.org/downloads/a2011_1st.pdf (non-SHA event).

Fri. 14 to Sun. 16 Oct. *Heavenly Discourses: Myth, Astronomy and Culture*, at the University of Bristol. Further details are given under 'Other news' towards the end of this issue (non-SHA event).

Sat. 29 Oct. *SHA Autumn Conference and AGM*, at the BMI in central Birmingham. Further details TBC. Offers of talks are welcome and should be sent to Kevin Kilburn (contact details at the end of this issue).

Finally, while not strictly within the scope of the history of astronomy, the exhibition *Growing Knowledge: The Evolution of Research* at the British Library, St Pancras, may be of interest to some members. It is intended to showcase innovative research tools, many concerned with on-line access to electronic resources, and to stimulate debate about the new methods of conducting research that they make possible. The exhibition is on now and will run until the summer. See: <http://www.growingknowledge.bl.uk/Default.aspx>

SHA news

Season's Greetings

The Council and Officers of the SHA would like to wish all SHA members, and other readers of this *eNews*, the compliments of the season. We hope that you have a happy, successful and prosperous New Year.

2011 Programme

The SHA will hold the following events during 2011:

Spring Conference, Sat. 9 April at the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge. Preliminary details are given below and further details will be circulated closer to the time.

Summer picnic, Sat. 16 July (date TBC) at the Orwell Park Observatory, which is in Orwell Park School, in the village of Nacton, near Ipswich, Suffolk. The Orwell Park Observatory is run by the The Orwell Astronomical Society who have information about it on their Web site: <http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~ipswich/>. Further details TBC.

Autumn Conference and AGM, Sat. 29 October at the BMI in central Birmingham. Further details TBC. Offers of talks are welcome and should be sent to Kevin Kilburn (contact details at the end of this issue).

Spring Conference

The SHA *Spring Conference* for 2011 will be held on Saturday 9 April at the Institute of Astronomy (IOA), Cambridge. The meeting is not themed and the current provisional programme is as follows:

9:30: Registration and refreshments

10:00: Gilbert Satterthwaite, *Welcome and Introduction*

10:15 Dr Mike Leggett, *Some Aspects of Buckinghamshire Astronomy*

11:00 Dr Anita McConnell, *Jesse Ramsden, the Craftsman who Believed that Big was Beautiful*

12:00 Lunch (not provided)

13:30 Gilbert Satterthwaite, *Welcome to the afternoon session*

13:30 Peter Hingley, *The Observatory as Architectural Object*

14:45 Prof. Colin Pillinger, *The Beagle 2 Diaries* (TBC)

15:30 Afternoon refreshments

16:00 Dr Michael Hoskin, *William Herschel and the Nebulae*

17:00 Gilbert Satterthwaite, *Close*

The programme is provisional and still subject to change. In particular, Prof. Pillinger's talk is still to be confirmed. His health means that he cannot unequivocally commit to speaking until closer to the event. A final programme will be circulated when it becomes available.

Tea and coffee will be available during both registration and the afternoon break. However, lunch is not provided and the IOA is quite isolated, with no catering establishments nearby. Members are strongly recommended to bring their own lunch. Members may introduce guests. The price for members and non-members alike is £10.00. Tickets are available from Kevin Kilburn (contact details at the end of this *eNews*). The IOA's address is: Institute of Astronomy, University of Cambridge, Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0HA. Directions are available on the IOA's Web site: <http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/>

Recent Meetings

The SHA *Autumn Conference and AGM* was held at the Birmingham & Midland Institute (BMI) in central Birmingham on Saturday 30 October. The AGM was held immediately after lunch and, after a lively discussion, approved a minor change to the Society's Constitution and elected a Council for the following year. Further details are given below. The meeting included varied and interesting talks by Paul Haley, Roger Hutchins, John Dee and Stuart Williams. A full report will appear in a future issue of the *Bulletin*.

Changes to the Constitution and Election of Council

The AGM held at the BMI on Saturday 30 October 2010 approved a change to section 3(i) of the Society's Constitution. The previous version read:

The general conduct and arrangement of business of the Society shall be in the hands of the elected Council of the Society (hereafter referred to as Council), composed of a Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and not more than seven other Councillors. [* Chairman, Chair, Chairwoman or Chairperson as preferred by the elected Councillor.]*

The revised version now reads:

The general conduct and arrangement of business of the Society shall be in the hands of the elected Council of the Society (hereafter referred to as Council), composed of a Chairman, a Vice Chairman*, a General Secretary, a Membership Secretary, a Treasurer, and not more than seven other Councillors. [* Chairman, Chair, Chairwoman or Chairperson as preferred by the elected Councillor.]*

This change creates the new posts of Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary and renames the previous post of Secretary to General Secretary (to avoid confusion with the new post of Membership Secretary).

A copy of the Constitution (as a PDF document) can be retrieved from the Society's Web site at URL:

<http://bit.ly/ha9bgA>

Also at the AGM Gilbert Satterthwaite was re-elected as Chairman and Kevin Kilburn as (General) Secretary. Roger Hutchins was elected as Treasurer. Stuart Williams and Peter Hingley were elected to the newly-created posts of Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary respectively. Kevin Johnson was confirmed as Executive Editor of *The Antiquarian Astronomer*. The other posts remained largely unchanged except that Martin Lunn did not stand for Council on this occasion. Mr Lunn is a Founder Member of the Society and has sat on Council since 2004. We thank him for his service to the Society. A full list of the Council and Officers will be included in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.

Stuart Williams took on the role of Treasurer in an hour of need. He stood down at end October, and the final hand-over to Dr Hutchins was made with exemplary efficiency before the end of December. Council thank him warmly, and are delighted that the Society will benefit from his serving now as Vice-Chairman.

Council Meetings in 2011

The following Council meetings are scheduled for 2011:

Sat. 12 March, at the premises of the RAS, Burlington House, London.

Sat. 10 September, at the BMI in central Birmingham.

Council meetings are not open due to lack of space, but any member may attend by prior arrangement with the General Secretary, Kevin Kilburn. Similarly, if you have any issue that

you would like to raise with Council then please contact the Secretary in advance (contact details at the end of this issue).

The Antiquarian Astronomer

As mentioned in previous issues of the *eNews*, Reg Withey, previously Editor of *The Antiquarian Astronomer*, had to stand down because of ill-health (see below for news of Dr Withey) and Kevin Johnson, previously the Assistant Editor, has stood in as the Executive Editor. We are pleased to report that the preparation of material for volume 5 is now complete and the issue is currently being laid out for publication. We hope that it will be distributed in the Spring. Once again we apologise for the delays to this issue and thank you for your patience.

We hope that henceforth *The Antiquarian Astronomer* will resume an annual publication schedule, with volume 6 being published around the end of 2011. Several papers have been received and are either being refereed or readied for publication. However, there is still time to accept additional papers. If you are interested in submitting one then please contact Kevin Johnson (contact details at the end of this issue).

The SHA Bulletin

Issue 20 (Summer 2010) of the *SHA Bulletin* was distributed during the early Autumn. If you have not received your copy then please contact the Editor, Clive Davenhall (contact details at the end of this issue). Preparation of material for the next issue, no. 21, is in progress and we hope that it will be published in the Spring. The mix of items will be much as in previous issues: news, meeting reports, articles, letters, book reviews and various Society business.

Contributions for inclusion in the *Bulletin* are always welcome and might include meeting reports, articles, letters and book reviews. It is usually prudent to check with the Editor before preparing items, particularly for meeting reports and book reviews, where duplication is a possibility. All correspondence should be sent to Clive Davenhall.

Dr Allan Chapman

Dr Chapman underwent surgery and other treatment for cancer of the palate during the second half of 2010. We are pleased to report that he responded well and has since made excellent progress. We wish him well for a continued good recovery.

Dr Reg Withey

We have heard that Dr Withey's condition is improving, though progress is slow and he is still some way from a return to full health. We wish him well for a good recovery.

Membership Subscription for 2011

Membership subscriptions for 2011 are now due. As for last year, a discount of £5 is available on all subscriptions for renewing members. This discount is to compensate for the non-appearance of *The Antiquarian Astronomer* during 2010. Consequently it is only available to existing members renewing their subscriptions and is not applicable to new members joining for the first time in 2011. The table below gives the full details.

Cheques should be made payable to 'The Society for the History of Astronomy' and sent to the Membership Secretary, Peter Hingley (contact details at the end of this issue). If you have not renewed your subscription by 31 March 2011 then, in accordance with the Society's Constitution, your membership will be deemed to have lapsed.

Membership Subscription rates for 2011

<u>Membership category</u>	<u>Full 2011 subscription</u>	<u>Amount due after applying discount</u>
Ordinary Membership	£25.00	£20.00
Family Membership	£30.00	£25.00
Concessionary Membership	£20.00	£15.00
Institutional Membership	£20.00	£15.00
Overseas Supplement	£10.00	£10.00

Other news

BAA Historical Section

The re-launched BAA Historical Section held its inaugural meeting on the theme of *Twentieth-Century Astronomy* on 27 November 2010, at the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge. The meeting was a great success, despite inclement weather, with talks by Bob Marriott, Jeremy Shears, Lee Macdonald, Jay Tate, Jacqueline Mitton and Simon Mitton. A short report will appear in a future issue of the *Bulletin*.

The Section intends to organise further meetings. The planning for the next one, to be held during 2011, is underway and details will be circulated in due course.

RAS Library Saturday opening

By kind invitation SHA members may use the RAS Library in their premises in Burlington House. In addition to normal weekday opening the Library also opens on the first Saturday of each Month, Bank Holidays excepted. For the remainder of 2010 the Library will be open 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on the following Saturdays:

8 Jan, 5 Feb, 5 March, 2 April, 7 May, 4 June, 2 July, 6 Aug, 3 Sept, 1 Oct, 5 Nov, 3 Dec.

There will only be one member of staff on duty so it will be necessary to ring the bell and wait to be admitted; if the delay is excessive please telephone 020-7734 4582, ext. 215. You are advised to confirm out-of-hours openings with the Librarian, Peter Hingley (details below) before undertaking a lengthy journey.

Conference: *Heavenly Discourses: Myth, Astronomy and Culture*

SHA member Nick Campion recently circulated the following announcement for the interdisciplinary conference Heavenly Discourses: Myth, Astronomy and Culture which seems likely to be of considerable interest. SHA members are warmly invited and most welcome to attend.

Date: Friday 14 to Sunday 16 October 2011.
Venue: University of Bristol, Bristol, UK
Web site: <http://heavenlydiscourses.org/>
Contact: Dr Nick Campion (e-mail: ncampion@caol.demon.co.uk)

On 12 April 1961 Yuri Gagarin became the first human in outer space and the first to orbit the Earth. 2011 sees the fiftieth anniversary of that event. In almost every human culture the sky

functions as a backdrop for mythical encounters, employing the celestial environment as a stage set for narratives of human and divine experience. That moment when human beings first left the planet gave us a different perspective on the sky.

THE EVENT: This conference will bring together scholars to examine the relationship between the heavens and culture through the arts, literature, religion and philosophy, both in history and the present. We invite proposals from academics in the arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences. Topics may include astronomy and music, literature, painting and the visual arts, architecture, religion, history and society.

CO-CHAIRS: This interdisciplinary conference is organised jointly by Nicholas Campion (School of Archaeology, History and Anthropology, Sophia Centre for the Study of Cosmology in Culture, University of Wales Trinity Saint David) and Darrelyn Gunzburg (Department of History of Art, University of Bristol).

Call for papers

Topics may include but are not limited to the following:

- The representation of the sky in art and its impact on cultures
- Astronomy through music and lyric
- How the sky has been engaged in literature and myth
- How the heavens have been interpreted and exploited by artists
- The influence of the sky on architecture
- The ways in which myths of the heavens have shaped religion
- The role of history in engaging the heavens
- The space programme and culture
- Space and society
- How the sky has been harnessed for educational purposes in museums and galleries
- Constructing and transmitting identities through the heavens

Each paper will be 20 minutes long including questions and discussion. Panel sessions will be one hour in length and consist of a Chair and 3 speakers. Due by date for submission is 31 March 2011.

Keynote speakers to date:

- Professor Ronald Hutton, Department of History, University of Bristol.
- Professor Roger Beck, Emeritus Professor, Department of Classics, University of Toronto.
- Dr Ed Krupp Director, Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles, USA
- Adjunct Professor David Malin, British-Australian astronomer and photographer, formerly of the Anglo-Australian Observatory
- Professor Michael Rowan-Robinson, Department of Physics, Imperial College, London.
- Professor Elliot Wolfson, Abraham Lieberman Professor of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, New York University

Conference exhibition

This conference is proud and delighted to welcome David Malin as one of its keynote speakers, and is joining with The Bristol Gallery (<http://www.thebristolgallery.com/>) to present an exhibition of his pioneering space photography. Born in 1941 in Summerseat, Lancashire, UK, Malin explored photography from an early age, trained as a chemist and worked as a microscopist. When he moved to Sydney, Australia, and joined the Anglo-Australian Observatory as its photographic scientist in 1975, he shifted from exploring the infinitely small to the infinitely far away. Malin was a pioneer in making true-colour astronomical photographs from black and white plates taken in three separate colours. The novel image enhancement techniques were all incorporated into creating unique three-colour photographs of previously unseen deep space objects. These new ways of extracting information from astronomical photographs, known as 'Malinisation', revolutionised our cultural relationship with the sky.

eNews admin

Next issue

The next issue will be circulated around 1 April 2011.

Contributions for inclusion in this issue should reach me by 19 March 2010.

Snippets for the *eNews*, typically notices of forthcoming events, are always welcome. Longer items suitable for the *SHA Bulletin* are also welcome and should be sent to the same address.

Contact details

All correspondence regarding the *eNews* or *Bulletin* should be sent to:

Clive Davenhall. 30, Millar Crescent, Morningside, Edinburgh, EH10 5HH, UK.
e-mail: newsletter@shastro.org.uk

Membership inquiries should be sent to the Membership Secretary:

Peter Hingley. The Librarian, Royal Astronomical Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BQ, UK. e-mail: pdh@ras.org.uk

General Communications to the Society should be sent to the General Secretary:

Kevin Kilburn FRAS. 158, Low Leighton Road, New Mills, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK22 4JF, UK. e-mail: kkilburn@globalnet.co.uk

SHA Web site: <http://www.shastro.org.uk>