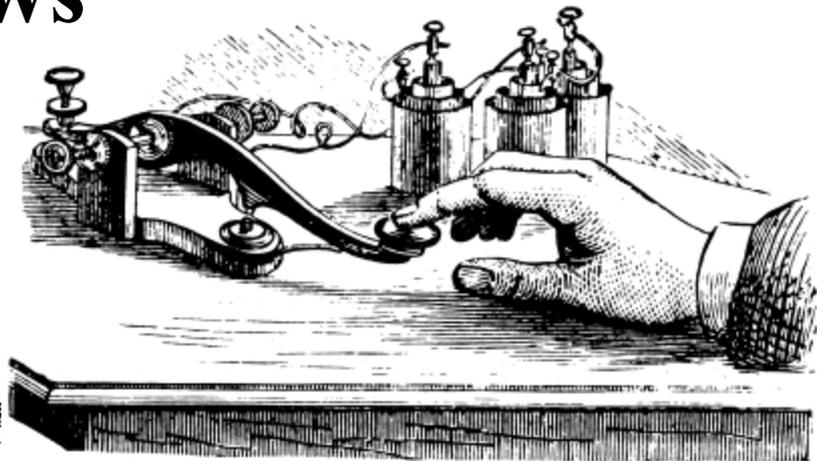


# SHA eNews



*Society for the History of Astronomy electronic news*  
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Editor: Clive Davenhall

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## Dates for the Diary

**Sat. 9 Apr.** *SHA Spring Conference*, at the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge. This event is now imminent. Full details are included in this *eNews*.

**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. Flyers were circulated with the January *eNews* and *AA5*. Contact: Wayne Orchiston (Wayne.Orchiston@jcu.edu.au) (non-SHA event).

**Sat. 25 Jun.** *A Celebration of Thomas Wright*, at the University of Bristol. Further details are given under 'Other news' towards the end of this issue (non-SHA event).

**Sat. 16 Jul.** *SHA Summer picnic*, at the Orwell Park Observatory, which is in Orwell Park School, in the village of Nacton, near Ipswich, Suffolk. This splendid Observatory is run by the The Orwell Astronomical Society. Tickets cost £10.00 for both members and non-members. Cheques should be sent to the General Secretary, Kevin Kilburn (contact details at the end of this *eNews*) or pay in person at the Cambridge meeting.

**Thr. 15 to Sun. 18 Sep.** *Hevelius 2011*, Gdańsk, Poland. A meeting to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Johannes Hevelius, organised by the Gdańsk Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Institute for the History of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Further details are given under 'Other news' towards the end of this issue (non-SHA event).

**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 second announcement (about 0.1 Mbyte; PDF format) at: [http://www.ciuhct.com/seac2011/docs/2ndAnnouncement\\_SEAC2011.pdf](http://www.ciuhct.com/seac2011/docs/2ndAnnouncement_SEAC2011.pdf) (non-SHA event).

**Fri. 14 to Sun. 16 Oct.** *Heavenly Discourses: Myth, Astronomy and Culture*, at the University of Bristol. Further details were given in the January *eNews* (non-SHA event).

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

Finally, the exhibition *Growing Knowledge: The Evolution of Research* at the British Library, St Pancras, may be of interest to some members. Further details are given under 'Other news' towards the end of this issue.

## SHA news

### *Important: Volunteers Sought for Council Posts*

The SHA will be nine years old this summer. Council's current priorities are to recruit new members, to review and enhance the benefits of membership, and to further encourage research in the history of astronomy through our publications and the Survey of Astronomical History hosted on the Society's Web site. There is lots of scope for new initiatives. These aspirations necessitate encouraging new blood with fresh ideas and skills to get involved now, this summer.

Specifically, several Officers have either had to stand down or are planning to stand down in the Autumn and we need to recruit replacements. After seven years of remarkable and effective leadership, our Chairman Gilbert Satterthwaite wishes to stand down at the October AGM. Gilbert is only the Society's second Chairman in its nine years. He has a nomination from within Council, but additional nominations by members are welcome. For personal reasons our popular General Secretary Kevin Kilburn must also stand down by October. Our Webmaster David Henderson has had to stand down, but happily has recently been replaced by Stuart Williams (further details are given later in this issue).

### *Immediate Priorities*

There are two immediate priorities. Firstly, we need to find a willing and suitable new **Chairman**. Secondly Kevin Kilburn needs to stand down as **General Secretary**. The primary responsibilities of the General Secretary are twofold, and could readily be divided between: (a) an **Events Secretary** to plan (with input from Council members) and organise two speaker meetings and a summer picnic each year, to prepare flyers or e-mail notices for them and to collect bookings; and (b) a **Business Secretary** to draft, in consultation with Council, the agenda for each of the two annual Council meetings and the AGM, and to minute those meetings. For both those roles keenness and being well organised and friendly is more important than previous experience.

In addition we have identified two new posts for which volunteers are needed: a **Publicity Secretary**, to take responsibility for publicising the Society's activities, and a **Recruitment Secretary** to coordinate the strategy for recruiting new members. Neither role is onerous but they do require some imagination and flair. They could be undertaken jointly or separately. The duties might include, for example, helping to prepare recruiting material for our table at the FAS Convention in October, drafting short articles about the Society or adverts aimed at the readership of astronomy magazines and, of course, your own new ideas.

It is possible, indeed encouraged, for anyone interested to 'test the water' before making a formal commitment: the SHA is run by a friendly Council and Officers. They liaise by any member asking a question or raising an issue for frank discussion within a Council e-mail group and by occasional meetings (attendance at which is not mandatory). If you are

interested in any of the vacant posts (or in contributing in other ways, such as assisting with the publications), it would be possible to co-opt you to join the e-mail group so that you can read the traffic, see how things work, contribute your opinion, and also, when ready, shadow a role so that you can discuss queries in more detail with the incumbent.

If further information from an informal chat would help you to decide to give it a try, please e-mail Kevin Kilburn (kkilburn@globalnet.co.uk), Stuart Williams (a.stuart.williams@gmail.com), Madeline Cox (library@shastro.org.uk) or any other Council member ((the full Council is listed on the back of *The Antiquarian Astronomer*, in the *Bulletin* and on the Society's Web site).

The SHA has clear aspirations and momentum but 2011 will also be a year of change. We need your active support to maximise the opportunities. Don't delay – please do contact us to explore your thoughts about serving in some capacity that appeals to you.

## **Book Reviewer Sought**

Would you like to review a book about Thomas Bugge's Tour of Germany, Holland and England in 1771, for a future issue of the *Bulletin*? One of the co-authors, Peter de Clercq, gave us a talk on this topic during the 2009 SHA Conference (see *Bulletin* Issue **20**, Summer 2010, p24). The book looks fascinating and is copiously illustrated:

Pedersen, Kurt Moller & De Clercq, Peter. *An Observer of Observatories: The Journal of Thomas Bugge's Tour of Germany, Holland and England in 1777*. Aarhus, University Press, 2010.

Don't worry if you're not used to writing reviews – we can offer help as required. If you are interested, or would like to find out more, please contact Madeline Cox, Reviews Editor (e-mail: library@shastro.org.uk).

## Spring Conference

The SHA *Spring Conference* for 2011 is imminent: it will be held on Saturday 9 April at the Institute of Astronomy (IOA), Cambridge. The 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 an 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*

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/>

## Forthcoming and Future Meetings

### 2011 Autumn Conference and AGM

The 2011 SHA *Autumn Conference and AGM* will be held on Saturday 29 October at the BMI in central Birmingham. The programme is currently being arranged. Items that are already finalised include a new talk on Sir George Airy by Dr Allan Chapman. In addition,

Brian Sheen, Director of the Roseland Observatory, Cornwall, will speak on ‘The life and times of John Couch Adams from 1819 to 1847.’ Dr Sheen has uncovered unpublished sources on Adams’ early years, which he believes are significant in explaining his approach to research. We are seeking one or two additional talks and offers are most welcome. If you are interested please contact Kevin Kilburn (details at the end of this issue).

### **Outline Programme for 2012**

The current outline programme for 2012 is as follows.

**April (date TBD).** *Spring Conference*, probably to be held at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

**Sat. 9 Jun (TBC).** *Summer Picnic*. The venue is not decided, but a possibility under consideration is Carr House, Much Hoole, Lancashire, from where in 1639 Jeremiah Horrocks made the first observation of a transit of Venus.

**Sat. 27 Oct.** *Autumn Conference and AGM*, at the BMI in central Birmingham.

### **Suggestions for the 2013 Programme**

The options for meetings in 2013 are being considered. Possibilities for the Spring Conference include the historic Chetham’s Library in Manchester, where two successful meetings have already been held, or a venue in Durham.

Several members have suggested holding the Summer Picnic in Sidmouth in order to visit the Norman Lockyer Observatory. On the one hand there are concerns that this location may be too remote to attract enough members to make the event viable; on the other members may choose to make the picnic a part of a longer break in an attractive part of the country.

Council will seek a show of hands at both the Cambridge meeting in April and the BMI in October, and be guided accordingly. Your preferences, comments and suggestions for alternative venues are most welcome. Please do make your views known either in person at one of the meetings or by e-mail to the General Secretary, Kevin Kilburn (contact details at the end of this *eNews*).

### **Council Meetings in 2011**

Council held a productive meeting at the premises of the RAS, Burlington House, London on Sat. 12 March. The following meeting is scheduled for the remainder of the year:

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).

## **SHA Stand at the FAS Convention**

For outreach and recruiting purposes the SHA will have a table at the Federation of Astronomical Societies Convention to be held at the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge on Saturday 15 October. Details of this event are available on the FAS Web site: <http://www.fedastro.org.uk/fas/>

## **David Henderson**

As mentioned earlier in this *eNews*, David Henderson, the Society's long-standing Webmaster has had to stand down due to accumulating work and family commitments. David has done sterling work on the Society's Web site and we thank him most warmly for his contribution.

## **The SHA Web Site**

Following David Henderson's resignation (above) Stuart Williams has stepped in as the new Webmaster. He has been involved in the site since its inception and brings a wealth of experience to the role. He has already given the site a spring clean and plans further enhancements. You are encouraged to visit the site, which is at: <http://www.shastro.org.uk>

## **The Antiquarian Astronomer**

Volume 5 of the Society's journal *The Antiquarian Astronomer* was despatched to members during March. It was completed under its new Executive Editor, Kevin Johnson, and contains a collection of refereed papers presenting original research in the history of astronomy. We hope that you enjoyed it. Once again we apologise for the delay in completing this issue. If you have not received your copy then please contact Peter Hingley (contact details at the end of this issue), who handles distribution.

We plan 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. Papers for consideration for publication in *The Antiquarian Astronomer* are always welcome. If you are interested in

submitting one then please contact the Executive Editor, Kevin Johnson (contact details at the end of this issue), who will be pleased to advise.

## **The SHA Bulletin**

Preparation of the next issue of the *SHA Bulletin* is in progress and we hope that it will be published in the late 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 (contact details at the end of this issue).

## **Membership Subscription for 2011**

*Formally membership renewals for 2011 were due by 31 March and if you did not renew by this date your membership has lapsed.* In practice we will accept renewals for a while and, in any event, new or rejoining members are always welcome.

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).

## **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

### Conference: *Hevelius 2011*

The conference *Hevelius 2011* will be held from 15 to 18 September 2011 in Gdańsk, Poland. It is being organised by the Gdańsk Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Institute for the History of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences to mark the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Johannes Hevelius. The meeting will bring together historians, historians of art, historians of science, historians of technology, and researchers who work on different aspects of Hevelius' life and work. The aim of the conference is to encourage Hevelius scholarship and to show his achievements in the broader seventeenth-century European context.

The keynote speakers will include:

- Suzanne Débarbat and Laurence Bobis (Paris Observatory) on Hevelius' manuscripts in France,
- Kathrin Müller (Frankfurt University) on Hevelius' visual representations,
- Klaus-Dieter Herbst (Bremen University) on Hevelius and his correspondence with scholars in Leipzig and Jena,
- Felix Lühning (Archenhold Observatory, Berlin) on Hevelius' observatory and his giant telescopes,
- Voula Saridakis (Lake Forest College, USA) on the Hevelius-Hooke controversy,
- Mordechai Feingold (California Institute of Technology, USA) on Hevelius' complex relationship with the Royal Society of London,
- Derek Jensen (Brigham Young University, Idaho, USA) on judgments of Hevelius,
- Richard L. Kremer (Dartmouth College, Hanover, USA) on Gdańsk table/calendar makers.

Proposals to present papers are welcome but note that the deadline for submissions is 30 April. A preliminary announcement with further details is available at:

<http://ihnpaw.waw.pl/2011/01/hevelius-2011-15%E2%80%9318-september-2011-gdansk-poland-call-for-papers/?lang=en>

Alternatively, contact Jarosław Włodarczyk (e-mail: [jaroslawwladarczyk@wp.pl](mailto:jaroslawwladarczyk@wp.pl)).

## **Conference: *A Celebration of Thomas Wright***

The Institute for Garden and Landscape History, University of Bristol will host the meeting *A Celebration of Thomas Wright* on Saturday 25 June 2011. This meeting is part of a series of events to mark Wright's tercentenary. Thomas Wright (1711-86) was a largely self-taught polymath who variously worked as an itinerant lecturer and teacher and a landscape gardener. He had wide ranging interests which included theology, astronomy, natural philosophy and kindred subjects. Within astronomy he is mostly remembered for his attempts to explain the appearance of the Milky Way as an assemblage of stars. He notably expounded his ideas in *An Original Theory or New Hypothesis of the Universe* (1750).

Outside astronomy Wright is celebrated for his contributions to landscape gardening. The meeting will cover all aspects of his life and work. Thus it is not solely, of even primarily, about his astronomy, but Sir Arnold Wolfendale is one of the contributors. Further information and a booking form are available at:

<http://www.gardenhistoryinstitute.co.uk/events.html>

## **Exhibition: *Growing Knowledge***

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 16 July. See: <http://www.growingknowledge.bl.uk/Default.aspx>

## **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 2011 the Library will be open 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on the following Saturdays:

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.

## **eNews admin**

### **Next Issue**

The next issue will be circulated around 1 July 2011.

Contributions for inclusion in this issue should reach me by 18 June 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](mailto:newsletter@shastro.org.uk)

**All correspondence regarding *The Antiquarian Astronomer* should be sent to:**

Kevin L. Johnson. 38, Tuns Hill Cottages, Reading, RG6 1NB, UK.  
e-mail: [theaar@shastro.org.uk](mailto:theaar@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](mailto: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](mailto:kkilburn@globalnet.co.uk)

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