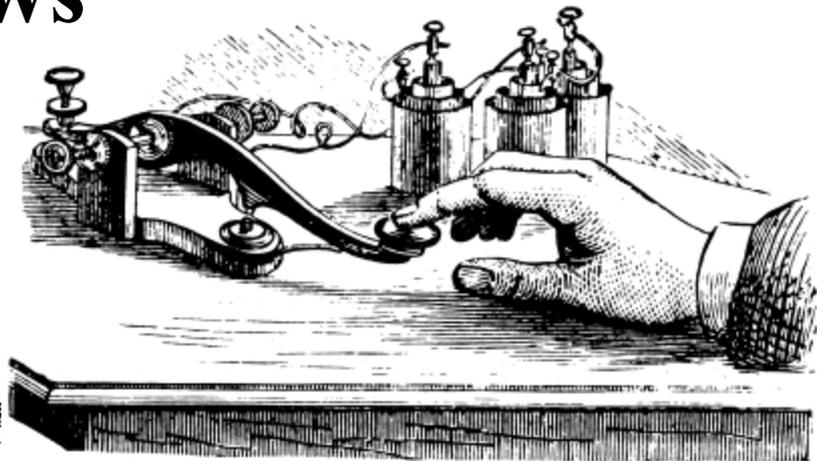


SHA eNews



Society for the History of Astronomy electronic news

Volume 3, no. 4, October 2011.

Editor: Clive Davenhall

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Dates for the Diary

2011

Imminent: Fri. 14 to Sun. 16 Oct. *Heavenly Discourses: Myth, Astronomy and Culture*, at the University of Bristol. For further details see: <http://heavenlydiscourses.org/> (non-SHA event).

Imminent: Sat. 15 Oct. *Nevil Maskelyne (1732-1811): an Astronomical Career in Context*, a symposium at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich to commemorate the bicentenary of Maskelyne's death. For further details see: <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/researchers/conferences-and-seminars/nevil-maskelyne-symposium> (non-SHA event).

Imminent: Sat. 29 Oct. *SHA Autumn Conference and AGM*, at the BMI in central Birmingham. 10:00am to 5:00pm. SHA Members and non-members £10. Prior booking necessary. Full details are given later in this *eNews*.

2012

Sat. 28 Apr. *SHA Spring Conference*, at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Further details later in this *eNews*.

Sat. 5 May. *Astronomy in the Industrial Age (1700-1900)*, BAA Historical Section Meeting at Soho House, Birmingham (non-SHA event). Further details later in this *eNews*.

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

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

Exhibitions

Until Sun. 11 Dec. 2011: *Omens and Inspirations: Ice, Dust and Fire – the Story of the Great Comet of 1811*, at the Herschel Museum of Astronomy, Bath. Further details are given later in this *eNews*.

Until Sun. 15 Jan. 2012: *Atkinson Grimshaw: Painter of Moonlight*, at the Guildhall Art Gallery, London. Further details are given later in this *eNews*.

Until Sun. 11 Mar 2012: *Astronomical: the Beauty of a Thousand Stars*, at the Derby Museum and Art Gallery, Derby. Further details are given later in this *eNews*.

SHA news

Important: Volunteers Urgently Needed for Society Posts

Volunteers are urgently needed to fill two posts that will become vacant after the AGM at the end of October. As advised in recent issues of the *eNews*, several of the Society's Officers have either had to stand down or are planning to stand down at the AGM. Replacements have been successfully recruited for several posts (further details are given later in this *eNews*). However, a replacement **General Secretary** is still needed once the long-serving incumbent, Kevin Kilburn, stands down at the AGM. In order to reduce the workload part of the General Secretary's duties have been split off into the new post of **Events Officer**, who will be responsible for arranging the Society's meetings.



**Your
Society
Needs
YOU!**

The principal duties of the **General Secretary** are to draft, in consultation with Council, the agenda for Council meetings and the AGM, and to minute those meetings. In addition the General Secretary acts as the first point of contact for external inquiries to the Society.

The **Events Officer** will plan (with input from Council members) and organise two speaker meetings and a summer picnic each year, prepare flyers or e-mail notices for these meetings and collect bookings. The 2012 programme is already well-advanced so the workload should be light in the first year, thus allowing the volunteer ample time to settle in.

For both roles keenness and being well-organised and friendly is more important than previous experience. However access to e-mail is essential as most Council business is conducted this way. If you are interested in either post then in the first instance please contact any member of Council who will be pleased to provide further details and advise (some contact details are given at the end of this *eNews* and there are more on the Society's Web site).

The Society will be ten years old in 2012. It has achieved a great deal during this time, but there is still much to be done and many exciting possibilities to explore. However, in order to continue to function the Society needs officers. **We urge you most strongly to volunteer. These two posts must be filled at the AGM on 29 October or the Society will lack the officers that it needs to operate.**

Imminent: Autumn Conference and AGM

The 2011 SHA Autumn Conference and AGM will be held on Saturday 29 October at the Birmingham and Midland Institute (BMI) in central Birmingham. The programme is as follows:

- 9:30: Registration
- 10:00: Gilbert Satterthwaite, *Welcome and Introduction*
- 10:15 Clive Davenhall, *Lost World: Images of Mars Before the Space Age*
- 11:00 Brian Sheen, *The life and times of John Couch Adams from 1819 to 1847*
- 12:00 Lunch (not provided)
- 13:30 Gilbert Satterthwaite, *Welcome to the afternoon session*
- 13:30 Gilbert Satterthwaite, *2011 Annual General Meeting*
- 15:00 John Dee, *An Update on the Canals of Mars* (if time allows)
- 15:15 Afternoon refreshments
- 15:45 Dr Allan Chapman, *Airy's Greenwich Staff*
- 16:45 Gilbert Satterthwaite, *Concluding remarks*
- 17:00 Close

The list of Officers to be elected at the AGM is summarised in the next section. **You are urged to volunteer for the vacant posts.** Further details of the AGM, including an agenda and minutes of last year's AGM will be circulated shortly.

Tickets are £10.00 each for both members and non-members and can be obtained from the General Secretary, Kevin Kilburn (contact details at the end of this *eNews*). Cheques should be made payable to 'The Society for the History of Astronomy.' Booking in advance is greatly appreciated. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided during the afternoon break. However, you should make your own arrangements for refreshments prior to the meeting and for lunch. The BMI has a cafe and there are numerous cafes and restaurants close by.

The BMI is conveniently located in central Birmingham, within ten minutes walk of New Street station. Its address is 9, Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3BS. See: <http://www.bmi.org.uk>

Election of Officers for 2011/12

The Society's AGM to held on Saturday 29 October (above) will elect the Council for the following year. Currently the following nominations have been received:

Chair: Madeline Cox (proposed Gilbert Satterthwaite, seconded Roger Hutchins)

Vice Chair: Gilbert Satterthwaite (proposed Roger Hutchins, seconded Madeline Cox)

*** General Secretary: vacant ***

Treasurer: Roger Hutchins (proposed Kevin Kilburn, seconded Kevin Johnson)

Membership Secretary: Peter Hingley (proposed Kevin Kilburn, seconded Madeline Cox)

In addition to the above elected officers Council comprises up to seven elected Councillors. The following individuals are standing for election as Councillors:

Roger Jones (Survey Officer)

Mike Leggett (Publicity Officer)

Kevin Johnson (Editor, *The Antiquarian Astronomer*)

Mark Hurn (Archivist)

Jerry Grover

Anyone wishing to stand as the General Secretary, the Events Officer or as a Councillor should contact Kevin Kilburn as soon as possible (contact details at the end of this *eNews*). In the absence of further volunteers the following individuals have indicated their willingness to be co-opted as a Councillor.

Clive Davenhall,

Stuart Williams,

Kevin Kilburn (retiring General Secretary)

Appointed Officers

In addition to its elected Council the Society has a number of appointed officers. Such officers are appointed by, report to and may be dismissed by Council. Councillors can (and often will) hold appointed posts, but the two roles are separate. The current list of appointed officers is as follows:

Editor, <i>The Antiquarian Astronomer</i> :	Kevin Johnson
Assistant Editor, <i>The Antiquarian Astronomer</i> :	Elliss Sharpe (designate)
Layout Editor, <i>The Antiquarian Astronomer</i> :	Peter Grego
Editor, <i>eNews</i> and <i>Bulletin</i> :	Clive Davenhall
Assistant Editor, <i>Bulletin</i> :	Madeline Cox
Layout Editor, <i>Bulletin</i> :	Peter Grego
Webmaster:	Stuart Williams
Publicity Officer:	Mike Leggett
* Events Officer	<i>vacant</i> *
Survey Officer:	Roger Jones
Librarian:	Madeline Cox
Research Librarian:	Stuart Williams
Archivist:	Mark Hurn

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/>

Recent Events

The Society's annual picnic was held on Saturday 16 July at the Orwell Park Observatory, Orwell Park School, in the village of Nacton, near Ipswich, Suffolk. The Society was made extremely welcome by the Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich; OASI). In addition to the picnic itself there were tours of, and talks about, the Observatory, with its splendid Victorian Tomline Refractor. The Society is most grateful to OASI for making the day so enjoyable and informative. A report will appear in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.

Meetings Programme for 2012

The outline programme for 2012 is as follows. In all cases further details will be announced later.

Sat. 28 Apr. *Spring Conference*, at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. The following talks have already been confirmed:

Gilbert Satterthwaite, *Being an Astronomer at the Royal Observatory in the 1950s*

Gilbert is the Society's retiring Chairman and will be well-known to most members. He was a member of staff at the Royal Observatory in the post-war years and made the last observations with the Airy Transit Circle. This talk should include many fascinating insights into the Observatory's routine in the mid-century.

Roger Davies, *The Gemini telescopes – Britain's Quest for Large Telescopes*

Prof. Davies is currently President of the RAS and was formerly much involved in the planning and work for the Gemini telescopes.

Mike Dworetsky, *The Mill Hill Observatory of the University of London*

Dr Mike Dworetsky is a long-serving Senior Astronomer at the University of London Observatory, Mill Hill and was the Observatory's Acting Director and then Director from 1996 until his (notional) retirement in 2008. He will describe the history of this institution and its important historic instruments.

Roger Jones, *An Overview of the SHA Survey*

Roger is the organiser of the Society's Survey of Local Astronomical History. He will present an overview of the Survey together with some nuggets from it.

There is still some space in the programme and offers of talks are welcome. Anyone interested in presenting their work should contact the General Secretary (contact details at the end of this *eNews*).

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

Sat. 27 Oct. *Autumn Conference and AGM*, at the BMI in central Birmingham. Offers of talks (which may be of thirty, forty or fifty minutes duration) are welcome. Anyone interested in presenting their work should contact the General Secretary (contact details at the end of this *eNews*).

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 have been taking advice from members on this issue and will seek a further show of hands at 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 the BMI or by e-mail to the General Secretary (contact details at the end of this *eNews*).

Council Meetings in 2011/12

Council held a productive meeting at the BMI in central Birmingham on Sat. 10 September. The following meetings are scheduled for the remainder of 2011 and 2012:

- Sat. 12 November 2011, at the premises of the RAS, Burlington House, London,
- Sat. 10 March 2012, venue TBC,
- Sat. 8 September 2012, venue TBC.

Council aims to usually meet three times per year and a third meeting during 2012 will be arranged. Council meetings are not open due to lack of space, but any member may attend by prior arrangement with the General Secretary. Similarly, if you have any issue that you would like to raise with Council then please contact the General Secretary in advance (contact details at the end of this *eNews*).

SHA Name Badges

Name badges are obviously helpful to everyone attending a meeting. Many members will still have their original badge, as issued by Ken Goward. However, if you have lost yours, or have joined the SHA more recently, and would like a name badge to wear at our meetings, please contact Roger Hutchins (e-mail direct roger.hutchins@magd.oxon.org). Affiliations, such as FRAS and/or an astronomical society that you are a member of, can be added if you wish.

Publications

The much-delayed Summer 2011 issue of the SHA *Bulletin* (no. 21 in the series) is currently being laid out for publication. We hope that it will reach you by the end of October. The mix of items in no. 21 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. Letters and short articles could include photographs that you have discovered, informal descriptions of an observatory or astronomer or other interesting snippets from your local knowledge, research or reading. All such items can also contribute to the Society's Survey.

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 eNews).

Volume 6 of *The Antiquarian Astronomer* is on schedule for publication around the end of 2011. We are delighted to report that Elliss Sharpe has kindly agreed to take on the role of Assistant Editor. Papers for consideration for publication in *The Antiquarian Astronomer* are always welcome. If you are interested in submitting one then please contact the Editor, Kevin Johnson (contact details at the end of this eNews), who will be pleased to advise.

Other news

BAA Historical Section Meeting

The next meeting of the BAA Historical Section will be held on Saturday 5 May 2012 from 10:00 am to 5:00pm at Soho House, Handsworth, Birmingham. Soho House was the home of the eighteenth-century industrialist Matthew Boulton and meeting place of the Lunar Society, whose members included James Watt, Erasmus Darwin and Josiah Wedgwood. The theme of the meeting will be *Astronomy in the Industrial Age (1700-1900)* but offers of talks on all subjects will be considered. Anyone interested in offering a talk should contact the Section Director, Mike Frost (e-mail: frostma@aol.com). SHA members are most welcome.

For further details see the BAA Historical Section's Web site: <http://www.britastro.org/history>

The Museum Boerhaave

The Scientific Instrument Society is currently calling for volunteers and donors to assist in saving the Museum Boerhaave in the Netherlands, which is threatened with closure.

The Boerhaave is an iconic museum for anyone interested in the history of scientific instruments. It is one of only a handful of major museums in the world devoted to the history of science. The catalogues that it issues are very important sources of information about scientific instruments. Last but by no means least the Museum's alumni play an important role in the academic study of instruments throughout the world. The loss of this wonderful resource would be a body blow to the discipline of the history of science. To avoid closure under the present proposals the Museum needs to raise around a million euros.

To read more and/or make a donation see: <http://www.sis.org.uk/donation/donation>

Further information is also available from the Museum's Web site. See (for the English version): <http://www.museumboerhaave.nl/english/>

Institute of Astronomy Library, Cambridge Facebook Group

Mark Hurn, Librarian at the Institute of Astronomy (IoA), Cambridge has recently set up a Facebook group for the IoA Library. The group is likely to be of interest anyone interested in astronomical history and libraries. SHA members are most welcome to join. The link is: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/221028344616052/>

LPOD 17 September 2011

Perhaps more ‘history and astronomy’ than ‘history of astronomy’, but the LPOD (Lunar Photo. of the Day) for 17 September 2011 may be of interest. It shows a dramatic photograph of a Harvest Moon rising above the Basilica di Superga just outside Turin which was completed in 1731. See: <http://lpod.wikispaces.com/September+17%2C+2011>

Exhibition: *Astronomical: the Beauty of a Thousand Stars*

The Derby Museum and Art Gallery, Derby is currently hosting the exhibition *Astronomical: the Beauty of a Thousand Stars* which features items from the Museum’s collections depicting astronomical imagery, including plates from Flamsteed’s *Atlas Coelestis* (Flamsteed was born in Denby in Derbyshire). The exhibition is part of the *Wright of Derby* festival to celebrate the painter Joseph Wright (1734-97), of whose work the Museum has an important collection. Wright’s work often includes scientific equipment, such as *The Orrery* or *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump*.

The exhibition runs until 11 March 2012. For further information see: http://www.derby.gov.uk/LeisureCulture/MuseumsGalleries/Derby_Museum_and_Art_Gallery.htm

Exhibition: *Omens and Inspirations: Ice, Dust and Fire – the Story of the Great Comet of 1811*

The Herschel Museum of Astronomy, Bath will be familiar to many members. It has recently opened the new Caroline Lucretia Gallery which will provide a suitable venue for its temporary exhibitions. The first such is *Omens and Inspirations: Ice, Dust and Fire – the Story of the Great Comet of 1811* which commemorates the bicentenary of the Great Comet of 1811. In addition to items from its own collections the exhibition includes items lent by the RAS, the Science Museum, the National Library of Scotland and various private collections.

The exhibition runs until 11 December 2011. An article about it was recently published in *Astronomy and Geophysics*, (October 2011, **52**(5), pp16-17). For further information see: <http://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk/?id=8>

Exhibition: *Atkinson Grimshaw: Painter of Moonlight*

The Guildhall Art Gallery, London is currently presenting the exhibition *Atkinson Grimshaw: Painter of Moonlight* featuring the work of the self-taught Victorian landscape painter John Atkinson Grimshaw (1836 -93). Atkinson Grimshaw was fascinated by the play of light on landscape and many of his paintings show scenes illuminated by moonlight or the rising or setting Sun. As such they are not specifically astronomical but may appeal to some members.

The exhibition runs until 15 January 2012. For further details see:

http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/LGNL_Services/Leisure_and_culture/Museums_and_galleries/Guildhall_Art_Gallery/

The Richard Green commercial gallery of New Bond Street, London is also running a selling exhibition of Atkinson Grimshaw's work until 23 October 2011. A fully illustrated catalogue is available for £25.00. See: <http://www.richard-green.com>

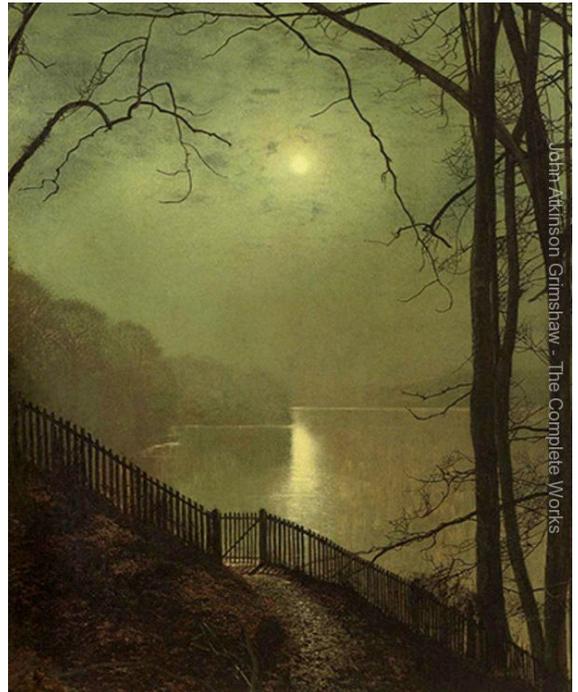
An extensive collection of Atkinson Grimshaw's work (unconnected with either exhibition) is available on-line at: <http://www.johnatkinsongrimshaw.org/>

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:

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.



*Moonlight on the Lake, Roundhay Park,
Leeds by John Atkinson Grimshaw
(courtesy of
<http://www.johnatkinsongrimshaw.org/>)*

Prepublication Offer: *Astrologies* from the Sophia Centre Press

The Sophia Centre Press centre are generously offering a discount for prepublication orders for their latest title, *Astrologies*, the Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Sophia Centre Conference, held in 2010.

Astrologies

Eds. Nicholas Campion and Liz Greene

Paperback, 265 pp,

Publication 23 October 2011,

normal price: £28

Prepublication Offer

Orders received before 23 October attract the pre-publication price of £18.00, including postage and packing.

For further details, including a contents list and to order see:

<http://www.sophiacentrepress.com/publications.html>

The *Astrologies* conference, organised by the Sophia Centre, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution on 24-25 July 2010 was the first gathering of academics working in the history and culture of modern astrology. The range of topics explored in the publication of the conference proceedings is broad, and reflects the striking diversity of techniques and underlying philosophies which underlie the enduring human perception of meaningful relationships between the heavenly bodies and life on earth. Although astrology has been treated in many scholarly works as a monolithic entity, all of the papers in this book demonstrate one of the paradoxes of astrological thought and practice: the existence of a relatively stable tradition of cosmological and astral representations and ideas combined with a adaptability that has enabled astrologies to meld with different spheres of human endeavour in a variety of cultures. The papers are grouped into three basic themes: the symbolism of astrologies, the history of astrologies within different cultural con-texts, and the practice of various astrologies from both ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ perspectives.

eNews admin

Next Issue

The next issue will be circulated around 1 January 2012.

Contributions for inclusion in this issue should reach me by 18 December 2011.

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

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

Kevin L. Johnson. 38, Tuns Hill Cottages, Reading, RG6 1NB, UK.

e-mail: theaa@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:

Before 29 October 2011: Kevin Kilburn FRAS. 158, Low Leighton Road, New Mills, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK22 4JF, UK. e-mail: kkilburn@globalnet.co.uk

After 29 October 2011: please contact Madeline Cox, e-mail: madeline.cox@gmail.com until we advise otherwise in early November following the recruitment of a new General Secretary.

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