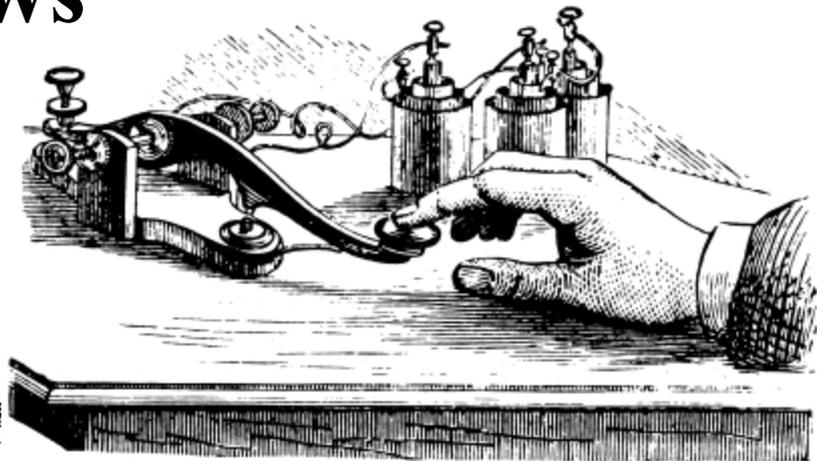


# SHA eNews



*Society for the History of Astronomy electronic news*  
Volume 4, no. 2, April 2012.

Editor: Clive Davenhall

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## Dates for the Diary

**Sat. 28 Apr, *Imminent*: SHA Spring Conference**, at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Full details are given later in this *eNews*.

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

**Sat. 19 May. Keele Observatory Fiftieth Anniversary**, at Keele University, Staffordshire. An event to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Keele Observatory. Further details are given later in this *eNews* (non-SHA event).

**Sat. 9 Jun. SHA Summer Outing** at Carr House and St Michael's Church, Much Hoole, Lancashire, from where Jeremiah Horrocks made the first observation of a transit of Venus in 1639. Details are given later in this *eNews*.

**Sat. 23 - Sun 24. Jun. Astrology in Time and Place: Cross-Cultural Questions in the History of Astrology.** The tenth Sophia Centre Conference, to be held at the Royal Literary and Scientific Institution, Bath. Further details are given later in this *eNews* (non-SHA event).

**Sat. 21 Jul. SHA Summer Picnic** at the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge. This picnic marks the tenth anniversary of the Founding of the SHA and there will be talks to commemorate the occasion. Further details are given later in this *eNews*.

**Mon. 24 to Sat. 29 Sep. SEAC 2012: Ancient Cosmologies and Modern Prophets.** Annual meeting of the Société Européenne pour L'Astronomie dans la Culture (SEAC). To be hosted by the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC-SAZU), Ljubljana, Slovenia. See <http://seac2012.zrc-sazu.si>. The flyer for the first announcement is available at <http://www.archeoastronomy.org/downloads/seac2012-1stannouncement.pdf>. Note the deadline for submission of abstracts for contributions is 1 May 2012 (non-SHA event).

**Sat. 27 Oct. SHA Autumn Conference and AGM**, at the BMI in central Birmingham. The programme is now finalised and a flyer with further details is available from the Society's Web site. All inquiries should be addressed to Madeline Cox (contact details at the end of this *eNews*).

## ***Important:* Membership Subscriptions, and Event registration**

*Please note the revised address for membership renewals and event bookings given below.*

Many members will be aware that RAS Librarian and SHA Meetings and Membership Secretary Peter Hingley began the year with a period of serious ill-health, necessitating a stay in St Thomas' Hospital, London. Peter was necessarily out of action during this period, though we are pleased to report that he is now making a good recovery. To assist his recuperation Peter has been relieved of all his specific SHA duties, though remains a member of Council.

SHA Treasurer Roger Hutchins has kindly agreed to be co-opted as Acting Membership Secretary and will also handle all event and bookings and pre-registration. These arrangements will apply until the AGM in October.

*Thus, henceforth all membership renewals and event bookings should be sent to:*

Dr Roger Hutchins, 1D, Fox Furlong, Littlemore, Oxford OX4 4XD, UK.  
e-mail: roger.hutchins@magd.oxon.org

*These instructions supersede any other addresses previously advised.*

Though it is usually possible to just turn up to SHA events and pay 'on the day,' pre-booking helps enormously with the arrangements, for example with estimating the numbers for catering. We encourage you to pre-book if at all possible.

Finally, thank you if you have already renewed your membership for 2012. The Society is most grateful for your continued interest and support. If you have not yet renewed then formally your membership lapsed at the end of March, though we will continue to send you e-mail communications for a while. For convenience the 2012 membership rates are listed below. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Society for the History of Astronomy' and sent to Roger Hutchins at the above address.

<b>Membership category</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Ordinary Membership	£25.00
Family Membership	£30.00
Concessionary Membership	£20.00
Institutional Membership	£20.00
Overseas Supplement	£10.00

## ***Imminent:* 2012 Spring Conference**

The SHA *Spring Conference* for 2012 will be held on Saturday 28 April and will make a welcome return to the impressive surroundings of the National Maritime Museum (NMM), Greenwich . The programme is as follows.

- 9:30 Registration
- 10:00 Madeline Cox, Welcome to the NMM
- 10:15 Gilbert Satterthwaite, *Being an Astronomer at the Royal Observatory in the 1950s*
- 11:15 Coffee break
- 11:45 Roger Davies, *The Gemini Telescopes – Britain's Quest for Large Telescopes*
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:30 Madeline Cox, Welcome back
- 14:30 Mike Dworetzky, *The Mill Hill Observatory of the University of London – and Maximising its Historic Instruments*
- 15:30 Afternoon break
- 16:00 Roger Jones, *The SHA Survey of Astronomical History*
- 17:00 Madeline Cox, Close



Tickets are £10 per person and should be booked in advance if at all possible. Guests or non-members are most welcome. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Society for the History of Astronomy' and sent to The Treasurer, Roger Hutchins, 1D, Fox Furlong, Littlemore, Oxford OX4 4XD.

Light refreshments will be provided at breaks, but delegates are asked to make their own provision for lunch. There is an excellent café/restaurant nearby in the Museum and pubs within walking distance. A flyer is included with this *eNews*.

The address of the NMM is National Maritime Museum, Romney Road, Greenwich, London SE10 9NF (telephone: 020 8858 4422). Further details, including directions, are available on the Museum's Web site: <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/>

Brief details of the speakers are as follows.

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

Gilbert was the Society's Chairman 2004-2011 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 Philip Wetton Professor of Astrophysics at the University of Oxford and currently President of the RAS. He is a cosmologist and co-discoverer of the 'Great Attractor.' He led the UK participation in the construction of 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 and will be well-known to many members. He will present an overview of the Survey together with some nuggets from it.

## **2012 Meeting Programme**

In addition to the *Spring Conference*, summarised above, during 2012 the SHA will hold the usual *Autumn Conference*, which will include the AGM. In addition there will be a *Summer Outing* to Carr House and St Michael's Church, Much Hoole, Lancashire on the Saturday closest to the 2012 transit of Venus. It was from Carr House that Jeremiah Horrocks made the first observations of a Venus transit in 1639. 2012 marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of the SHA and to mark this milestone a special *Summer Picnic* will be held at the Institute of Astronomy (IOA), Cambridge. This event will include several talks to celebrate the Society's first ten years. Further details of the *Summer Outing* and the *Summer Picnic* follow.

## **2012 Summer Outing**

***Please note that booking for this event is now closed. Space is limited and the maximum number of attendees has been reached.***

The SHA will hold a *Summer Outing* on Saturday 9 June to Carr House and St Michael's church, Much Hoole, near Preston in Lancashire. It was from Carr House that Jeremiah Horrocks made the first observations of a Transit of Venus in 1639. Horrocks had connections with the nearby church of St Michael (he is often mistakenly said to have been a curate there) and the church has various memorabilia associated with him. The outing will include visits to both locations. It will be held on the Saturday closest to the transit of Venus on 6 June (the end of which will just be visible from the UK immediately after dawn, weather permitting). The next transits of Venus will not occur until December 2117 and 2125.

The visit will be hosted by Clive and Jane Elphick who own Carr House and who have very kindly offered to show us the upstairs room from where Horrocks is thought to have made the famous observation. SHA Hon. President, Dr Allan Chapman, who is also an Hon. Friend of St Michael's church, will give a talk, commencing *circa* 2pm in the church, about the historical significance of this important observation. We are very grateful to the Revd Derek Baines, Rector of St. Michael's, for making this venue available. Attendees should aim to arrive in the car park adjacent to the church around 1pm. The church postcode and Web site are respectively PR4 5JQ and [http://www.hoolevillage.com/home/st\\_michaels/index.html](http://www.hoolevillage.com/home/st_michaels/index.html).

IAU Colloquium 196: *Transits of Venus: New Views of the Solar System and Galaxy* included a visit to Carr House and St Michael's on the day of the previous transit, 8 June 2004. The write-up of that occasion in the *Newsletter* (no. 4, November 2004, p14) gives a taste of this summer's offering.

## 2012 Summer Picnic

The SHA *Summer Picnic* will be held on Saturday 21 July 2012 at the Institute of Astronomy (IoA), Cambridge and will be a celebration of the Society's tenth anniversary. Consequently the format will be slightly different to previous years: there will be several talks in the morning followed by the picnic itself. The programme for the morning is:

- 10:00 Registration
- 10:30 Madeline Cox, Welcome to the IoA
- 10:35 Roger Hutchins, *Oxford Observatories 1772-1939: Astronomy and Controversy*
- 11:20 Mark Hurn, Guided visit to the Rare Book Room in the Mead Building
- 12:00 Prof. Roger Griffin, *Binaries: a Reflector, and the Cambridge Observatories 1957-2012*
- 13:00 End of talks and start of picnic

There are no items scheduled for the afternoon. Attendees should bring their own picnic lunch; there are no catering establishments close to the IoA. The picnic is notionally timetabled to end at 14:30, though attendees are welcome to continue to enjoy the Observatory grounds. An alternative possibility is to explore historic Cambridge. The Observatory is on the outskirts of the town, but there is an omnibus stop across the road from the entrance (take a Citi 4 omnibus into town). Cars can be left in the IoA grounds for the duration. The Fitzwilliam Museum and the Colleges are open until 5:00pm but the Whipple Museum is not open on a Saturday.

Tickets are £10 per person and should be booked in advance if at all possible. Guests or non-members are most welcome; children up to age 16 are free. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Society for the History of Astronomy' and sent to The Treasurer, Roger Hutchins, 1D, Fox Furlong, Littlemore, Oxford OX4 4XD.

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/>

A flyer for this event is included with the mailing for this *eNews*.

## **The Survey of Astronomical History**

*The following item has been contributed by Roger Jones, who Co-ordinates Society's Survey of Astronomical History.*

Members will no doubt remember our announcement in December that in 2012, our tenth Anniversary Year, we would make a major effort to boost the Survey. I am pleased to report that it has so far generated about 200 'stubs'. These are all very welcome and have been added to our county pages. The whole project is inevitably cumulative. And many small offerings of one or a few stubs, or corrections/additions to existing stubs, soon adds depth and quality to our unique record of astronomical activity by county.

I am working to completely re-vamp the SHA's Survey Web site, including putting all our astronomy gleanings up front, with the local history connections and resources behind tabs. Some county pages contain photographic images and we will seek to add more illustrations to enhance the interest of browsing. And while we want to retain the separate county listing, we're trying to see how we can make the whole site searchable by key words. No other institution, Web site or book has attempted to offer – as we aspire to do – an attractive way into the astronomical heritage of each county. Our effort is unique.

I'm sure each of you has at least a couple of favourite astronomers or observatories that you would like to see put on record, and that you have a clear idea of why they are significant, and should be remembered. This is your chance, and, please, lets make 2012 the year it happens. Don't delay. Don't wait to perfect a larger piece of research. This doesn't cut across such efforts. Just look at a couple of our already 'busy' counties like Middlesex, Surrey or Lancashire, for examples of minimal and fuller stubs, then send me yours. I'll be delighted to hear from you ... many single stars make a galaxy ... You can put your name to a stub, or your initials, or just leave it anonymous. You are also welcome to submit additions or corrections if you think copy already on the site needs it.

And let us not forget the Survey competition. I said I would let you know more about a prize for the member who, in the opinion of Council, had contributed the most to the Survey during 2012.

*The prize will be a free year's SHA membership.*

We pride ourselves on being a very active Society where every member can get involved. So please don't keep your research to yourself ... share it with others.

Let's hear from you soon; e-mail me at ziksby@gmail.com.

*Roger Jones, Survey Co-ordinator.*

## **Council Meetings in 2012**

The first Council meeting of 2012 was held on Sat. 25 February at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Birmingham. The following meetings are scheduled for the remainder of the year:

- Sat. 23 June, at the premises of the RAS, Burlington House, London,
- Sat. 8 September, at the premises of the RAS, Burlington House, London,
- Sat. 10 November, at the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge.

Provisionally these meetings will start at 1:00 pm. 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*).

## **Publications**

Members should have received *Bulletin 21* shortly before Christmas and volume **6** of *The Antiquarian Astronomer* within the past couple of months. If you have not received a copy which you believe you are due then please contact the appropriate Editor in the first instance (contact details at the end of this *eNews*) and we will arrange dispatch of a replacement.

The next issues of the *Bulletin* and *The Antiquarian Astronomer* are in preparation. *Bulletin 22* should be out over the summer and volume **7** of *The Antiquarian Astronomer* around the start of 2013.

Papers for consideration for publication in *The Antiquarian Astronomer* are always welcome. Papers should present original research in the history of astronomy and are externally refereed prior to publication. If you are interested in submitting one then please contact the Editor, Kevin Johnson, who will be pleased to advise.

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.

## **Web site**

As previously advised, the URL of the SHA Web site is now:

<http://www.freewebs.com/sochistastro/>

The previous URL (<http://www.shastro.org.uk>) no longer functions correctly. (Strictly speaking the freewebs URL has been current for some time and the previous URL redirected to it. However, the redirection no longer works properly, so the freewebs URL should be used directly.)

## Other news

### **Imminent: 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 5:30pm 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)* and the following people will be speaking:

Kevin Kilburn, *The Forgotten Star Atlas: Bevis's Uranographica Britannica*  
Mike Leggett, *Bryan Donkin, FRS: Engineer, Industrialist and Astronomer*  
Mike Maunder, *The Early Years of Astrophotography*  
Stuart Williams, *William Henry Robinson: From Red Books to the Red Planet*  
Allan Chapman, *James Nasmyth: Astronomer of Fire* (Keynote speaker)

We are hoping that tours of Soho House will also be available. The cost will be £12 for non-BAA members (£10 OAP/student). For further details see the BAA Historical Section Web site: <http://www.britastro.org/history> or contact the Section Director, Mike Frost (frostma@aol.com). SHA members are most welcome.

### **Keele Observatory Fiftieth Anniversary Meeting**

2012 sees the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Keele Observatory. To mark the anniversary the University is holding a public meeting on Saturday 19 May 2012 with a historical theme; though the Observatory is half a century old some of its telescopes are of Victorian vintage. The current provisional programme is:

14:00 Dr Ron Maddison, *The First Fifty Years of The Keele Observatory*  
Claus Madsen, *The First Fifty Years of The European Southern Observatory*  
Prof. William Leatherbarrow, *The British Astronomical Association*  
16:00 Prof. Allan Chapman, *The Victorian Transits of Venus, 1874 and 1882*  
17:00 Close of formal presentations  
17:30 Visit to the Observatory and Sun and Star Party  
23:30 Close

Dr Maddison, now retired to Florida, was responsible for originally setting up the Observatory. Mr Claus Madsen is a senior member of staff of the European Southern Observatory, which coincidentally is also celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. The talks will be held in the Westminster theatre on the University's campus. After the presentations there will be a visit to the Observatory and, weather permitting, opportunities for viewing the Sun and other objects.

Attendance at the meeting is free of charge, but must be booked in advance because of limited seating. An on-line registration form, and other details such as campus maps and directions, are available from the event's Web site at URL:

<http://www.astro.keele.ac.uk/Observatory/history/50/event.html>

## **Astrology in Time and Place Conference**

The Tenth Annual Sophia Centre Conference, *Astrology in Time and Place: Cross-Cultural Questions in the History of Astrology*, will be held on Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 June 2012 at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute in the historic city of Bath. The meeting is organised by the Sophia Centre for the Study of Cosmology in Culture of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

The conference will consider questions surrounding the exchange of astrological ideas or practice between cultures, issues arising from their transmission from one period to another, or consider comparisons between the astrologies of different cultures. Astrology has been practised in some form in most cultures. In some it is rudimentary, in others complex. It may be considered magical, religious or scientific, or it may defy categorisation. There is evidence of the transmission of ideas in the near east between Egypt, Greece and Mesopotamia, and between the Near East, India and East Asia. In Mesoamerica and China technical forms arose which were entirely different to the Near Eastern tradition. Syncretism has been a major feature of astrology in India, Persia and Europe down to modern New Age culture and the globalisation of alternative spiritualities.

The keynote speakers include Prof. Charles Burnett (Warburg Institute), Prof. David Pankenier (Lehigh University) and Prof. Michael York (formerly Bath Spa University). The conference fees are £65 for both days or £45 for one day. Further information can be obtained from the conference Web site at URL:

<http://www.historyofastrology.org.uk/conferences/TimeAndPlace/>

The address of the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institute is: 16-19, Queen Square, Bath BA1 2HN, UK. Further details of this institution are available from its Web site at URL:

<http://www.brlsi.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 2012 the Library will be open 10:00 am to 12:30 pm and 1:30 to 5:00 pm on the following Saturdays:

5 May, 9 June, 7 July, 4 Aug, 1 Sept, 6 Oct, 3 Nov and 1 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 (e-mail: [pdh@ras.org.uk](mailto:pdh@ras.org.uk)) before undertaking a lengthy journey. You are also asked to advise him in advance of any special items (that is, ones not on the open shelves) that you require.

Mr Hingley is due to retire later in the year, probably, in October, so the November and December dates must be regarded as provisional. Readers are advised to contact the RAS to check whether the building will be open.

## eNews admin

### Next Issue

The next issue will be circulated around 1 July 2012.

Contributions for inclusion in this issue should reach me by 15 June 2012.

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

**Inquiries regarding membership or meetings** other than the *Autumn Conference* should be sent to the Acting Membership Secretary: Dr Roger Hutchins, 1D, Fox Furlong, Littlemore, Oxford OX4 4XD, UK. e-mail: roger.hutchins@magd.oxon.org. Inquiries about the *Autumn Conference* should be directed to Madeline Cox, 4, Rutland Close, Warsop, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG20 0DY, UK. e-mail: madeline.cox@googlemail.com

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

Stuart Williams. 26, Matlock Road, Bloxwich, Walsall, WS3 3QD, UK. e-mail: secretary@shastro.org.uk

**SHA Web site:** <http://www.freewebs.com/sochistastro/>