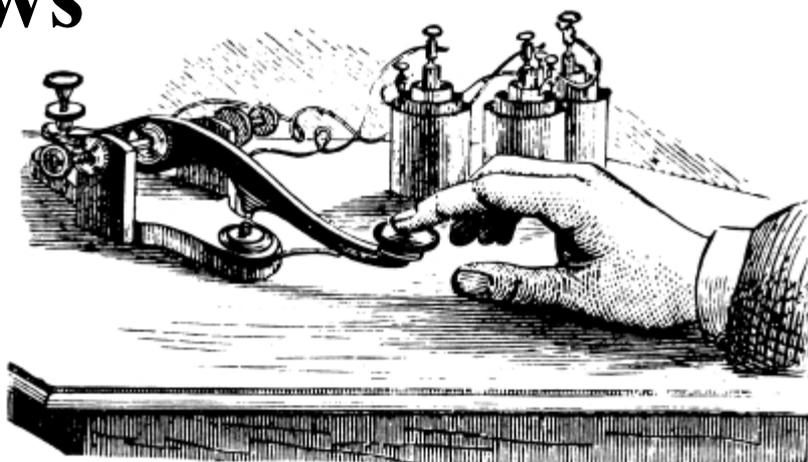


SHA eNews



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Editor: Clive Davenhall



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A telescope is silhouetted against the rising or setting Sun in the striking photograph on the front page. It is not on an equatorial mounting and so is likely intended to be used for terrestrial viewing. The location and date are unknown. The image was taken from an old North American postcard and unfortunately no further details are available.

Dates for the Diary

Mon. 22 - Sun 28 Jul. *Twenty Fourth International Congress of History of Science, Technology and Medicine*, on the theme 'knowledge at work' and to be held at the University of Manchester. See <http://www.ichstm2013.com/> (non-SHA event).

Mon. 2 - Fri. 6 Sep. *SEAC 2013: Astronomy, mother of Civilization and Guide to the Future*. Annual meeting of the Société Européenne pour L'Astronomie dans la Culture (SEAC), to be held in the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, in central Athens. See http://www.archeoastronomy.org/downloads/internet_rationale_seac-2013.pdf (non-SHA event).

Sat. 7 Sep. *Library Open Day* at the Society's Library at the BMI in central Birmingham, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Further details are given later in this *eNews*.

Revised Date: Sat. 19 Oct. *SHA Autumn Conference and AGM*, at the BMI in central Birmingham. Further details are given later in this *eNews*.

Exhibitions

Fri. 7 Jun - Sun. 15 Sep. *Visions of the Universe* at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Further details are given later in this *eNews*.

SHA news

Important: New Editor Sought for *The Antiquarian Astronomer*

Kevin Johnson, the Editor of *The Antiquarian Astronomer* wishes to stand down after publication of the next issue, volume 8, which is due in the spring of 2014, and a volunteer replacement is urgently sought. Kevin is stepping down after editing the journal since 2010, preceded by an extended period as Assistant Editor.

The Antiquarian Astronomer is the Society's flagship journal and carries peer-reviewed papers which present original research in the history of astronomy. The Editor is supported by an Assistant Editor and several Council members, who help solicit articles, suggest referees, proof-read, and do some editing. The work can be spread across a year. The editorship carries a mandatory seat on the Society's Council and the Editor can access the Council and Officer's e-mail discussion group to follow and contribute to discussions on any SHA issues and to seek advice or support on any editorial matter.

We seek a volunteer to work as Assistant Editor with Kevin until spring 2014, helping to produce *AA8*, and then to take over. There are no qualifications beyond a high standard of literacy, and being open-minded and very well organised. Though not strictly necessary, a broad general knowledge of the history of astronomy and/or prior experience editing or copy-editing would certainly be useful. This is a creative opportunity for an aspirant to gain experience without stress, get involved with a very friendly SHA Council, and then take responsibility for a fine annual journal.

Author's manuscripts are usually submitted and circulated as Microsoft WORD documents and currently the final text of the journal is also assembled using WORD (though alternatives are possible). Most communication with authors is by e-mail. In practice ready access to these items is essential.

If you would like more information by discussing informally what is involved, but without your making a prior commitment, please contact Kevin (e-mail: theaa@shastro.org.uk, other contact details at the end of this *eNews*) to arrange an evening or weekend time for a 'phone call.

It is of fundamental importance to the SHA to fill this post as soon as possible. The sooner it is filled, the easier the transition, so please do not hesitate: if you have an interest please contact Kevin now for a chat. The continuing success of the SHA is entirely dependent upon volunteers, and then Council supporting their efforts. It can be *very* rewarding!

New Benefits and Initiatives

In recent years the SHA has been the fortunate recipient of generous bequests from two deceased members: Mr Alan Cox and Dr David Dewhirst. Both bequests are for ‘advancing the general purposes of the Society’, and Dr Dewhirst added a wish that some of his bequest be used to defray hospitality for members.

These monies have been combined to form The Cox-Dewhirst Fund and at their meeting on 8 June, Council debated how to use this fund to best benefit members, further the aims of the Society and to promote research in our subject. It resolved:

- ◆ to reduce Members’ subscriptions by £5 from January 2014,
- ◆ to reduce Members’ conference fees by £5 with effect from 1 January 2014 (but to maintain the £10 rate for visitors),
- ◆ to strengthen the speaker events by supporting an annual Alan Cox Lecture by defraying reasonable travel expenses in whole or part,
- ◆ to subsidise by up to £500 per year the refreshments provided at SHA conferences (a growing expense),
- ◆ to provide research grants to any SHA member undertaking research on a topic in the history of astronomy, from ‘a pot’ of £1000 per year. The application procedure and other particulars will be announced shortly,
- ◆ to provide up to £100 per year in prizes for essays on a history of astronomy topic by under-18 year olds. Further details will be announced later.

Council is satisfied that these benefits and initiatives can be afforded as part of a ten-year strategy, while reserving a contingency fund on deposit to underwrite the variable annual running costs of the Society.

Meetings During 2013

The Society held a successful *Spring Conference* at the Quaker Meeting House, York on Saturday 20 April. The *Summer Picnic* will have been held at the University of London Observatory in Mill Hill, North London on Saturday 29 June by the time this issue of the *eNews* is distributed. The Society will hold the following events during the remainder of 2013:

Sat. 7 Sep. Library Open Day (**new event**),
Sat. 19 Oct. (**Revised Date**) *Autumn Conference and AGM*.

Details of both these events are given below. Note that the Library Open Day is a new event which has not been announced previously.

Revised Date: 2013 Autumn Conference and AGM

The 2013 SHA Autumn Conference and AGM will be held at the Birmingham and Midland Institute (BMI) in central Birmingham on **Saturday 19 October**. **Note the revised date**, which is a week earlier than the usual. The revision was necessary to avoid a clash with an existing booking at the BMI.

Anyone planning to attend is strongly urged to pre-book using the details below so that we can supply accurate numbers for the catering. Papers for the AGM will be circulated in advance and members are invited to raise any issues concerning the Society during the AGM. The programme for the *Autumn Conference* is as follows:

09:30 Registration
10:00 Madeline Cox, *Welcome and Introduction*
10:15 Dr Bryn Jones, *Welsh Astronomy*
11.15 Frank Concannon, *Markree Observatory, and Irish Astronomy in the Nineteenth Century*
12:15 Lunch (not provided)
13:30 Madeline Cox, *Welcome to the afternoon session*
13:30 Madeline Cox, *2013 Annual General Meeting*
14:30 Mike Leggett, *Some Aspects of Norfolk Astronomy*
15:15 Afternoon refreshments
15:45 Dr Allan Chapman, *Measuring the Heavens and the Earth: Astronomy, Cartography, and Instruments*
16:45 Madeline Cox, *Concluding remarks*
17:00 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, 5, Sandringham Close, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1NU (note that Dr Hutchins has moved during last year and this is his current address) or **pre-register by e-mail** (roger.hutchins@btinternet.com) and pay on the day.

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>

Library Open Day

The Society's Library at the Birmingham and Midland Institute (BMI) in central Birmingham will be open to members on Saturday 7 September 2013 from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Please come along to browse, borrow items or do some research. It would be useful if you could let Madeline Cox, the Librarian (and Chairman) know in advance if you intend to attend (contact details at the end of this *eNews*). For details of the BMI see the previous item.

Survey Competition

Contributed by Roger Jones, Survey Coordinator.

Last year we ran a competition to encourage members to contribute to our *Survey of Astronomical History*, and as announced in the previous issue, the winner was Dr Mike Leggett. A presentation was made at the *Spring Conference* in York on 20 April.

Council has decided to run this competition again this year. The prize will be awarded for the most significant contribution to the *Survey* between March 2013 and March 2014. Members can contribute by submitting brief entries ('stubs') for one or more counties or by adopting a county and offering a fuller coverage for it. Please take a look at our new Web site to see what is already available and what remains to be done. The *Survey* can be accessed from the menu on our main Web site at:

<http://www.shastro.org.uk>

or directly at

<http://shasurvey.wordpress.com>

Council Meetings in 2013

The following Council meetings have been held during 2013:

Sat. 9 February,
Sat. 8 June.

The following Council meetings are scheduled for the remainder of the year:

Sat. 14 September,
Sat. 23 November.

All meetings will be held at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Birmingham. Provisionally these meetings will start at 1:30 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*).

SHA Web site

The URL of the Society's Web site is:

<http://www.shastro.org.uk/>

which supersedes any other URL previously advised.

The Antiquarian Astronomer

The most recent issue of *The Antiquarian Astronomer*, volume 7, was circulated to members during May. If you have not received a copy and believe that you should have done then please contact Bob Bower in the first instance (contact details at the end of this *eNews*).

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 (contact details at the end of this *eNews*).

The Bulletin

The next issue of the *Bulletin* is in preparation and we hope to circulate it during the summer. This issue will contain a number of obituaries of deceased members and other historians of astronomy, as well as all the usual material.

Contributions for inclusion in the *Bulletin* are also always welcome and might include meeting reports, articles, letters and book reviews. Guidelines for contributions are available from the *Bulletin's* Web pages. It is usually prudent to check with the Editor before preparing items, particularly for meeting reports, book reviews and obituaries, where duplication is a possibility. All correspondence should be sent to the Editor, as above.

Contents lists and, in many cases, the complete text, for back issues of the *Bulletin* are available from the 'Publications' page of the Society's Web site.

Other news

BAA Historical Section News

Contributed by Mike Frost, Section Director (frostma@aol.com)

The next meeting of the BAA Historical Section will be held on Saturday 3 May 2014 at the Friargate Quaker Centre in York (the venue's for this year's SHA *Spring Conference*). Further details, including a theme and a call for papers, will be circulated in due course. The meeting is open to non-members and SHA members are most welcome to attend.

Visions of the Universe

The exhibition *Visions of the Universe* is currently running at the National Maritime Museum Greenwich from Friday 7 June to Sunday 15 September. Entrance costs £8.00 (including a voluntary donation of £1.75) and some concessions are available. The exhibition comprises a spectacular collection of astronomical images, mostly contemporary, but including some historical items. It includes images from NASA, the Russian space programme, the European Southern Observatory and several major observatories plus some of the best entries from the Royal Observatory's Astronomy Photographer of the Year competition.

The historic images include a drawing of the Orion Nebula that Sir John Herschel made while at the Cape and an early photograph of the same object by Henry Draper. There are drawings, daguerreotypes and other early photographs of the Sun, Moon, sunspots, eclipses and transits. Completely new to me was the first photograph of an eclipse, taken in 1851 by the little-known Berkowski at the Königsberg Observatory.

However, the bulk of the exhibition is modern images, some well-known, others less so. All are impressive. In addition to the static images there is a darkened room where a sequence of modern images are projected onto a large screen.

The highlight of the exhibition is the 13-metre long *Mars Window*, a panoramic projection of the Martian landscape as seen by NASA's Spirit, Opportunity and Curiosity rovers on the surface of the red planet. There are three panoramas, each painstakingly stitched together from dozens of individual images. Projected on a large scale, the installation gives the feeling of standing on Mars itself. It is stunning.

A minor caveat is that there is no exhibition catalogue. Nonetheless, the exhibition is highly recommended. For further information see URL:

<http://www.rmg.co.uk/visit/events/visions-of-the-universe>

eNews admin

Next Issue

The next issue will be circulated around 1 October 2013.

Contributions for inclusion in this issue should reach me by 13 September 2013.

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 should be sent to the Membership Secretary:

Bob Bower, Tigh Na Bruaich, Port Logan, Stranraer, DG9 9NE, UK.

e-mail: membership@shastro.org.uk

All inquiries relating to meetings should be sent to:

Madeline Cox, 4, Rutland Close, Warsop, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG20 0DY, UK.

e-mail: chair@shastro.org.uk

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

Bob Bower, Tigh Na Bruaich, Port Logan, Stranraer, DG9 9NE, UK.

e-mail: membership@shastro.org.uk

Note change following Stuart Williams' resignation.

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