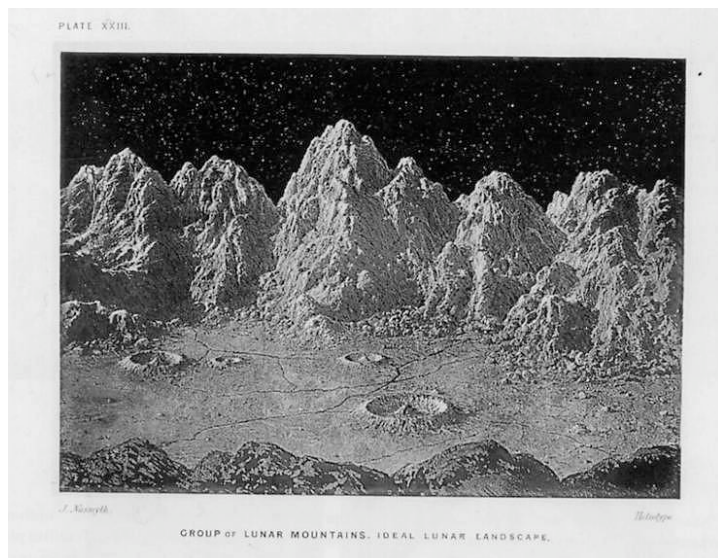




# SHA e-NEWS

*The SHA's new mode of Internet communication.*

A LUNAR LANDING TAKES PLACE AT THE BMI



The Society for the History of Astronomy has this week been given a very valuable addition to our library, most suitable for a year in which both the Lunar observations of Englishman Thomas Harriot and the Lunar explorations of Apollo 11 have been rightly celebrated.

This is an extensive collection of about eighty books and atlases relating to late 19th century lunar studies and pre and post-Apollo NASA technical reports.

The donor is Mr Stephen Ridgway of Sale, Manchester, who has accumulated since the late 1960s a superb technical library relating to the moon. This he has donated to the SHA's Sir Robert Ball Library at the Birmingham & Midland Institute, and the books were collected by me on Tuesday evening.

The collection includes books by Nasmyth, Proctor, Flammarion, Pickering and other researchers of lunar astronomy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but the star of the collection must be the Kuiper's Photographic Atlas of the Moon (1960) and other contemporary atlases published by NASA along with a lot of highly technical NASA reports of the Apollo landings and subsequent analyses. There is also a large amount of later lunar astronomy books published in the last 40 years.

As a keen lunar observer, I was staggered at the content of this very important donation that hopefully will form the core of a specialist library housed within the SRBL. I have thanked Mr. Ridgway on behalf of the SHA for his kind generosity and we are sure our members will be delighted to concur.

*Kevin Kilburn, SHA Secretary*

## *The Write Stuff*

During the first NASA missions the astronauts made notes with pencils. In 1965, for Gemini, NASA controversially ordered 34 mechanical pencils from Tycam Engineering Manufacturing, Inc. at \$128.89 each. NASA backtracked immediately, equipping astronauts with cheaper items.

Around this time, Paul C. Fisher of the Fisher Pen Co. designed a ballpoint pen that would operate better in the weightlessness of space and extreme conditions, using a pressurized ink cartridge. Fisher developed his 'space pen' without NASA funding, the company reportedly investing about \$1 million then patenting the pen, cornering the market.

Fisher offered the space pen to NASA in 1965, but, because of the previous controversy, the agency was hesitant. In 1967, after rigorous tests, NASA managers agreed to equip Apollo astronauts with these pens. About 400 pens were purchased at \$6 each for Project Apollo.

In February 1969, the Soviet Union also purchased 100 of these Fisher pens, plus 1,000 ink cartridges, for Soyuz space flights. Previously, Soviet cosmonauts had used grease pencils.

Both American astronauts and Russian cosmonauts are still equipped with Fisher space pens today. In fact, I use one myself on occasion...

*Stuart Williams, Editor*

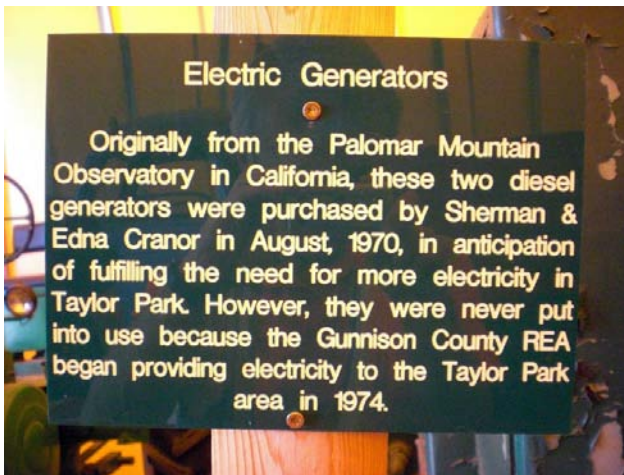
## A SURVEY SNIPPET STATESIDE



*Stellar surplus in the States*

When you're not looking for anything astronomical, you are likely to stumble upon it. In mid September I was in Gunnison, Colorado, USA looking round the Pioneer Museum, hoping to find something that might link to my family history research.

In a building full of agricultural machinery a sign in front of two massive generators caught my eye.



It indicated that they were originally from Mt Palomar and had been used as a power source for the Observatory.

Evidently they became surplus to requirements and were brought to Gunnison to power a small housing development, before mains power was available.

In history of astronomy as in law enforcement, as Shaw Taylor used to say, it pays to "Keep 'em peeled!"

*Roger Jones, SHA Survey Coordinator*

## SHA LIBRARY

What books would you like to see in the SHA Library?

Is there a book you think we should purchase for the Library? Is it a reasonable price and would it appeal to members? If so, please let me know and the Library Committee will consider it for purchase.

*Book Reviewers Wanted*

Thank you to the two people who came forward last month and gave me their book reviews for the *SHA Bulletin*. We would still like more so if you are interested (help and advice can be given) please contact me.

Many thanks.

Please email to: [madeline.cox@gmail.com](mailto:madeline.cox@gmail.com)

*Madeline Cox, SHA Head Librarian.*

## SHA PRESENCE AT EXHIBITIONS

The SHA exhibition stand will be attending the: 2009 Federation of Astronomical Societies Convention at the Institute of Astronomy Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0HA, from 09.00 on October 3rd 2009.

For further details of this event, please see: <http://fedastro.org.uk>

*Mark Hurn, SHA Archivist.*

RAS LIBRARY  
SATURDAY  
OPENINGS

Remaining Saturday Openings of the Royal Astronomical Society Library for this year are: 3 October, 7 November, 5 December. Opening times 10.00 - 12.30, 13.30 - 17.00.

Anyone wishing to view the RAS Library on these dates should contact the Librarian, Peter D. Hingley, in advance to let him know of anything special they need, especially older journals and Reserve Collection books.

The continued availability of the RAS Library on Saturdays is however under question at the moment due to the small number of readers attending.

Contact Peter Hingley by email: [pdh@ras.org.uk](mailto:pdh@ras.org.uk) or by telephone during office hours: 020 7734 4582 extension 215.

Royal Astronomical Society Library, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BQ. Website: [www.ras.org.uk](http://www.ras.org.uk)

*Peter D. Hingley, RAS*

## *Imminent: The SHA Autumn Conference 2009 in Birmingham*



*The Birmingham & Midland Institute, 9 Margaret Street.*

SATURDAY 31 OCTOBER 2009, 09.30-17.10

As is traditional, this year's SHA Autumn Conference will take place at the Birmingham & Midland Institute in Margaret St, Birmingham.

The date is slightly later than in previous years, Saturday 31 October, and for reasons of economy, the meeting is being held in the Dickens Room, which was the venue for the 2004 Autumn Conference. Coincidentally, two of this year's speakers - Dr. Allan Chapman and Mr. Andrew Lound - also spoke on that previous occasion!

Admission to this event will cost £10 for members and £12 for non-members, to include afternoon refreshments. Those attending are asked to make their own arrangements with regard to morning refreshments (the cafe will be open) and lunch (there are many eating establishments and sandwich shops in the city centre). There is no on-site parking but there are a number of city centre car parks and Birmingham New Street and Snow Hill Stations are within a 10 minute walk.

A booking form confirming these details has been emailed and will be posted shortly, please book asap so that the caterers can be given the details for the afternoon refreshments.

The programme for the day is as follows:

- 09.30 to 10.00 REGISTRATION - in  
The Dickens Room.
- 10.00 to 10.15 Mr. Kevin Kilburn:  
Welcome.
- 10.15 to 11.00 Mr. David Kerrigan: 'A 2,000 -  
year - long international astronomy project -  
Ptolemy's Star Catalogue'.



*The Dickens Room - 2004 Autumn Conference*

11.00 to 11.45 Mr. David Sellers: 'In Search of  
William Gascoigne (c.1612-1644)'.

12.00 to 13.20 LUNCH BREAK including:  
Unveiling of the Ken Goward  
Memorial Clock in the Sir  
Robert Ball Library.

13.30 to 14.15 Mr. Andrew Lound: 'James  
Ferguson's lecture series in Kidderminster 1771.

14.15 to 15.00 Dr. Mike Leggett: 'The Wing  
Dynasty'.

15.00 to 15.30 REFRESHMENTS.

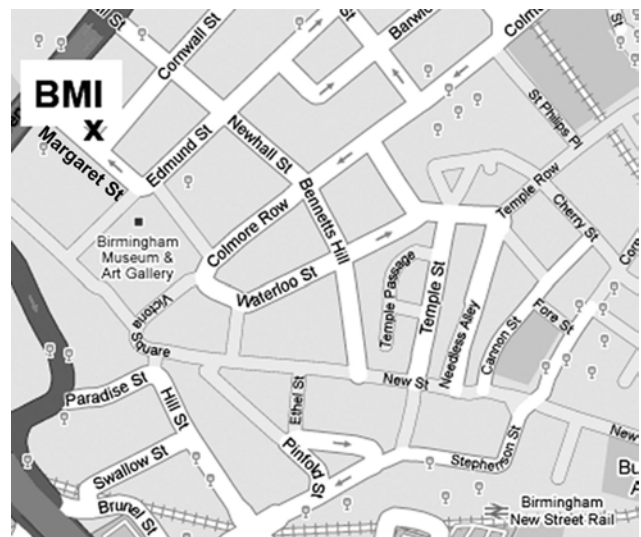
15.30 to 17.00 Dr Allan Chapman: 'Title tba'.

17.00 to 17.10 Mr. Gilbert Satterthwaite:  
Conclusions and Dispersal.

Organisers: Kevin Kilburn, Stuart Williams and  
Roger Jones. Email: [kkilburn@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:kkilburn@globalnet.co.uk)

BMI website: <http://www.bmi.org.uk>

Birmingham Car Park Map: <http://bit.ly/Eh39C>



SHA MEETINGS IN 2009

**Sat. 31 October: SHA Autumn Conference**, Dickens Room, Birmingham & Midland Institute. See page 3. SW

COUNCIL MEETINGS 2009

21 February: Burlington House, London. 13 June: BMI, Birmingham. 12 September: BMI, Birmingham. November: Posrtponed to January 2010 at the IOA, Cambridge. SW/CD

OTHER EVENTS IN 2009

**Wed. 7 October: Institute of Astronomy, University of Cambridge** Public Observing Nights begin at the Institute of Astronomy on Wednesday 7th October 2009 at 7.15pm. These will take place each week subsequently on Wednesday nights at 7.15pm. More details at: [http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/public/public\\_observing/](http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/public/public_observing/)

**Sat. 10 October: Mark Hurn, SHA Archivist** will be giving his talk "Failed to find Neptune" about the Revd. James Challis, Director of the Cambridge Observatory, at the

Lincoln Astronomical Society 50th Convention to be held on October 10, 2009 as a part of the IYA celebrations at St Georges Church Hall, Eastbrook Road, Lincoln LN6 7EW. <http://www.lincolnastronomy.org/>

**Tues. 13 October: Royal Astronomical Society Public Lecture: The Past, Present and Future of Lunar Science and Exploration** by Dr Katherine Joy. 1pm-2pm (doors open 12:15pm).

Forty years on from the Apollo Moon landings we are at the beginning of a new era of lunar exploration. This talk will discuss the scientific findings of Apollo, new views of the Moon discovered by robotic missions and will address what questions still remain about our nearest planetary neighbor and how the next generation of lunar missions will be trying to find the answers.

Following a PhD in planetary science at UCL Katherine is now a Post-Doctoral Research Assistant at Birkbeck College. She uses mineralogical and geochemical measurements of lunar samples to interpret chemical data obtained from orbital remote-sensing missions to the Moon. For admission details see: <http://bit.ly/3WvjHK>

**Thu. 16 July, 13:00 – Sun, November 15, 17:00: 'Bright Stars - Daughters of Urania'**, Herschel Museum of Astronomy, 19 New King Street, Bath, BA1 2B. An exhibition celebrating the history of women in astronomy. Website: <http://www.bath-preservation-trust.org.uk> Opening times weekdays 11 - 5pm (closed Wednesday). Weekends & bank holidays 11 - 5 pm. Entry to exhibition included in admission fee.

SW

*Calendar in Brief 2009*

**Thurs. 1 January**

SHA Subscription Renewals due. Contact Peter Hingley [pdh@ras.org.uk](mailto:pdh@ras.org.uk)

**Sat. 28 March**

SHA Joint Meeting with RMetS, RAS, Burlington House, London.

**Sat. 18 April**

SHA David Dewhirst Meeting, IOA, Cambridge.

**Mon. 20 - Thur. 23 April**

European Week of Astronomy and Space Science, including RAS NAM etc: [www.jenam2009.eu](http://www.jenam2009.eu)

**Fri. 8 May**

Mars Before the Space Age, RAS, Burlington House, London.

**Sat. 4 July**

SHA Summer Picnic, Hanwell Community Observatory, Oxfordshire.

**Sat. 18 July**

SHA AGM & Summer Conference, NMM, Greenwich.

**Sat. 31 October**

SHA Autumn Conference, BMI.

**PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY**

[www.shastro.org.uk](http://www.shastro.org.uk)

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