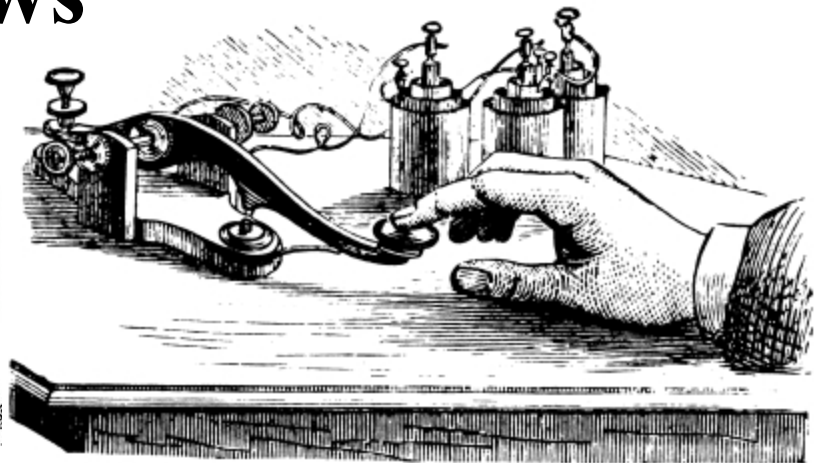


# SHA eNews



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

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## Dates for the Diary

Additional details for all the SHA and BAA meetings listed are included later in this *eNews*.

### 2010

**Fri. 28 May to Sun. 31 Oct.** *My wit was always working: John Aubrey and the Development of Experimental Science*. Exhibition at the Bodleian Library, Oxford featuring items from the Library's collection about the mathematician, natural philosopher, antiquarian and founding Fellow of the Royal Society John Aubrey (1626-97). See: <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodleian/about/exhibitions> (non-SHA event).

**Mon. 25 to Fri. 29 Oct.** *INSAP VII* at the Royal Literary and Scientific Institute, Bath. See: <http://www.insapvii.org/index.html> (non-SHA event).

**Sat. 30 Oct.** *SHA Autumn Conference and AGM* at the Birmingham and Midlands Institute, Birmingham. *This meeting is now only a few weeks away. We strongly urge anyone intending to attend to book in advance in order to assist us with estimating numbers for refreshments.*

**Sat. 27 Nov.** *BAA Historical Section Meeting* at the Institute of Astronomy, Madingley Road, Cambridge on the theme of 'Twentieth Century Astronomy'. 10:30 am to 6:00 pm. For details see: <http://www.britastro.org/history> (non-SHA event).

### 2011

**Sat. 9 Apr.** *SHA Spring Conference*, at the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge. Further details TBC. Anyone interested in giving a talk should contact the Secretary, Kevin Kilburn (contact details at the end of this issue)

**Sat. 29 Oct.** *SHA Autumn Conference and AGM*, at the BMI in central Birmingham. Further details TBC.

Finally, the SHA **Summer picnic** will be held at the Orwell Park Observatory near Ipswich, Suffolk at a date still to be finalised, but likely to be during June to August.

## SHA news

### Editorial: the SHA *eNews*

As I mentioned in the previous issue the *eNews* will not normally carry an editorial. However, this time there are a few issues that need mentioning. Firstly, my e-mail address changed earlier in the year and consequently you may have experienced difficulty in contacting me about the *eNews* or *Bulletin*. My previous address, [acd@roe.ac.uk](mailto:acd@roe.ac.uk), was disabled in the spring and should no longer be used. Unfortunately, due to an oversight, the 'official' SHA e-mail address for the *eNews* and *Bulletin*, [newsletter@shastro.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@shastro.org.uk), continued to be forwarded to this address until recently (we thought that it had been changed, but it had not). It has now been redirected to my current e-mail address and, as a precaution, is also copied to others in the *Bulletin* team. Alternatively I can be contacted at my current personal e-mail address, which is [acd@davenhall.demon.co.uk](mailto:acd@davenhall.demon.co.uk). I apologise to anyone who has encountered difficulties.

As I write this editorial the much-delayed Summer 2010 issue of the *Bulletin* has been printed and is currently being distributed. Your copy should reach you within a few days of receipt of this *eNews*. We apologise for the delay with the *Bulletin*. The layout took much longer than expected, mostly due to the Layout Editor, Peter Grego, being distracted by the unexpected arrival of other urgent commitments.

There is also good news regarding *The Antiquarian Astronomer* and progress is being made by the revised editorial team. Further details of both publications are given later in this *eNews*.

Finally, but by no means least, we are most pleased to report that on the 14 July 2010 Dr Allan Chapman, the SHA Honorary President, was awarded an Honorary DSc by the University of Salford in recognition of his research and teaching of the history of science, especially astronomy and medicine. We offer Dr Chapman our warmest congratulations. In less welcome news we have learned that Dr Chapman has recently undergone a serious operation. I am sure you will join us in wishing him a good and rapid recovery.

*Clive Davenhall.*

### Autumn Conference

The SHA *Autumn Conference and AGM* will be held on Saturday 30 October. *This meeting is now only a few weeks away and if you are planning to attend it would greatly assist the organisers if you could book your ticket in advance.* Having a good idea of numbers greatly assists in booking refreshments.

As usual the venue for the meeting will be the Birmingham & Midland Institute in central Birmingham. In a change to previous years the meeting will include the AGM. Some of the

items to be discussed at the AGM are mentioned in the 'Changes to Council' item, below. There is a varied programme which should lead to an interesting and informative meeting. The details are as follows:

- 09:30 Registration
- 10:00 Welcome to the BMI, Gilbert Satterthwaite MSc FRAS, Chairman SHA
- 10:15 *Heavens Above Through Victorian Eyes*, Paul Haley MA FRAS  
(based on the work of Revd T.W. Webb)
- 11:00 *John Phillips' Astronomy at Oxford 1862-7: a Pioneer of Comparative Planetology*, Dr Roger Hutchins FRAS
- 12:00 Lunch break
- 13:20 Welcome back, Gilbert Satterthwaite
- 13:30 Annual General Meeting
- 14:45 *Rediscovering Schiaparelli's Canals*, John Dee
- 15:30 Afternoon refreshments
- 16:00 *H.P. Lovecraft: the Terror out of Space*, Stuart Williams FRAS
- 17:00 Concluding remarks and dispersal, Gilbert Satterthwaite

Afternoon refreshments will be provided, but morning refreshments (prior to registration) and lunch will not be. There are numerous catering establishments close to the BMI. There is no on-site parking but there are several city centre car parks and Birmingham New Street and Snow Hill Stations are within a ten-minute walk. Contact details for the BMI are: Birmingham & Midland Institute Margaret Street, Birmingham B33BS, telephone: 0121 236 3591. See URL: <http://bmi.org.uk/>

Tickets cost £10.00 per person and should be booked in advance from the Secretary, Kevin Kilburn (contact details at the end of this issue).

## **2011 Programme**

The outline of the 2011 SHA events programme has now been decided. It will consist of:

**Spring Conference**, Sat. 9 April 2011 at the Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge. Further details will be circulated around the New Year. In the meantime anyone interested in giving a talk should contact the Secretary, Kevin Kilburn (contact details at the end of this issue).

**Summer picnic** will be held at the Orwell Park Observatory, which is in Orwell Park School, in the village of Nacton, near Ipswich, Suffolk. The date is still to be finalised. The Orwell Park Observatory is run by the The Orwell Astronomical Society who have information about it on their Web site: <http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~ipswich/>

**Autumn Conference and AGM**, 29 October 2011 at the BMI in central Birmingham. Further details TBC.

## **Recent meetings**

The SHA held two events over the summer. Firstly on the Saturday 3 July there was a visit to the Radcliffe Observatory and the Museum of the History of Science in Oxford. Secondly, on Saturday 17 July 2010 the annual Summer Picnic was held at Stonyhurst College, Lancashire. Both events were very successful and enjoyed by those members who were able to go. Reports will appear in a future issue of the *Bulletin*. In the meantime it only remains to thank everyone involved in organising the events for making them so informative and enjoyable.

## **Forthcoming Council Meeting**

The next meeting of the SHA Council will be held on Saturday 9 October 2010 at the premises of the RAS, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London. Council meetings are not open due to lack of space, but any member may attend by prior arrangement with the 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).

## **Changes to Council**

At the Forthcoming AGM to be held at the BMI on Saturday 30 October (see above) members will be asked to approve some minor changes to the Society's Constitution and to elect several new officers. The proposed changes to the constitution would create two new posts: Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary. Both posts would carry seats on Council.

The office of Vice Chairman is proposed in order to create an additional senior position in addition to the existing triumvirate of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. Currently occasions can arise when Council's work stalls as decisions cannot be made because the senior officers are not available. An additional senior post would ameliorate this problem.

The post of Membership Secretary would handle membership matters, principally maintaining the membership list and processing new applications and membership renewals. These duties were previously carried out by the Treasurer. Splitting the previous Treasurer's duties in this way would make the considerable workload more manageable.

The changes to Council membership on which members will vote are as follows. Stuart Williams is standing down as Treasurer. If the creation of the office of Vice Chairman is approved he will stand for that post; if not he will stand as a Councillor without portfolio.

Dr Roger Hutchins (see below) will stand for election as Treasurer. Mr Peter Hingley will stand for election as Membership Secretary. He is already a Councillor and has been fulfilling the role of Membership Secretary for a while, so his election would regularise the situation.

There have also been changes to the editorial team of *The Antiquarian Astronomer*. The previous Editor, Dr Reg Withey, has stood down for health reasons. *The Antiquarian*

*Astronomer* team is now led Kevin Johnson as Executive Editor (he was previously the Assistant Editor). Gilbert Satterthwaite and Roger Hutchins are now Assistant Editors and Peter Grego will do the layout.

Any member wishing to stand for one of the offices or as a Council Member without portfolio should contact the Secretary, Kevin Kilburn, without delay (contact details at the end of this issue).

## **Dr Roger Hutchins**

Most of the proposed changes to Council are rearrangements of the duties of existing Councillors, who will already be known to members. Dr Roger Hutchins, who is standing for Treasurer, may not be so familiar. He has kindly sent the following biographical details:

Roger Hutchins FRAS was originally a ship broker on London's Baltic Exchange and was drawn into astronomy by the astonishing Apollo moon landings. He acquired a refractor, served a period as Secretary to an astronomical society, visited major observatories and attended JPL for the Voyager fly-bys of Saturn, Uranus and Neptune.

In 1989 he went up to Oxford to read Modern History (BA, 1992). He was subsequently a Research Associate, a copy-editor with and contributor (astronomers) to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and gained a D.Phil in 1999. His thesis on *British University Observatories 1772-1939* was published in 2008. He is not an accountant, but organised the Development Office of Magdalen College until his retirement in December 2006. He responded to the SHA Council's appeal for assistance with the Treasury – because 'Britain has a wonderfully rich and diverse history of astronomy, still with much to research and (re)assess. Raising awareness, and publication, has now by default fallen almost entirely to the SHA. There's a real need for each to do our bit.'

## **The Antiquarian Astronomer**

Under the new editorial team led by Kevin Johnson considerable progress has been made with the current issue of *The Antiquarian Astronomer* (volume 5). Once again we thank you for your patience in bearing with the considerable delays in preparing this issue. The following papers are complete and ready for inclusion in the issue:

Dr Ron Maddison, *The Telescopes of J.H.Reynolds of Harborne, Birmingham, England: One of the Great Amateur 'Professionals'*

David Le Conte, *De La Rue – Pioneer Astronomical Photographer*

Mary T. Brück and David M. Gavine, *Hector Copland Macpherson (1888-1956), Clergyman, Educator, Lecturer and Writer on Astronomy and its History*

Additional papers have been accepted and are being readied for publication or have been submitted and are awaiting comments from the reviewer.

## **The SHA Bulletin**

The much delayed Spring issue of the *SHA Bulletin* (no. **20**) has now been printed and is currently being distributed. Your copy should arrive within a few days of your receiving this *eNews*. If you have not received your copy by Saturday 16 October 2010 please contact me (assuming your address is in the UK; overseas deliveries will take longer, of course).

No. **20** is a substantial issue, the largest that we have ever produced. It includes an obituary and appreciation of the Society's much missed founding Treasurer Ken Goward and reports of the Society's joint meeting with the Royal Meteorological Society, the RAS Discussion Meeting *Mars Before the Space Age* (both held in spring 2009), and the Society's 2009 *Summer Conference and AGM* held at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. There are articles on the Isaac Newton Telescope at Herstmonceux and on artist's representations of Mars before the space age as well as letters, book reviews and the regular SHA items.

Contributions for future issues of the *Bulletin* are always welcome, indeed encouraged. Articles, letters, book reviews and entries for the *Observatory Scrapbook* series are all welcome. For book reviews it is sensible to contact me in advance to avoid duplication. All contributions should be sent to me (contact details at the end of this issue).

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## Other news

### BAA Historical Section Meeting

The BAA Historical Section will hold its inaugural meeting on the theme of *Twentieth Century Astronomy* in the late autumn, This meeting will be held at the Institute of Astronomy, Madingley Road, Cambridge on Saturday 27 November 2010 from 10:30 am to 6:00 pm. The cost will be £13.00 with lunch buffet included and payment on the door. The programme is:

- 10:00 Registration
- 10:30 Welcome & Introduction
- 10:45 Bob Marriott, *Mary Evershed: First Director of the Historical Section*
- 11:45 Jeremy Shears, *Felix de Roy: A Life in Variable Stars*
- 12:30 Buffet Lunch
- 13:50 Lee Macdonald, *The Isaac Newton Telescope*
- 14:50 Jay Tate, *Saving Science Heritage*
- 15:50 Jacqueline Mitton, *Maria Mitchell, America's First Female Astronomer, and her Vassar College Legacy*
- 16:35 Break
- 17:00 Simon Mitton, *Sir Fred Hoyle*
- 18:00 Close

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

The meeting is being organised by Mike Frost and Lee Macdonald, respectively Director and Deputy Director of the BAA Historical Section (and both SHA members). They would be delighted to see other SHA members attend.

### 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 2010 the Library will be open 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on the following Saturdays:

6 November and 4 December.

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 January 2011.

Contributions for inclusion in this issue should reach me by 18 December 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* should be sent to:**

Clive Davenhall. 30, Millar Crescent, Morningside, Edinburgh, EH10 5HH, UK.  
e-mail: [newsletter@shasto.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@shasto.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 Secretary:**

Kevin Kilburn FRAS. 158, Low Leighton Road, New Mills, High Peak, Derbyshire, SK22 4JF, UK. e-mail: [secretary@ras.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ras.org.uk)

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