



SHA e-News

Society for the History of Astronomy

Volume 6, no. 2, April 2014.

Editor: David Sellers

FRESH GLOSS ON SHA PUBLICITY

The *Society for the History of Astronomy* has produced a new generation of publicity material for use in promoting the history of astronomy and encouraging enthusiasts to join the Society.



We envisage that the new full-colour tri-form leaflet illustrated above will be mainly used on our stalls at forthcoming astronomical events, but if you know of somewhere that it can be productively used, please let our publicity officer, Mike Leggett, know. A monochrome tri-form leaflet with our programme for 2014-15 has also been produced.

DON'T LOSE OUT! BOOK NOW!

An excellent line-up of speakers - including Brother Guy Consolmagno from the Vatican Observatory - promises to provide a memorable history of astronomy day in Manchester on 26th April. But places are limited. Book your place now, to avoid disappointment! Details on page 2.

NEW HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENT

We are delighted to announce that SHA member **Prof. Sir Arnold Wolfendale, FRS**, has accepted the post of Honorary Vice-President. Sir Arnold replaces Sir Patrick Moore and takes his place alongside our Honorary President, Dr Allan Chapman, and our other Honorary Vice-President, Dr Michael Hoskin.

Sir Arnold has had a distinguished career as an academic and astronomer and was the Astronomer Royal from 1991 to 1995. He was elected a member of the Royal Society in 1977. He is currently Emeritus Professor of Physics at Durham University, where he taught for many years. You may remember his splendid talk at our York conference last April on the history of cosmic ray astronomy.

We welcome Sir Arnold in this new role and hope he will be able to represent us for many years to come.

Madeline Cox, FRAS, Chairman SHA



Prof. Sir Arnold Wolfendale, FRS
(picture: Jim Cornmell, Wikimedia)

FUTURE SHA MEETINGS

2014 SPRING CONFERENCE

Saturday 26 April, Chetham's Library, Long Millgate, Manchester. M3 1SB

Chetham's Library, founded 1653, is the oldest public library in the English-speaking world.

Seating for this event is limited. To guarantee a place, book in advance via Kevin Kilburn (kevinkilburn@sky.com) Members £5; Non-members £10.



Chetham's Library (Wikimedia, Terry6082 Books)

The meeting will be in the Baronial Hall, which is a wonderfully preserved example of the timber halls found in the north west of England.

SPRING CONFERENCE AGENDA

Time	Speaker	Subject
09.30		REGISTRATION
10.00	Dr Michael Powell. (Librarian, Chetham's)	Welcome to Chetham's
	Dr Barry Henshall (Pres, Manchester AS)	Welcome to Manchester on behalf of Manchester A.S.
	Lord Mayor Cllr N. ul Hassan	Welcome from the City of Manchester
10.15	Paul Haley (SHA)	Sir David Gill (1843-1914): an astronomer's centenary
11.00	Bob Bower (SHA Gen. Sec. and Memb. Sec.)	Herschel's Conic Quest: William Herschel's optical work on specula, based upon his logbooks
12.00		LUNCH BREAK
	Madeline Cox, FRAS, (SHA Chairman)	Welcome back
13.30	Joe Henthorn	Horrocks, Gascoigne, Crabtree, Towneley, et al, in contemporary context
14.30	John Moffat (SHA)	Dorothea Klumpke: her life and legacy.
15.15		AFTERNOON REFRESHMENTS
15.45	Br Guy Consolmagno, SJ	Angelo Secchi & Jesuit impact on Astronomy
17.00	Madeline Cox	CONCLUSIONS & DISPERSAL

2014 AGM / AUTUMN CONFERENCE

The Annual General Meeting & Autumn Conference will held at the Birmingham & Midlands Institute on 25 October 2014. Talks will include:-

Dr Allan Chapman on *Copernicus, Galileo, the Telescope & the Church 1500-1700* (the subject of Allan's latest book - due out Oct. 2014)

Madeline Cox on *Derbyshire Astronomy*

Lee Macdonald on the *History of the Kew Observatory*

Prof. Bill Leatherbarrow on *The Amateur's Moon: British Selenography and the BAA Lunar Section*

Registration begins at 9.30 for a start at 10.00. The Conference finishes at 17.00. Book in advance if possible: £5 for members, £10 for non-members. (Pre-register via roger.hutchins@btinternet.com)

If you would like to speak at a future conference, please contact Madeline Cox, at: chair@shastro.org.uk

SUMMER PICNIC

GREENWICH 12th JULY 2014

This year's Summer Picnic is at Greenwich Park, Greenwich, London, on 12th July. There will also be an opportunity to visit the Royal Observatory, and to see the temporary National Maritime Museum (NMM) exhibition, *Ships, Clocks & Stars: the Quest for Longitude*.



Times and programme

- Pre-1215** The morning will be free for you to visit the historic north site of the Observatory (Flamsteed House and the Meridian Courtyard), the South Building of the Observatory (modern astronomy), the National Maritime Museum, the Queen's House or Planetarium.
- 1215** Meet inside the main entrance of the NMM (off Romney Road) where staff will direct you to the Group Space
- 1230-1345** Picnic outside on the lawn, or inside in wet weather. Coffee & Tea provided.
- 1400-1500** First guided tour of the Exhibition *Ships, Clocks & Stars: the Quest for Longitude*.
- 1500-1600** Second guided tour of the Exhibition *Ships, Clocks & Stars: the Quest for Longitude*.

Attendees will picnic and tour together, but then follow their own interest, and leave when they wish.

Attendees

Numbers are limited for the exhibition tour, so **pre-registration is essential**. The charge will be about **£10 per person** (payable on the day). This will include the picnic, tea or coffee, and the curator-led exhibition

tour. A small amount of free parking will be available *by prior arrangement only*.

If you wish to visit the historic north site of the Observatory (Flamsteed House and the Meridian Courtyard) you will have to pay an additional fee. *If you let us have your name in advance you will get the reduced group price.*

If you wish to attend the day's event, please email Madeline Cox at Chair@shastro.org.uk. Please indicate whether parking will be required, and also wheelchair access. *Attendees are asked to wear their SHA name badge, if they have one.*

NAME BADGES

SHA events are a great place to meet new people with a similar passion for the history of astronomy. We usually supply name badges to help members to get to know each other. If you already have an SHA badge, please bring it with you to save us the cost of supplying a new one.



LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD

2015 Joint SHA-BAA HISTORICAL SECTION CONFERENCE

This event will be on Saturday 28 March 2015 at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, and will feature presentations by the following speakers:

William Sheehan on *Mars: from Galileo's Perspicillum to Curiosity*

Stuart Clark on *Richard Carrington (and the Solar Flare of 1859)*

Anthony Kinder on *the BAA/SHA historical membership project*

Bob Marriott on *William Rutter Dawes*

Roger Jones on *The SHA Survey*

SHA COUNCIL

The current SHA Officers & Council are:

Honorary Council Members

Hon President Dr Allan Chapman
Hon Vice-President Dr Michael Hoskin
Hon Vice-President Prof. Sir Arnold Wolfendale,FRS

Council Members

Chairman (& Librarian) Madeline Cox
Vice-Chairman Kevin Kilburn
General & Membership Secretary Bob Bower
Treasurer Roger Hutchins
Editor, SHA Bulletin Clive Davenhall
Editor, SHA e-News & Registrar David Sellers
Editor, The Antiquarian Astronomer Ian Ridpath
 (after AA8)
Deputy Editor, The Antiquarian Astronomer Kevin Johnson (Editor until issue of AA8)
Survey Co-ordinator & Assistant Librarian Roger Jones
Publicity Officer Mike Leggett
Events Co-ordinator (vacant)

Appointed Officers

Archivist Mark Hurn
Online Editor Stuart Williams
Historical Records Officer Anthony Kinder

SHA COUNCIL MEETINGS

Future meetings of the SHA Council are scheduled as follows:

2014 Jun 07 Birmingham (BMI)
 2014 Sep 13 Manchester (Godlee Observatory)
 2014 Nov 22 Cambridge (Institute of Astronomy)

If any member would like to attend one of these Council meetings, or would like anything raised at a meeting, please let Bob Bower (Gen. Secretary) know.

OTHER HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY MEETINGS

BAA Historical Section Spring Meeting

Sat 3rd May 2014, 10.30-17.30 (doors open 10.00)
 Friargate Quaker Centre, York, YO1 9RL
["North Country Astronomy, Old & New"](#)

Speakers:

Mike Maunder: *The first 100 years of the BAA (north of Watford)*
 Gerard Gilligan: *William Lassell, 1799-1880: Telescopes, Planets and Drinking Beer*
 David Sellers: *William Gascoigne*
 Dr Emily Winterburn: *The jobbing musician: William Herschel discovers astronomy*
 Prof. Tom McLeish, FRS: *A Medieval Big Bang: The cosmology of Robert Grosseteste*

The cost will be £5 for BAA members and £7 for non-members.

It is hoped that a lunchtime trip to view the memorial to John Goodricke in central York will be included.

SHA members are warmly invited to attend.

Crawford Lecture in the History of Astronomy: Edinburgh

The 2014 Crawford Lecture will be delivered by Professor Jim Bennett, former Director of the Museum of the History of Science (Oxford).

Title: *The Craft of Early Astronomy: Making Books, Globes, and Instruments in the Sixteenth Century*

Day: **30th April 2014** Time: 5:30 p.m.

Venue: Teviot Place Lecture Theatre, Old Medical School, The University of Edinburgh, Teviot Place, Edinburgh EH8 9AG

Lecture free but ticketed (details on how to book will be posted in April on the lecture [website](#)).

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE
 OUR EVENTS COORDINATOR?**

See pages 10-11.

SHA PUBLICATIONS

SHA e-NEWS

The next issue of the *e-NEWS* is due in early July. If you know of any meetings, publications, exhibitions or events pertaining to the history of astronomy that might interest other members, please email brief details to the editor.

Back issues and guidelines for contributions are available from the [e-News web page](#).

SHA BULLETIN

Society members should recently have received their copy of the much-delayed issue 23 of the *SHA Bulletin*. If you have not yet received a copy and believe that you should have done then please contact me in the first instance.

I hope that issue 23 contains items of interest. I also apologise for it being very late and thank you for your forbearance and patience. Issue 23 was originally scheduled for the middle of last year, but it suffered an accumulation of various delays. We are revising the arrangements for producing the *Bulletin* in an effort to ensure that it appears in a more timely fashion in the future.

We hope that the next issue will appear over the summer. It should contain two obituaries that had to be held over from issue 23 and all the usual material: news, meeting reports, articles, book reviews etc. Contributions are most welcome, including letters which can be on any aspect of the Society or the history of astronomy. Contributions for the next issue should reach me by 23 May 2014. I hope to hear from you.

Back issues and guidelines for contributions are available from the [Bulletin's web page](#).

It is usually prudent to check with the Editor before preparing items where duplication is a possibility (e.g. book reviews). Back Issues of the *Bulletin* (and its predecessor: *SHA Newsletter*) are now indexed on the Abstract service of SAO/ NASA. Enter SHAN as the 'Journal Code' at

http://adsabs.harvard.edu/bib_abs.html

It is hoped that in the near future, scanned copies of the original articles will be accessible in the same way.

Clive Davenhall (newsletter@shastro.org.uk)

THE ANTIQUARIAN ASTRONOMER

Issue 8 of *The Antiquarian Astronomer*, the Society's refereed journal, is due out by Easter 2014 and will be sent free of charge to members.



Ian Ridpath has kindly volunteered to take over from Kevin Johnson as Editor from Issue 9. Kevin has edited the journal since 2010.

WEB-LINKS NOTICED

Treasures of the RAS

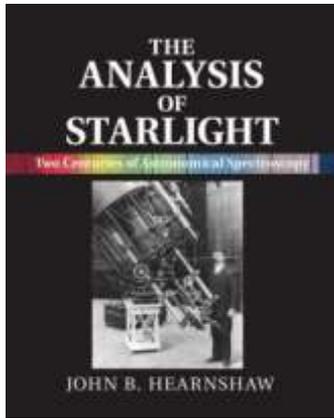
The Library and Archives of the Royal Astronomical Society contain books, images and documents significant in the development of scientific thought in astronomy, geophysics and related disciplines. The web page [Treasures of the RAS](#) gives links to a series of articles and videos in which RAS Librarians display some of the gems of the collection.

In the excellent set of videos so far available, Librarian Jenny Higham introduces the following:

- The woman in the Moon - Cassini's lunar map
- Copernicus puts the Sun at the centre of the Solar System
- Astronomicum Caesareum
- Starry Messenger by Galileo Galilei
- The Sphere by John of Holywood
- The discovery of Uranus
- Uranometria by Johann Bayer

FORTHCOMING BOOKS NOTICED

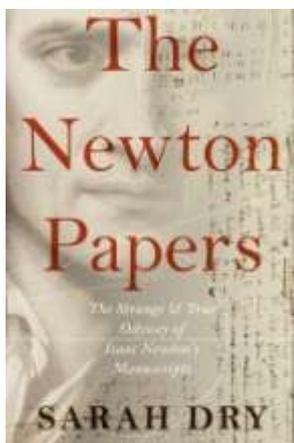
[*The Analysis of Starlight*](#), by John B. Hearnshaw (2nd edition) (Cambridge University Press), Apr. 2014, pp.448 (hardback £75.00, ISBN 9781107031746



First published in 1987, this is the story of the analysis of starlight by astronomical spectroscopy. Beginning with Joseph Fraunhofer's discovery of spectral lines in the early nineteenth century, this new edition continues the story through to the

year 2000. In addition to the key discoveries, it presents the cultural and social history of stellar astrophysics by introducing the leading astronomers and their struggles, triumphs and disagreements. Basic concepts in spectroscopy and spectral analysis are included, so both observational and theoretical aspects are described, in a non-mathematical framework. This new edition covers the final decades of the twentieth century, with its major advances in stellar astrophysics: the discovery of extrasolar planets, new classes of stars and the observation of the ultraviolet spectra of stars from satellites.

[*The Newton Papers: The Strange and True Odyssey of Isaac Newton's Manuscripts*](#), by Sarah Dry (Oxford University Press USA), Jun. 2014, pp.352 (hardback, £25.00), ISBN 9780199951048

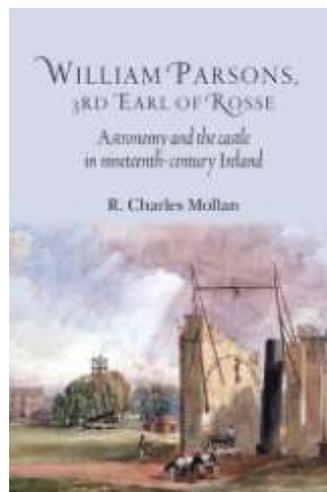


When Isaac Newton died at 85 without a will on March 20, 1727, he left a mass of disorganized papers—upwards of 8 million words—that presented an immediate challenge to his heirs. Most of these writings, on subjects ranging from secret alchemical formulas to impassioned rejections of

the Holy Trinity to notes and calculations on his core discoveries in calculus, universal gravitation, and

optics, were summarily dismissed by his heirs as "not fit to be printed." Rabidly heretical, alchemically obsessed, and possibly even mad, the Newton presented in these papers threatened to undermine not just his personal reputation but the status of science itself. As a result, the private papers of the world's greatest scientist remained hidden to all but a select few for over two hundred years. This book divulges the story of how this secret archive finally came to light—and the complex and contradictory man it revealed.

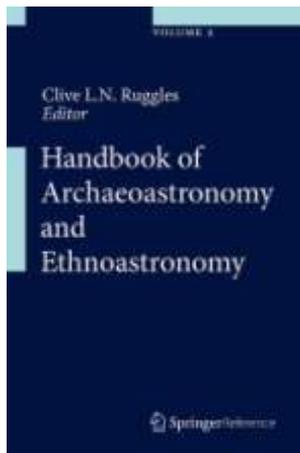
[*William Parsons, 3rd Earl of Rosse: Astronomy and the castle in nineteenth-century Ireland*](#), ed. R. Charles Mollan (Manchester University Press), Jun. 2014, pp.368 (hardback, £70), ISBN 9780719091445



An account of the family life and achievements of the Third Earl of Rosse, a hereditary peer and resident landlord at Birr Castle, County Offaly, in nineteenth-century Ireland, before, during and after the devastating famine of the 1840s. The book gives details, in a non-technical style, of his engineering

initiatives and the astronomical results, but also reveals much more about the man and his contributions – locally in the town and county around Birr, in political and other functions in an Ireland administered by the Protestant Ascendancy, in the development and activities of the Royal Society, of which he was President from 1848–54, and the British Association for the Advancement of Science. The Countess of Rosse, who receives full acknowledgement in the book, was a woman of many talents, among which was her pioneering work in photography, and the book includes reproductions of her artistic exposures, and many other attractive illustrations.

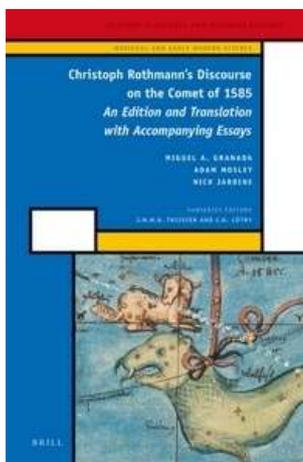
[*Handbook of Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy*](#), ed. Clive Ruggles (Springer), Jun. 2014, pp.2200 (hardback, £773.50), ISBN 9781461461401



The central aim of “Handbook of Archaeoastronomy” is to provide a reliable source for theory, method, interpretation and best practices that will give a definitive picture of the state of the art research in this field for serious scholars regardless of the discipline(s) in which they

are qualified. It is aimed at those already contributing to the field and those interested in entering it. Also included are studies in ethnoastronomy, which is concerned with contemporary practices related to astronomy, particularly among modern indigenous societies.

[Christoph Rothmann's Discourse on the Comet of 1585](#), by Miguel A. Granada, Adam Mosley and Nick Jardine (Brill), Jun. 2014, pp.384 approx (hardback, 140 euro), ISBN 9789004260344



Christoph Rothmann wrote a treatise on the comet of 1585 shortly after it disappeared. Though it was not printed until 1619, Rothmann sent it in 1586 to Tycho Brahe, decisively influencing his rejection of the solid celestial spheres two years later. In his treatise, Rothmann joined the elimination of the solid

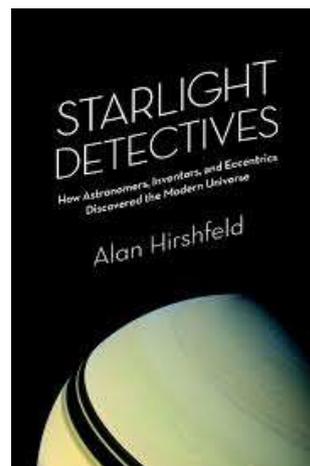
celestial spheres to his concept of air as the substance filling the cosmos. He based his argument on the absence of refraction and the celestial location of the comet. The treatise also contained clear statements reflecting Rothmann’s adoption of Copernicanism. This first critical edition of the treatise is accompanied by an English translation and a thorough commentary. Some appendices with archival documents illustrate the genesis of Rothmann’s treatise.

[Selected Correspondence of William Huggins](#) (2 vols.), ed. Barbara J. Becker (Pickering & Chatto), Jun 2014, pp.1100 approx (hardback, £275), ISBN 9781848934153

William Huggins (1824–1910) was celebrated in his lifetime as the father of astrophysics. From the earliest days of his career Huggins was regularly in contact with other scientists, including astronomers, chemists, physicists, mathematicians and the makers of scientific instruments. Correspondents include Ernest Rutherford, Thomas Romney Robinson, George Gabriel Stokes and Joseph Larmor, Thomas and Howard Grubb, David Gill and George Ellery Hale.

This edition includes over 1000 letters and excerpts from Huggins’s observatory notebooks. The documents, the majority of which are previously unpublished, reveal the important role that Huggins played in the development of astrophysics.

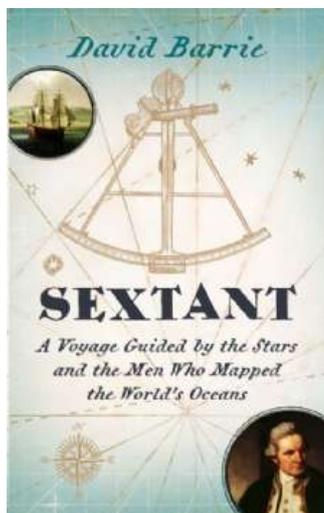
[Starlight Detectives: How Astronomers, Inventors and Eccentrics discovered the Modern Universe](#), by Alan Hirshfeld (Bellevue Literary Press), Jun. 2014, pp.320 (paperback, \$19.95), ISBN 9781934137789



In 1930, Edwin Hubble announced the discovery that the galaxies are hurtling apart; the universe is expanding. This discovery was the culmination of a decades-long arc of scientific and technical advancement. In its shadow lies an untold, yet equally fascinating, backstory whose cast of characters illuminates the gritty, hard-won nature of scientific progress.

The path to a broader mode of cosmic observation was blazed by a cadre of 19th-century amateur astronomers and inventors, galvanized by the advent of photography, spectral analysis, and innovative technology to create the entirely new field of astrophysics. From William Bond, who turned his home into a functional observatory, to geniuses of invention such as Léon Foucault, Hirshfeld reveals the incredible stories—and the ambitious dreamers—behind the birth of modern astronomy.

[Sextant: A Voyage Guided by the Stars and the Men Who Mapped the World's Oceans](#), by David Barrie (William Collins), Feb. 2014, pp.368 (hardback, £16.99), ISBN 9780007516568



David Barrie tells how and why the sextant was invented; how offshore navigators depended on it for their lives in wild and dangerous seas until the advent of GPS – and the sextant's vital role in the history of exploration. Among the protagonists are Captain James Cook, La Pérouse, George Vancouver, Matthew Flinders, Robert FitzRoy, Joshua Slocum, and Frank Worsley of the *Endurance*.

Their stories are interwoven with the author's account of his own transatlantic passage aboard *Saewen* in 1973, using the very same navigational tools as Captain Cook, and the book is infused with a sense of wonder and dramatic discovery.

SHA RESEARCH GRANT AWARDS

As reported in the previous issue of the *e-News* the Society is now running a scheme of Research Grants which allows members to apply for small grants to assist with their research. We are pleased to announce that the first two awards under this scheme have been made. Paul Haley will be travelling to Edinburgh to continue his work on Sir David Gill, and Kevin Kilburn is spending a day at the British Library to inspect its copy of the Bevis atlas. We wish them both good luck in their endeavours and look forward to reading the results of their research in due course.

Not all the money available in the current round has been allocated and so funds remain available. Further applications are welcome until either all the funds are allocated or the round ends on 31 August 2014.

The Society intends to continue the scheme for a second round to run from 1 September 2014 until 31 August 2015. Advance applications for this round are also invited and should be submitted to a deadline of 1 July 2014. (The 'Year for which support is requested' item on the application form allows you to specify which round you are applying for.)

The conditions for the second round remain unchanged. In outline: grants (up to an aggregate total

of £1000 per year), will be available 'to finance any expenses incurred while pursuing a research project in the history of astronomy, broadly understood'. Application is open only to SHA members in good standing and applications should be accompanied by a brief written case not exceeding 500 words. Further details and the application form are available from the [grants page](#) of the Society's Web site.

Madeline Cox and Clive Davenhall

LIBRARY ACCESSIONS

Recent additions to the SHA Library include:

- Leverington, D. *Encyclopedia of the History of Astronomy and Astrophysics* (2013)
- Chapman, A. *Slaying Dragons: Destroying Myths in the History of Science and Faith* (2013)
- BAA Historical Section *Researching Astronomical History* (2013)
- BAA, *Indexes to the Journal of the BAA*. 3 DVDs (2010)



The [Sir Robert Ball Library](#) of the SHA is located at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, 9 Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3BS - just 10 mins walk from New St and Snow Hill stations.

If you are a member of the SHA and you wish to consult or borrow any items, please arrange a visit in advance with the Librarian: library@shastro.org.uk

A 74-page [up to date catalogue](#) of the thousands of items held by the SHA Library is available on the Society website.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS AND EVENTS

THE LEEDS CLOCK & THE LONGITUDE LEEDS CITY MUSEUM



An 18th century precision pendulum clock, which played a valuable role in helping to solve one of the greatest scientific challenges of the age, is now on [permanent display](#) at Leeds City Museum.

Built by famous clockmaker John Harrison and his brother in 1727, the longcase clock No.2, is showcased, as part of the 'John Harrison, the Clockmaker who changed the world' display which will celebrate the timepiece's contribution to accurately determining longitude at sea.

This complements the displays at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich (part of the National Maritime Museum) that are dedicated to navigation, precision timekeeping and John Harrison. It is the only display outside London about John Harrison, and, by chance, is near to his birthplace, Foulby, Wakefield.

The clock - thought to be worth £2m - was left to the city in 1973 by William Wyrill Sissons. For a number of years, it was displayed at Abbey House Museum, in a mock-up period shop. With no clock specialist on the staff, it took a long time for anyone to realise its importance.

SEEING THE UNIVERSE IN ALL ITS LIGHT

[This free exhibition](#), presented by the *Science and Technology Facilities Council* (STFC), is to be presented as part of the [Edinburgh International Science Festival](#) and runs from Tue. 8 April until Sat. 12 April at Summerhall, Edinburgh.



The interactive exhibition showcases the story of astronomy, scanning from the past to the future and highlighting some of the key inspirational moments and technical challenges along the way. It includes: a replica model of English astronomer Thomas Harriot's first telescope; a 1:4 scale model of ESO's Very Large Telescope (VLT); a 1:12 scale model of an Atacama Large Millimetre Array (ALMA) antenna; a 1:20 scale model of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST); a 1:10 scale model of Herschel Space Observatory; 'Hands-on' exhibits including 'seeing the invisible', 'adaptive optics' and 'micro autonomous robots'; an interactive control desk, providing details on the full spectra of wavelengths used by astronomers; Historical scientific papers from the Royal Astronomical Society (RAS) & the Thomas Harriot Trust.

Future venues include: Queen's University, Belfast, 16th – 25th May 2014; National Astronomy Meeting, Guildhall Walk, University of Portsmouth, 23rd – 26th June 2014.

ASTROLABES IN MEDIEVAL CULTURES

Warburg Institute (London), 24-25 April 2014

Organised by Josefina Rodriguez-Arribas and Charles Burnett (Warburg Institute) and Stephen Johnston (Oxford Museum for the History of Science)

The topics covered by [this conference](#) will be the astrolabe itself, texts on the construction and use of the instrument, and the position of the astrolabe in pre-

modern cultures and societies (Islam and India, Jewish societies and Medieval and Renaissance Europe).



Speakers will include: Charles Burnett (Warburg Institute), Laura Fernandez Fernandez (Complutense Madrid), Stephen Johnston (Museum of the History of Science, Oxford), Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma (Stuttgart), Emilia Calvo Labarta (Universidad de Barcelona), Josefina Rodríguez Arribas (Warburg Institute), Petra Schmidl (Bonn), Johannes Thomann (Zürich), Flora Vafea (Cairo), Koenraad van Cleempoel (CNHS, Bruxelles), and Miquel Forcada (Universidad ode Barcelona).

Attendance is free of charge, but pre-registration is required by emailing (warburg@sas.ac.uk) giving your name, email address, and the name of your institution (if relevant).

The conference will last 1.5 days, from approx 2 pm on 24 April and then the whole day on 25 April (from approx 10.15 to 17.00).

OTHER WORLDS AND IMAGINARY BEINGS

Christ Church College, Oxford is currently mounting the exhibition 'Other Worlds and Imaginary Beings: From Medieval Illumination to 19th-Century Drawings'. It will run in the College's Upper Library until 25 April 2014. A well-illustrated catalogue is available from the College for £5.00 (plus £2.50 p&p in the UK). The exhibition is likely to be of interest to some members but, judging from the catalogue, the 'other worlds and imaginary beings' are genuinely imaginary, from Medieval bestiaries to the works of Lewis Carroll, rather than imagined views of real extra-terrestrial worlds. Thus, though fascinating and delightful, there is not obviously much (if any) history of astronomy content. Further details are available from the [exhibition website](#).

SHA SURVEY OF ASTRONOMICAL HISTORY

Message from the Survey Coordinator

Some interesting additions have been made to the *Survey* pages in recent weeks. My thanks go to Founder Member Bill Barton, for sending me information about Washington Teasdale, Arthur Wesley Blacklock and the Rev. E L Berthon. To see the full entries just type the surname into the search box at shasurvey.wordpress.com

Berthon is best remembered for his dynamometer and his equestrial equatorial. He built several reflectors including a 12.5" which won a silver medal at the 1878 Paris Exhibition.

Teasdale was best known for his connection with Leeds AS where he was president in the 1890s, whilst Blacklock, a doctor, was a well known amateur telescope maker.

Members can help the survey considerably if they have astronomical information on the following counties:- Berkshire, Dorset, Somerset, Westmorland and the Isles of White and Man.

Please send your research to Roger Jones (Survey Coordinator) - ziksby@gmail.com

Roger Jones

Information wanted re James Lyle (b.1831)

The *Glasgow Weekly News* of 18 Nov 1905, included a puzzling claim by the optician and telescope maker **James Lyle**. In his younger days (date unknown), with a hand-rotated wooden mount of his own devising, he had taken a photograph of the Moon, with a 1-hour exposure time. This, so far as he was aware, he told the journalist, "was the first photograph taken of the Moon".

Since he was born in 1831, however, it is unlikely that his photo of the Moon was in any major sense a first. Reputedly, the first (daguerreotype) photo of the Moon was taken by JW Draper in 1840. Also, photographs were even being taken on collodion plates through telescopes at least as early as 1852 (by Warren de la Rue).

If Lyle was aware of what was going on at the time (and he certainly would seem astute enough to have been aware), the respect in which his photo was 'a first' must have been very specific (and too subtle for the journalist to have understood). Does any reader have information about Lyle and his lunar photo?

His company (which separated from Gardner & Lyle in 1891) got into difficulties and suffered sequestration in 1893. Some details are in the NMS book, *Brass & Glass*.

(replies please to David.Sellers@ntlworld.com)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE SHA COUNCIL

The SHA's conferences and publications, and administration, are all organised and effected by volunteers. We're not a closed clique! In recent years we've lost great colleagues to The Reaper or to change in personal circumstances. We are very fortunate to have found replacements from volunteers who have frequently had no previous experience on Council (that doesn't matter) but have appropriate skills, and have made the individual decision that the SHA is worth some of their time and input.

Please, don't wait for someone else to step forward!

Would you enjoy getting involved?

Events co-ordinator needed: we organise for each year two speaker meetings and a picnic event at a historic site. These have to be arranged about a year in advance. Each results from discussion in Council, and there are always plenty of ideas for venues and speakers. Currently different Council members have handled an event or two. Ideally it needs to be done systematically, contact maintained with booked speakers and venue organisers, a flier prepared, catering organised, and then help welcome attendees on the day.

Crucially, there are two reasons why participation can be interesting and enjoyable; (1) Council has an exclusive email-list. Any question or problem or need for advice can be raised there, and any/all Council members can respond. Brain-picking works! (2) Each post can be enjoyed because the responsibilities are defined and limited (i.e. the work shared!), while the post-holder has the 'full picture' context, and can input to any discussion, on the email-list or at a meeting.

If you *might* be interested, and would like a chat just to find out more, please email Chairman Madeline Cox, Secretary Bob Bower, or Treasurer Roger Hutchins, to make a date for a phone call.

Council is a small friendly group, including several new members, and we meet for a lunch before each meeting so that we get to know each other socially before tackling SHA business.

Would *you* consider helping in this way? Please do call for a friendly chat without your prior commitment to taking anything on.

REPORTS

Institute of Astronomy, Cambridge Open Day, Saturday 22 March

This annual event is always fascinating for anyone interested in astronomy, and is a popular family afternoon (attracting more than 1,000 people) during the *Cambridge Science Festival*. The IofA go to great trouble to host it in the most interesting and friendly way, spread across the site. Four lectures were supplemented by stands publicising the Planck and Gaia missions, with Cambridge astronomers on those teams explaining and answering questions. There were other 'stalls' presenting astrophysical research, and some wonderful computer graphics. Astronomers and students hosted numerous activities for the children.

Courtesy of Mark Hurn, IofA Librarian and SHA Archivist, Mike Leggett (SHA Publicity Officer) organised a substantial SHA publicity stand in one of the library rooms in the Observatory building of 1828. His archive display was visited by some 230 adults and children, a good few stopped to study SHA material, and a dozen took away leaflets with more information. Thanks to Mike for his considerable effort, and special thanks to his wife Pat, also a SHA member, who was once again an enthusiastic and active ambassador for the SHA.

Roger Hutchins



SHA Publicity stand at the Institute of Astronomy

e-NEWS CONTACT DETAILS

Communications relating to *SHA e-News* should be sent to the **Editor**: enews@shastro.org.uk

General communications to the Society should be sent to the **General Secretary** (Bob Bower): membership@shastro.org.uk

SUMMARY DATES FOR THE DIARY

2014 MEETINGS

Thu 24-Fri 25 Apr. Astrolabes in Medieval Cultures Conference, at the Warburg Institute (London). Further details are given elsewhere in this *e-News*. (non-SHA event).

Sat. 26 Apr. SHA Spring Conference, at Chetham's Library, Manchester. Further details are given elsewhere in this *e-News*.

Wed 30 Apr. Crawford Lecture on the History of Astronomy, at the University of Edinburgh. Further details are given elsewhere in this *e-News*. See also - <http://scienceofthestars.wordpress.com/crawford-lecture-in-the-history-of-astronomy/>. (non-SHA event).

Sat. 3 May. BAA Historical Section Meeting, at the Friargate Quaker Centre in York. Further details to be advised at <http://www.britastro.org/history/>. SHA members are most welcome (non-SHA event).

Tue. 17 - Fri. 20 Jun. LISA VII, will be held on the theme of Open Science – at the Frontiers of Librarianship and will be hosted by the Astronomical Observatory of Capodimonte, National Institute for Astrophysics (INAF), Naples, Italy. The scope of the LISA (Library and Information Services in Astronomy) conferences does not fall entirely within the history of astronomy but nonetheless they may be of interest. For details see: <http://eventi.oacn.inaf.it/lisa7/conference/first-announcement/> (non-SHA event).

Sat. 12 Jul. SHA Summer Picnic, Greenwich Park, Greenwich, London and will include a curator-led tour of the temporary National Maritime Museum exhibition, *Ships, Clocks & Stars: the Quest for Longitude*. Further details are given elsewhere in this *e-News*.

Sat. 22 - Fri. 26 Sep. SEAC 2014. The annual meeting of the *Société Européenne pour L'Astronomie dans la Culture* (SEAC), The Materiality of the Sky, will be held in Malta. Further details will be available from the SEAC Web site: <http://www.archeoastronomy.org/> (non-SHA event).

Sat. 25 Oct. SHA Autumn Conference and AGM, at the BMI in central Birmingham. Further details are given elsewhere in this *e-News*.

2015 MEETINGS

Sat. 28 Mar. SHA/BAA Historical Section Joint Meeting, at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (apologies, the previous e-News incorrectly said York). Further details are given elsewhere in this *e-News*.

EXHIBITIONS

Tue. 8 Apr.-Sat. 12 Apr. Seeing the Universe in all its Light, at Summerhall, Edinburgh. Further details are given elsewhere in this *e-News*.

Until Fri. 25 Apr. Other Worlds and Imaginary Beings, Christ Church College, Oxford. Further details are given elsewhere in this *e-News*.
