



SHA e-News

Society for the History of Astronomy

Volume 6, no. 3, July 2014.

Editor: David Sellers

SHA AT GREENWICH

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, to Roger Hutchins). 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.*



Royal Museums Greenwich banner for the exhibition *Ships, Clocks & Stars: the Quest for Longitude*.

FUTURE SHA MEETINGS

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)

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*

2015 AGM / AUTUMN CONFERENCE

The Annual General Meeting & Autumn Conference for next year will be held at the Birmingham & Midlands Institute on 31 October 2015.

FUTURE SPRING CONFERENCE VENUES

The SHA Council is tentatively planning that the Spring Conference will held at a 'west country' location (Bristol or Bath being possibilities) in 2016 and that it will return to Chetham's Library (Manchester) in 2018.

Members are encouraged to give presentations, or exhibit posters relating to their research, at future SHA events and anyone wishing to do so should should contact Roger Hutchins in the first instance (via roger.hutchins@btinternet.com).

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
Deputy Editor, The Antiquarian Astronomer Kevin Johnson
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 Sep 13 Manchester (Godlee Observatory)
 2014 Nov 22 Cambridge (Inst of Astronomy)

SHA PUBLICATIONS

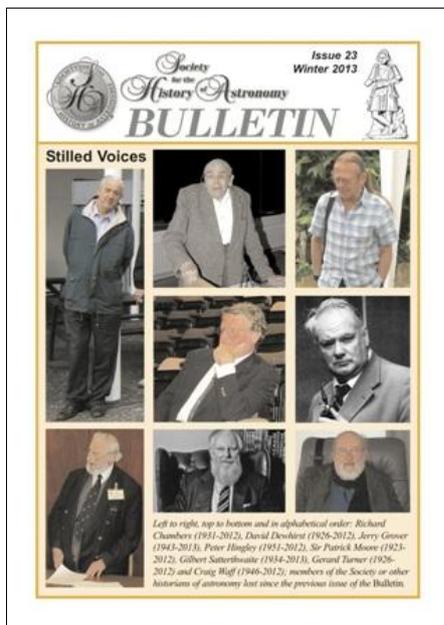
SHA e-NEWS

The next issue of the *e-NEWS* is due in early October. 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 have received their copy of the much-delayed **issue 23** of the *SHA Bulletin* during the Spring. 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 **issue 24** will appear in late 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.

Issue 25 is planned for the end of the year.

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, came out in early June 2014. All members should have received a copy free of charge. Please let us know, if you have not received yours.

The new issue (121 pages long) has a wide variety of papers, spanning several centuries of astronomy. Hopefully all members will find items of interest.



Contents of Issue 8

Some matters relating to the documentary evidence of the discovery of Neptune. Disputes and controversies (by Norma Foster)

The Life and Times of John Rand Capron (1829-1888) (by Paul Fuller)

David Gill: clock maker to global astronomer (by Paul A. Haley)

Despite the Clouds: A History of Wales and Astronomy (by Bryn Jones)

Identifying the stars on Johann Bayer's Chart of the South Polar Sky (by Ian Ridpath)

William Crabtree and the date of Easter (by David Sellers)

Ian Ridpath has kindly volunteered to take over from Kevin Johnson as Editor from Issue 9. Kevin has edited the journal since 2010. Members and others wishing to submit material for future issues of the Antiquarian Astronomer should contact Ian (at ian@ianridpath.com). [Guidance for authors](#) can be found on our website.

LIBRARY ACCESSIONS

Recent additions to the SHA Library include:

Purchases

Nath, B.B., *The Story of Helium and the Birth of Astrophysics* (2013)

Dunn, Richard & Higgitt, Rebekah (Royal Museums Greenwich), *Finding Longitude: How ships, clocks and stars helped solve the longitude problem* (2014)

Lequeux, J., *Le Verrier: Magnificent and Detestable Astronomer* (2013)

Clarke, David, *Reflections on Astronomy in Glasgow* (2013)

Donations

Friends of West Norwood Cemetery (Newsletter No. 77 May 2013), *R.C. Carrington FRS, Solar Astronomer (1826-1875)* - donor: John Moffat

ESO, *Extremely Large Telescopes: the next Step in Mankind's Quest for the Universe* (2005) - donor: unknown

Levy, D., *Starry Night: Astronomers and Poets read the Sky* (2001) - donor: Madeline Cox

Royal Greenwich Observatory, *Astronomical Observations made at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich ...1837* - donor: David Sellers

Smith, Meg Weston, *Beating the Odds: The Life and Times of E.A. Milne* (2013) - donor: Roger Hutchins

Wolfschmidt, G.(ed), *Kometen, Sterne, Galaxien: Astronomie in der Hamburger Sternwarte* (2014) - donor: the Editor.

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



Roger Jones, Madeline Cox and Les Jepson in the SHA Library

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

SHA MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire that was circulated to SHA members (by email) during Spring 2014 has received an encouraging response. General Secretary, Bob Bower, will be producing an analysis for inclusion in the next issue of SHA e-News. Some early suggestions that have been made include the following:

Publicity: more approaches to the media; reports of activities to be sent to magazines (e.g.RAS A&G); aim to broaden SHA age profile.

Bulletin: should be more regular; should not aim to carry news.

AA: could include correspondence

e-News: should include abstracts from upcoming talks at SHA meetings; could include a 'Meet the Member' column.

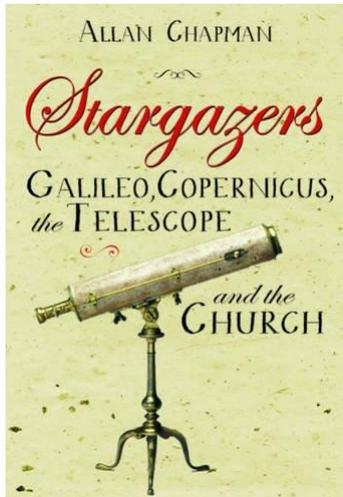
Survey: could include an oral history project - focussing on prominent astronomers and historians whilst they are still with us.

Meetings: more national spread; several new volunteers to give talks.

There is still time to take account of additional responses. Please make sure that you take this opportunity to make your comments and suggestions known to the SHA Council

FORTHCOMING BOOKS NOTICED

[Stargazers: Galileo, Copernicus, the Telescope and the Church](#), by Allan Chapman (Lion Books), Oct. 2014, pp.448 (paperback, £10.99), ISBN 9780745956275



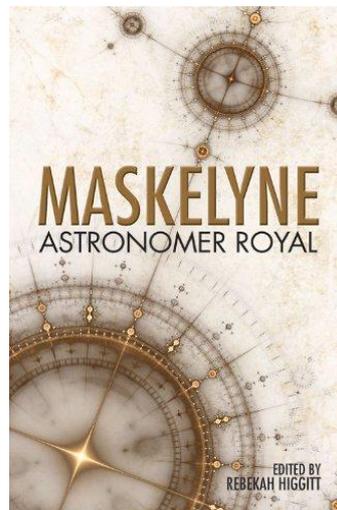
Stargazers presents a comprehensive history of how leading astronomers, such as Galileo and Copernicus, studied the stars and planets from 1500AD to around 1700AD. Building on the work of the Greek and Arabian astronomers before him, church lawyer

Nicholas Copernicus proposed the idea of a sun-centred universe. It was later popularized by Galileo - a brilliant debater whose abrasive style won him many enemies - who presented new evidence, which suggested that the earth moved. This examination of the work of both men explores both their achievements and influences. It then traces the impact of their ideas on those who followed them, including Sir Francis Bacon, Dr John Wilkins, Dr Robert Hooke, Sir Isaac Newton and Reverend Dr James Bradley. Chapman investigates the Church's role and its intriguing relationship with the astronomers of the day, many of whom were churchgoers. He rebuts the popular view that the Church was opposed to the study of astronomy. In reality, it led the search to discover more. In 1728, Copernicus's theory of the moving earth was finally proven by the young Reverend Dr James Bradley.

[Maskelyne: Astronomer Royal](#), by Rebekah Higgitt (NAG Press), Nov. 2014, pp.208 (hardback, £16.99), ISBN 9780719809125

Nevil Maskelyne (1732-1811) was a hugely significant figure in the worlds of British science and maritime exploration. His high international standing and wide influence have in many ways been unfairly overlooked as his story has come to be dominated by his role in the campaign waged by John Harrison, the

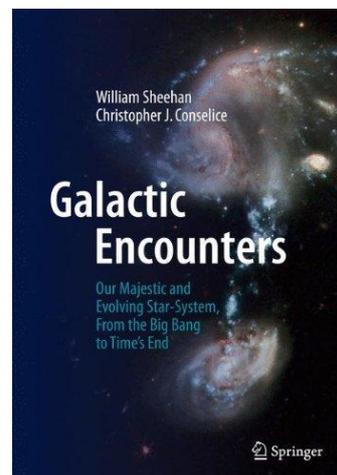
clockmaker, for a larger reward for his pioneering marine timekeepers.



Maskelyne was, however, involved in all the key projects of eighteenth-century astronomy. These included ambitious expeditions to observe the transits of Venus, experiments designed to establish the shape and 'weight' of the Earth, the remaking of the Royal Observatory,

Greenwich, and the survey of new lands on voyages of scientific exploration. The essays in this volume allow us to appreciate Maskelyne's role in these projects and to gain a new perspective on the decisions he made with the Board of Longitude. They reveal a conscientious individual, close to friends and family, with a deep sense of commitment to his work and those who depended on him for a living. These essays are written by experts in the history of science and the collections of the National Maritime Museum, which, along with the Royal Observatory, is now part of Royal Museums Greenwich. They give new insight into Maskelyne's world, looking at his interactions with colleagues, rivals and employees, and exploring the buildings in which he lived and worked.

[Galactic Encounters: Our Majestic and Evolving Star-System, From the Big Bang to Time's End](#), by William Sheehan & Christopher J. Conselice (Springer), Jul. 2014, pp.391 (hardback, £31.99), ISBN 9780387853468



The story of the discovery of galaxies, their nature and mankind's place in the universe. This historical approach helps the reader to understand "why" we know what we do, not simply "what".

The book starts with Galileo's discovery that

the Milky Way consists of a myriad of individual stars and progresses through the fascinating discoveries that have resulted in our current understanding. The lives and work of the key astronomers responsible are described with the aid of a wealth of images. The story concludes with a consideration of the dark matter, black holes, dark energy and the origin of the universe.

[New Insights From Recent Studies in Historical Astronomy: Following in the Footsteps of F.](#)

[Richard Stephenson](#), by Wayne Orchiston (Ed.), Richard Strom (Ed.), David A. Green (Ed.) (Springer), Sep. 2014, pp.300 (hardback, £173), ISBN 9783319076133

Papers from a conference held to celebrate the 70th birthday of one of the world's foremost astronomical historians, Professor F. Richard Stephenson. It brings together under one cover papers on four different areas of scholarship: applied historical astronomy (which Stephenson founded); Islamic astronomy; Oriental astronomy and amateur astronomy. Included are ways in which recent research using historical data has provided new insights into auroral and solar activity, supernovae and changes in the rotation rate of the Earth. It also presents readers with results of recent research on leading historical figures in Islamic and Oriental astronomy, and aspects of eighteenth and nineteenth century Australian, British, German and Portuguese amateur astronomy, including the fascinating 'amateur-turned-professional syndrome'.

[Eclipses, Transits, and Comets of the Nineteenth Century: How America's Perception of the Skies](#)

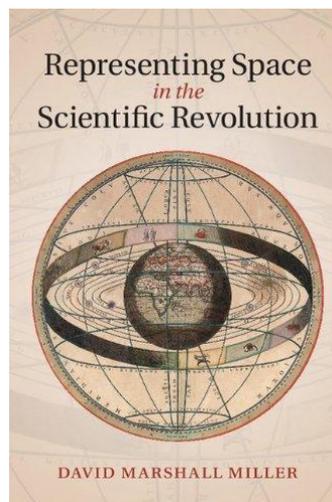
[Changed](#), by Stella Cottam & Wayne Orchiston (Springer), Aug.2014, pp.380 (hardback, £90), ISBN 9783319083407

Grabbing the attention of poets, politicians and the general public alike, a series of spectacular astronomical events in the late 1800s galvanized Americans to take a greater interest in astronomy than ever before. At a time when the sciences were not yet as well established in the United States as they were in Europe, this public interest and support provided the growing scientific community in the United States with the platform they needed to advance the field of astronomy in the United States.

Earlier in the 19th century comets, meteors and the discovery of the planet Neptune were all sources of

inspiration to the general public. The specific events considered are the total solar eclipses of 1868, 1869 and 1878 and the transits of Venus of 1874 and 1882.

[Representing Space in the Scientific Revolution](#), by David Marshall Miller (Cambridge University Press), Aug 2014, pp.220 (hardback, £55), ISBN 9781107046733



The novel understanding of the physical world that characterized the Scientific Revolution depended on a fundamental shift in the way its protagonists understood and described space. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, spatial phenomena were

described in relation to a presupposed central point; by its end, space had become a centerless void in which phenomena could only be described by reference to arbitrary orientations. David Marshall Miller examines both the historical and philosophical aspects of this far-reaching development, including the rejection of the idea of heavenly spheres, the advent of rectilinear inertia, and the theoretical contributions of Copernicus, Gilbert, Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, and Newton. His study shows how the centered Aristotelian cosmos became the oriented Newtonian universe.

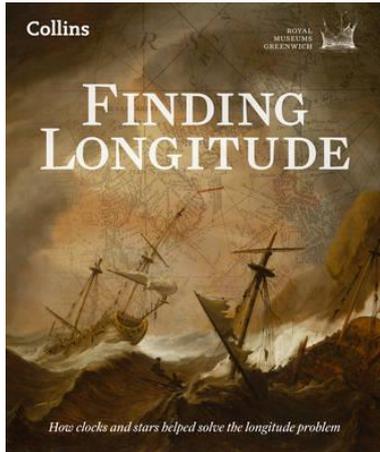
[Finding Longitude: How Clocks and Stars Helped Solve the Longitude Problem](#), by Richard Dunn &

Rebekah Higgitt (National Maritime Museum/Collins), Jul. 2014, pp.256 (hardback, £25) ISBN 9780007525867

Official publication of the National Maritime Museum's exhibition "Ships, Clocks and Stars: The Quest for Longitude".

300 years ago, amidst growing frustration from the naval community and pressure from the increasing importance of international trade, the British government passed the 1714 Longitude Act. It was an attempt to solve one of the most pressing problems of the age: how to determine a ship's longitude (east-west position) at sea. With life-changing rewards on offer,

the challenge captured the imaginations and talents of astronomers, skilled craftsmen, politicians, seamen and satirists. This beautifully illustrated book is a detailed account of these stories, and how the longitude problem was solved.



PUBLICATIONS WANTED

SHA Member Leonard Matula is seeking copies of the following:

Antiquarian Astronomer 2

SHA Newsletter 4, 12, 15, 16

Southern Astronomy (later called Star & Sky) - any issues published in the 90's in Australia

BAA Journal 1978 to 1984 all issues, 1987 Oct, Dec. 1988 all issues. 2004 Aug.

RAS newer format magazine style Feb/Mar 1997 to Aug 1997, Aug 1998, Feb 2001, Oct 2002, Aug 2003, Oct, Dec 2005, Dec 2006, Feb Apr Jun Oct Dec 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 - all issues.

"Cash paid & All Shipping expenses"

If anyone can help, please contact Leonard at:

Leonard Matula
PO Box 1826
Temple City
CA 91780
USA
Tel. 626-230-7612

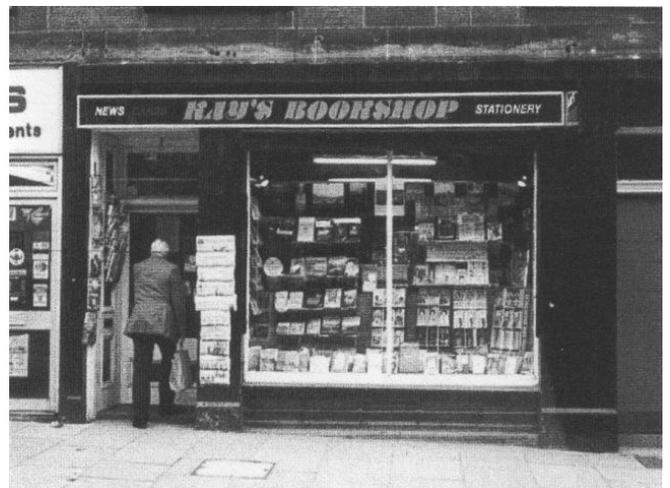
BULLETIN BOOKSHOP COMPETITION

The Society's secondhand bookshop competition is still open until the end of September and we look forward to receiving your entries. The idea is simple. Submit a brief description of an astronomy book that you found in a secondhand bookshop and the story of how you found it. It might be rare book, one with a limited geographical circulation, or just one that you treasure. A £10.00 National Book Token will be awarded to the person who submits the most entertaining entry, and a £5.00 one will go to the runner-up. A UK National Book Token would not be much use to an entrant from overseas so an Amazon gift voucher will be substituted. The rules for entering are simple:

- Entries should describe an astronomy book bought in a secondhand bookshop (or similar secondhand book fair, market stall, charity shop etc).
- The entry should comprise no more than five hundred words.
- To be eligible to enter you must be an SHA member in good standing at the time you submit your entry.
- The closing date is 30 September 2014.
- The Editor's decision is final.

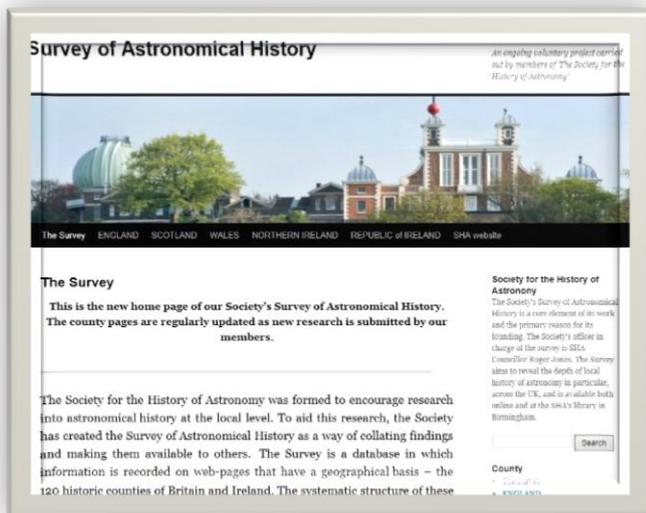
Entries should be sent to the Bulletin Editor by e-mail or post (newsletter@shastro.org.uk; 30 Millar Crescent, Morningside, Edinburgh, EH10 5HH). The winning entries will be, and other entries may be, published in whole or part in a future issue of the Bulletin.

Clive Davenhall



Kay's Bookshop, now closed, on Morningside Road, Morningside, Edinburgh

SHA SURVEY OF ASTRONOMICAL HISTORY



Home page of Survey website

Survey Coordinator

Council and founder member Roger Jones has been Survey co-ordinator since setting up the survey in 2003, shortly after the Society was founded. He has decided to stand down from this post at the next AGM and Stuart Williams has kindly volunteered to take on the job of coordinating the survey and running [Survey website](#).

Members are encouraged to assist in the building of this survey by continuing to submit their research findings to me at ziksbj@gmail.com.

Roger Jones

AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS

Although the SHA - a non-for-profit society - is not a registered charity and has no legal obligation to present audited accounts, the Council is anxious to ensure that the SHA's financial affairs are managed properly and efficiently. It has therefore engaged a firm of Chartered Accountants to carry out a review of our accounts for the latest financial year. Messrs Timothy N Horne Ltd (of Ipswich) will review our Income & Expenditure Statement with all its supporting documents (invoices, receipts, cheque books, constitution, minutes, Treasurer's reports, etc). They will then report in writing on whether they have found good practice or not, note deficiencies, and make recommendations.



SHA publicity stand at the Institute of Astronomy in March

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

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. Further details are given elsewhere in this *e-News*.

Sat 31 Oct. SHA Autumn Conference and AGM, at the BMI in central Birmingham
