

## **FLAMSTEED ASTRONOMY SOCIETY**

Notes from a meeting held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007 at Jane Bendall's house

**Present:** (in alphabetical order) Jane Bendall, Mike Dryland, Peter Kitcherside, Pat Wainwright and David Waugh

- 1. Apologies:** Apologies were received from Lin Potter
- 2. Matters arising:** There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007
- 3. Vote of thanks:** The meeting moved a vote of thanks to David Waugh for his hard work and dedication over the past two years, particularly on enhancing and running the solar viewing project on behalf of the FAS. The solar viewing project has gone from strength to strength with now over 20 trained members. We very much hope that David will continue to be an active and enthusiastic member of the society and that one day soon we shall welcome him again as a committee member.

### **4. Progress with Founder Members arrangements**

Mike updated the meeting on the current situation. Progress remains frustratingly slow and it was agreed that Jane will write to Norman Reed and Claire Hyde on behalf of the committee setting out our considerable and well founded concerns and requesting a meeting as soon as possible. We are bound to have questions from the floor at the AGM about the seemingly intractable problem of rolling the two subscriptions into one and actually collecting the money and we have no real answers.

### **5. Arrangements for AGM**

Roger Geeson is willing to stand for the committee and Peter agreed to propose him. It was decided that we approach various people who might be amenable to becoming committee members.

### **6. Programming:**

**Catering at meetings:** Although Jane is still willing to shop and supply the coffee, tea, wine etc she is finding, that now that we can have up to 60 people at a normal lecture evening, it is becoming too much for one person to handle every month.

It was agreed:

- That from now on each member of the committee takes over the catering on a rota basis. They will recruit two likely looking members as they come through the door as assistants. Jane will do a quick 10 minute update at 6.30 to remind the duty committee member where things are and how they work.

- She will also write an “idiot’s guide” to the proceedings e.g. how many spoonfuls of coffee for each flask etc.
- That we would buy two more thermos flasks
- That hot drinks would continue to be served before the lecture but not afterwards.
- The duty person and his/her helpers would clear up afterwards.

**Christmas party:** It was decided that there were too many problems with holding a party at the ROG and that we should settle for the lecture theatre.

We would arrange a combined lecture and party –

- Jane to book the podium as well as the lecture theatre
- Rod Jenkins to be asked to make his lecture 45 minutes long
- We shall order food from M&S as we did last year – sticking to sandwiches, cake and mince pies and that wine etc would be served after the lecture finishes
- Mike would prepare another of his immensely popular quizzes
- We should ask if the shop could remain open until 7.30 when we start the lecture.
- Rod and possibly Mrs. Jenkins would like a tour of the ROG starting at 3.00 pm. Mike and/or Jane to arrange.

**Book Mart:** Arranged by Mike, for the November meeting. We shall ask members if they want to order a £2.00 calendar from the FAS.

### **Astrophotography**

There is great interest in the whole subject and although Martin Thomas will lecture about Deep Space Imaging in January, it was felt that there might be room for another workshop to discuss less advanced techniques. Malcolm Porter had kindly offered to do a 10 minute members slot before the main lecture one evening and Jane shall contact him to arrange a time in the New Year. No decision was taken.

### **Visits and Trips**

It was agreed that we would visit Blythe House, the Science Museum stores, situated near Olympia during the winter and arrange a summer visit to the Mullard Telescope, Cambridge. The meeting felt that we should arrange longer overnight visits bi-annually.

Lin has the offer of a luxury retreat in the Canaries to use this winter. Several people expressed concern about the availability of flights and the committee asked if she could supply more details and costings and then we could email members to see the level of

interest. Concern was also voiced about the amount of work and responsibility involved for the organizer.

## **7. Solar Viewing update**

It was good news that the museum has approved expenditure on another (second hand) telescope and a proper notice board. David has already informed Mark Duwe that we wish to buy his telescope and will ask him to raise an invoice so that he can be paid.

- Pat will order the notice board.
- Pat and David will send both invoices to Jane for action – as soon as possible.
- Lin will arrange for the leaflet to be translated into Arabic

## **8. Viewing up-date.**

Pat reported that her arrangements have been dogged by bad weather throughout last winter, resulting in several disappointing evenings.

When Martin suggests another date at Romney we shall give it a great deal more publicity and a higher profile; stressing the privilege of using a private observatory, the limited number of places available and organizing car sharing. Would it be a good idea to have a pub supper beforehand?

Mike suggested that we provide more of what we do well e.g. viewing on Blackheath, especially on pub nights when we should try to bring the Flamsteed. We can continue to use Hazelwood for special events and the Perseid meteor shower viewing had been pretty successful.

Darren Baskell has suggested that he becomes more involved with viewing activities and we shall invite him to the next H&B meeting. We would welcome more pro-am events and await his proposals with interest.

## **9. Joint Activities**

Mike attended a “Whither Astronomy” brainstorming meeting at the NMM with several very eminent Astrophysicists. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the relationship of the ROG with professional astronomers in the UK. Should the ROG have a senior astronomical figure to speak for its interests? Despite the awe inspiring nature of the meeting Mike talked about the role of amateur astronomy and the contribution that the FAS already makes to the activities at the ROG. He stressed that we seek further challenges and cooperative events.

**Evenings with the Stars:** It is obvious that Kevin Fewster expects a higher profile from the ROG (see meeting above), so Mike and Jane will continue to liaise with Rob Edwards and Sarah Lockwood, who are in charge of planning a series of open evenings offering more than just 28” viewing sessions e.g. visiting the galleries, planetarium shows and star

gazing in the courtyard. The committee felt that it is unlikely that we would find enough volunteers to man telescopes in the courtyard at every event. We shall wait and see what is being proposed.

**Joint telescope workshop** in January: We shall need a team of volunteers to help out with the second workshop which is a public event. We shall liaise with John Griffiths and the organizers nearer the time.

**10. International Profile:** Pat had suggested that we follow up member's contacts with overseas astronomical societies so that we could arrange mutual exchange of information. Members could also visit the "affiliated" overseas society if they are near at hand and their members can come to FAS events if they are visiting London. We shall approach Eddie Yeadon to see if he would be interested in setting up the project.

#### **11. Any Other Business**

- Pat is considering whether to take on the role of Coronado organizer and volunteer coordinator next season.
- It was agreed that the FAS should join the BAA as a corporate member and Pat will send Jane details.
- **Pearson Education.** Mike tried to make contact by telephone to no avail. Pat expressed some suspicions about their hotmail address. There is no more information at present.
- **Metro:** Mike is in touch with Ms JJ Cox who is eager to join us at a viewing session. We shall invite her to an Evening with the Stars.
- As we have had no luck in arranging a farewell dinner with Polly Larner it was agreed that we should send her a thank you present of champagne and chocolates at Christmas.
- We had heard no further plans from Tony Malone over his company's observing proposals.

**Date of next meeting** was not fixed, but it was agreed that we should have another meeting shortly after the AGM.

