

**FLAMSTEED ASTRONOMY SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING**, held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2008 at 7.15 p.m. in Lin's offices.

**Present:** Lin Potter (Chair), Kate Bishop, Mark Duwe, Mike Dryland, Peter Kitcherside, Roger Geeson, Pat Wainwright and Jane Bendall

1. **Apologies:** There were no apologies for absence.
2. **Matters arising** from the meeting held on 1st May 2008.

**Workshop:** Jane has not yet arranged the workshop.

**Badges:** Kate to print stickers with Flamsteed member's names before each meeting. In LARGE print – Jane to remind Kate to put it on her check list.

**Correction:** There will be no discounts for Flamsteed members who sign up for GCSE courses.

### 3. **Arrangments for AGM and elections to the Committee**

All current committee members are willing to stand for re-election. It was agreed that should there be other nominations Peter would stand down and then immediately be co-opted onto the committee again. Pat also volunteered to do so. Jane will send out AGM paperwork and request for nominations and questions in the next week.

Roger will give the report on solar viewing as Pat will not be present.

### **Programme:**

**Christmas party:** Darren Baskell's proposals were tabled and accepted with the proviso that we should have a planetarium show about a serious astronomical subject as well as the fun and games. Jane will ask for the shop to be open for a while during the wine reception. Food will be bought from Marks and Spencer. There was not quite enough wine last year, so we shall over-order, using any surplus for the following meeting.

**10 minute talks:** we now have four Flamsteed members who have volunteered. It was agreed that Marek (see later point) would introduce himself and give a 10 minute talk in October before the lecture.

**RAS/ROG joint lecture season:** Claire Hyde, Robert Massey and Kate are discussing a lecture programme in late 2008/early 2009 in conjunction with the Royal Astronomical Society. The two institutions would swap speakers and offer mutual support. We await details with great interest as these events are for Members of the Museum only.

**IYA:** We must arrange a meeting in first half of September with Helen and Marek to discuss joint Flamsteed and Museum arrangements. Committee members are welcome to participate.

**Telescope workshop:** Jane is trying to sort out suitable dates with Helen and John Griffiths so that we can hold joint museum / Flamsteed evenings. Various issues were discussed and will be brought up with Helen.

- Are we going to charge Flamsteed members...there is a very serious problem with no-shows; about 50 percent of people who sign up do not turn up on the day. A small charge which is refunded at the door might be the way forward. It was decided that Lin would read the riot act at the AGM, explaining that we must make our allocation of tickets available to the public if people are not coming. If that does not work we shall ask members to send a cheque to the Members office when they book, which Kate will hold until the workshop evening.
- How many tickets should be allocated to FAS?
- Unallocated tickets must be returned to Helen to be offered for sale. We need to agree a time span.
- Audibility is a problem, the NMM has a roving mike and this could be the way forward.
- Would John like help from members – numbers and duties to be decided. Those who are giving help will not have to pay.

As these workshops as for beginners, Jane will set up a more advanced Flamsteed workshop later in the season.

**Fred Watson Visit:** Kate explained that the Flamsteed is being allocated 90 places at a Fred Watson's lecture in the planetarium on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September – a coup for the Members office which has had enormous problems in making arrangements – Fred is travelling with an entourage of 30 tour operators and there will be guided tours beforehand. Kate is planning to charge a small amount to cover the wine and nibbles reception in the foyer. Kate will let Jane know details as soon as possible so we can start the booking process – which will be through the Members office.

**Partial eclipse wash-up:** it was a great success and thanks are due to all Flamsteed participants. It was the first such event that Darren had organised and he did a magnificent job, especially as he was working entirely on his own. Lin passed special thanks to Mark who had kept the Coronado telescope going throughout the morning, despite technical difficulties. At a rough guess about 500 people had had an opportunity to view the partial eclipse throughout the morning.

5. **Marek Kukula**, Lin, Mike, Kate and Jane had met Marek Kukula the Museum's new public astronomer in a very helpful meeting that morning. Mike will post Marek's very impressive professional details on the website. Marek has agreed to give a 10 minute introductory talk about himself and his new job on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

6. **Evenings with the Stars and Family Evenings:**

Several committee members are meeting Rob Edwards on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> August at 10.00 a.m. to discuss Flamsteed involvement with the above events.

**EWTS:** Regular Tuesday evenings planned - access problems seem to be ironed out with the abandonment of the road train, the opening of Blackheath gate for most of the evening for cars and the use of a mini bus from the EW car park for pedestrians.

Rob had not programmed in any slots for Flamsteed members to use the 28" telescope. Sarah Lockwood, Head of Education, is keen to rectify this and we must discuss frequency mutually convenient times.

Flamsteed volunteers would be most welcome to erect their telescopes – probably in the area round the cone – for public viewing. Members will be responsible for their own telescopes, although we must clarify issues of damage/accidents in the dark.

Training should be offered in advance to Flamsteed members who volunteer to man the museum's telescopes.

Flamsteed involvement will not be advertised in advance, if members turn up because the weather is fine, it will be a welcome added extra to the evening's events.

**Family Events:** Four events for all the family are to be held on Saturdays (one Tuesday) and the museum is keen for Flamsteed volunteer participation using small telescopes to back up the free lance astronomers. The 28" is unsuitable for use by children and will not be open.

Flamsteed involvement would be advertised on the programme in advance so we must be able to guarantee our input.

7. **Solar viewing:**

- **Arrangements for access:** Kate is arranging distribution of house keys. Pat and Mike are rechecking names and Pat will liaise with Kate shortly. Passes – everyone must be checked for suitability first.
- **Parking permits-** if there are any spare permits they will be issued to volunteers on the day. The committee were reminded that, if you have no heavy equipment to carry, it is always possible to use the NMM car park at weekends and walk up

the hill. An email or telephone message to Kate is necessary beforehand and she will arrange.

- **Telescope Storage:** As the cupboard in the Harrison Gallery is not available, it had been decided to block in an alcove in the Time Gallery instead. Despite Tom Sturdy's help and repeated requests from Mike, things are moving very slowly – Kate volunteered to assist.

**8. Viewing update:** there was further discussion about viewing sites and their use (see full minutes of committee meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November). Pat felt that opportunities to carry out practical viewing had improved greatly during the past year.

**Romney:** Pat has agreed to continue arranging viewing programme with Martin & Jane.

**Hazelwood:** We shall continue the same arrangements which are working well. Despite dicey weather eight people had viewed the Perseid meteor shower last week.

**Blackheath:** It was agreed that we needed someone to take the initiative to arrange a bimonthly event in the winter, choosing a date (referring to Mark's excellent viewing calendar) send out notices and act as anchor person on the night.

## **9. Publicity**

Still no flyers and posters but Kate explained that she was a "one man band" and had been totally tied up with other projects. There is a specially allocated budget for Flamsteed publicity and Kate is now prioritising the production of the flyers. She is working towards Flamsteed publicity at each appropriate public lecture and also all the museum astronomy class's. It was agreed that even if there are no flyers available it would be useful to put information on the av screens during intervals at lectures.

Kate is experiencing difficulty finding suitable sites throughout the museum for posters.

## **10. Finances**

Jane tabled the museum's end of year figures which showed a satisfactory surplus despite problems earlier in the year with collecting subscriptions. Everything seemed to be working smoothly now.

**11. Any Other Business:** Jane will be in Australia for the whole of October. Peter and Roger volunteered to do the catering etc at the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

**12. Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at 7.15 in Lin's office.