

Secretary's Annual Report 2007-08

This report should be read in conjunction with that of the Chairman and Treasurer.

Secretary

Due to family commitments Pat Williams had to step down as Secretary and the position of Temporary Secretary has been taken up by Eric Walker. We would like to acknowledge Pat's considerable and diligent efforts during her time "in office".

Membership

The number of members, by the end of the current session, is 85 including Junior/Student members and Life Members.

Numbers attending each meeting including speaker and visitors

(Previous year's figures in brackets)

29 (26) Apr 07		<i>AGM</i>
45 (39) May	Douglas Cooper	<i>'Imaging with the Canon EOS 20DA'</i>
40 (36) Jun	Ken MacTaggart	<i>'Discovery and Exploration of the Moon'</i>
27 (28) Jul	Members	<i>Equipment Night & Children's Evening</i>
43 (40) Aug	Dougie Scott	<i>'Watchers of The Dawn' and Visit to the Clava Cairns</i>
46 (51) Sep	Bill Leslie	<i>'The Total Eclipse of 1919 & the Creation of Einstein, The Celebrity'</i>
42 (48) Oct	Rhona Fraser	<i>'Travelog – A Southern Sky'</i>
48 (52) Nov	Robert Law	<i>'Space Missions'</i>
41 (??) Dec	Pauline Macrae	<i>'The Christmas Star'</i>
32 (53) Jan08	Robert Clark	<i>'Presentation Skills'</i>
49 (48) Feb	Pauline Macrae	<i>'Jupiter'</i>
47 (50) Mar	Neil Bone	<i>'Meteors'</i>

Thanks are due to all those who help "man the door & tea urn" at these meetings and ensure all the documents are distributed, attendees sign in/out, and that new visitors are chaperoned, fed & watered, and welcomed into our Society.

Antony McEwan has started yet another regular feature for attendees at meetings and visitors to our website – *Highland Skies* - which describes what can be observed in the night sky throughout the forthcoming month.

Antony's observing guide is used as a basis for Stellarium presentations at our monthly meetings to assist members "visualise" what they can see in practice, whether with the naked eye, binoculars, or telescope.

Bill Leslie has also initiated a new regular feature for attendees at our meetings "Bill's Binocular Targets" which describes a handful of objects visible in the night sky during the coming months using a modest pair of binoculars. Bill will produce his leaflets during the winter dark sky months.

Media - Publications (Inverness Courier)

April 2007	Antony McEwan	<i>'Light and Shade'</i>
May	Pauline Macrae	<i>'Interplanetary Traffic Jam'</i>
June	Pauline Macrae	<i>'Life But Not As We Know It'</i>
July	Pauline Macrae	<i>'Our Local Star'</i>
August	Rhona Fraser	<i>'Watching The Summer Triangle'</i>
September	Antony McEwan	<i>'More Than Maria And Mountains'</i>
October	Maarten de Vries	<i>'Hercules – Globular Clusters Galore!'</i>
November	Pauline Macrae	<i>'Galaxy Clusters and the Large Scale Structure of the Universe'</i>
December	Antony McEwan	<i>'The Clouds of Orion'</i>
January 2008	Antony McEwan	<i>'Orion Unlimited'</i>
February	Rhona Fraser	<i>'The Crab and The Winter Triangle'</i>
March	Pauline Macrae	<i>'The Twins and The Charioteer'</i>

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Media - Features (magazines)

BBC Sky at Night (July) – new observatory project featured.

Astronomy Now (September) – article on how to utilise the local press to promote astronomy clubs.

Media - Television

In April 2007 a film crew produced a pilot programme featuring a HAS observing session at Culloden for submission to STV. This was successful and the same crew carried out the recording of a programme on 25 January featuring HAS members at a HAS star party which is due to be broadcast later this year.

Media – Website

The Spacegazer website continues to receive a high hit rate and also many enquiries throughout the year from potential new members and queries from the general public and media re “sightings” and forthcoming events. Antony McEwan deserves special mention for the professional and diligent upkeep of our website.

Events

The Society supported events organised by Dark Sky Scotland at Abriachan (20 Oct), Grantown (26 & 27 Oct), Cromarty (24 Nov), and Strathnairn Community Woodland (22 & 23 Feb 08).

The Society held its annual Open Day at the Eastgate Centre on Sat 08 September which, in addition to bringing HAS and its activities to the attention of the local public, resulted in the recruitment of new members at meetings in the latter part of the year.

Exhibitions

Trina Shaddick inspirationally designed and produced a poster depicting astronomy in the Highlands and our new observatory which is on display at Inverness Museum.

Observing Sessions

Observing at Culloden was difficult this year, not only due to our usual weather problems, but also because the NTS were building their new visitor centre. We all eagerly wait for the completion of the new observatory this year and the increased practical observation opportunities this will bring to our Society.

Specialist Support Sections

The Society is building up a team of specialists who will be able to assist our members, the public, and the media with queries – both practical and knowledge-based.

Members

HAS is all about its members. We are very fortunate to have a sizeable and diverse membership and must endeavour to utilise this diversity to continue to promote our aims and activities throughout the Highlands.

Chairman

I cannot possibly complete this report without acknowledging the tremendous efforts put in by our new Chairman, John Gilmour. I have seen at first hand the dedication, professionalism, and sheer tenacity that John brings to our Society and I am sure that the efforts of him and his team this will result in the long term successful future of Highlands Astronomical Society.

Eric W Walker
Secretary
26 March 2008