

15TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FLAMSTEED ASTRONOMY SOCIETY

Held on Monday 15th September 2014 at 7.00 p.m. in the lecture theatre of the National Maritime Museum.

1. **Present:** Malcolm Porter (Chair) and 78 members of the Flamsteed Astronomy Society
2. **Apologies** were received from Grey Liple, Lin Potter, Nick Phillips, Roger Geeson and Rupert Smith.
3. **Matters arising:** There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday 16th September 2013.
4. **Chair's address:**

Malcolm welcomed members to the 15th Annual General Meeting of the Flamsteed Astronomy Society and gave an overview of the 2013/14 season and plans for the coming season.

Activities During the 2013/14 Season

- Ran 10 quality lectures;
- Successfully supported the recording of BBC Sky at Night in October;
- Founded the Observing and Imaging special interest group. Ran telescope and astrophotography workshops, along with observing sessions on Blackheath, Cudham and several visits to Martin's observatory in Romney;
- Continuation of the Radio Astronomy and History of Astronomy special interest groups. Arranged a trip to the RMG stores;
- Enjoyed a number of Flamsteed viewing sessions with the Great Equatorial Refractor, including two special imaging sessions;
- Continuation of the monthly pub social evenings;
- Solar viewing sessions for the public and members at the ROG;
- 2 trips to CERN in Geneva, and 1 trip to Herstmonceux;
- 76 events arranged during the season, with 15 cancelled due to weather, making 61 successful events in total.

Flamsteed Membership and Financial Position

Total Membership including 'lapsed' is as follows:

- September 2011 216 paid + 20 lapsed = 236 members
- September 2012 278 paid + 27 lapsed = 305 members
- September 2013 305 paid + 41 lapsed = 346 members
- September 2014 329 paid + 26 lapsed = 355 members

As reported previously in 2011, we provided approximately £5,000 from the previous gross surplus to the Royal Observatory to buy support items such as a new solar telescope, a solar outreach kit for schools and binocular sets, etc.

By the end of the 2012/13 financial year, the gross surplus was again approaching the maximum allowed of £10,000 and the committee decided to fund support items, primarily for the Great Equatorial Telescope, by providing funds of approximately £4,500 to purchase suitable items. This included high quality eyepieces, monochrome and colour imaging cameras, a spectroscope and a solar wedge for use on the attached 6.25-inch refractor.

All items are intended to improve usability and educational value for the public and our members.

Discussions and negotiations have taken a considerable time, however we expect these and other items to arrive shortly.

The Flamsteed and Royal Museums Greenwich (RMG)

We enjoy a good working relationship with the new Development and Membership team led by Simon Daniels and Chris Hill. This new team are utilising their previous experiences in order to improve the overall membership experience.

However, there remain long-standing issues with Membership and Booking system, which are proving difficult to resolve.

Through your committee, the Flamsteed is committed to providing support to the RMG and, in particular, the Royal Observatory Greenwich (ROG) by

- Holding public astronomy events;
- Dealing with media requirements;
- Holding public and members astronomy workshops.

However, given the size of the Flamsteed Astronomy Society and the complexity of organising all the events mentioned previously and also to support the RMG, we need more help from members of the society.

Proposed Activities for 2014/15

- All lectures are now scheduled, with assigned speakers;
- Continuance and, in one or two cases, the reinvigoration of:
 - The Radio Astronomy Group
 - The History of Astronomy Group
 - The Observing and Imaging Group
 - Pub Social Meetings
 - Public viewing sessions
- Continue and refine the Great Equatorial imaging sessions proposed and the members Great Equatorial viewing sessions;
- Look to institute Flamsteed members imaging workshops;

- Continue media support for the RMG and the BBC including, no doubt, the 2015 solar eclipse;
- Possibly, organise another overseas trip to a suitable facility applying the approach used for the two successful trips to CERN.

Taking the Flamsteed Forward in 2014/15

- Explore with the RMG a better way to run the Society financially;
- Continue the process of increased contact with other societies;
- See whether a Flamsteed 'dark site' camp is viable, or join up with an event organised by another society;
- Organise trips to other astronomy related institutions;
- Use of Mycenae House for potential events such as Members Workshops;
- Take institutional membership of the BAA;
- Whilst continuing with the external viewing sessions in Blackheath, Cudham and Romney, look to find additional potential semi-dark and dark sites;
- Possibly restructure the Committee so as to improve the decision-making process and look to involve more people in making 'things happen'.

Finally...

Let me thank the following for their support in what has been a full and, as always, a challenging year:

- In particular, Mike Meynell, who despite having a very busy work and family life seems to be able to cope with a vast amount 'front and back office' work;
- Your Committee, who have worked hard all year on your behalf;
- The people who run our Special Interest Groups;
- Martin and Jane for their kind hospitality when hosting viewing events in Romney;
- As I said this time last year, Lin Potter, Jane Bendall, Mike Dryland and Eddie Yeadon and others, who have who have done so much over the years to make the Flamsteed Astronomy Society into the strong society that it is today;
- Simon Daniels, Chris Hill and their Membership team, the technicians who look after us at the lectures and the security staff who wait patiently whilst we drink our wine and eat our crisps, après lectures.
- And, last but not least, you, our members, who have turned out in numbers when we needed you and 'prodded' us when we have needed prodding!

5. Election to the Committee:

Asra Jilani, Lin Potter and Sumitra Sri Bhashyam have stepped down from the committee.

Three nominations have been received:

Andy Sawers was proposed by Sumitra Sri Bhashyam and seconded by Mike Dryland; Clive Inglis was proposed by Mike Meynell and seconded by Martin Male; Tej Dyal was proposed by Brian Blake and seconded by Peter Kitcherside.

As there were no other nominations an election was deemed unnecessary and Andy, Clive and Tej were duly appointed as new committee members.

Co-opted members of the committee will be nominated at the first committee meeting in October.

6. Election of Office Holders (Chair and Vice-Chair):

Office holders of the Flamsteed Astronomy Society were then elected.

Malcolm Porter was re-elected as chair of the society. Grey Liple and Mike Meynell were re-elected as vice-chairs of the society.

7. Any Other Business:

As there was no other business, Malcolm Porter closed the meeting.