

FLAMSTEED ASTRONOMY SOCIETY

Minutes from a Committee Meeting held on Monday 4th July 2005 at 7:30pm in the Ashburnham Arms

Present: Lin Potter (Chair), Nicki Bearcroft, Pat Wainwright, Eddie Yeadon, Mike Dryland, David Waugh and Jane Bendall

Apologies: David Barnewell

Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on March 7th 2005

Jane to check on the amount of money in the Flamsteed reserve fund as we should be planning to donate £1,000 to the Universal Appeal from the Society as already agreed by the committee.

Constitution: The final version of the constitution was tabled and formally accepted by the Committee. Lin Potter proposed a vote of thanks to Eddie Yeadon for his tenacity, hard work and unremitting efforts – which have resulted in a very satisfactory outcome. Polly Lerner and the Friends' lawyer have read and approved the constitution and were going to put it before the next meeting of the Friends' Council for ratification.

Programme

Sunday 7th August: Our participation in the event on One Tree Hill has been cancelled. When Mike and Jane visited the site they discovered that it was basically woodland with no clear view through the trees to the south. The disappointed organisers have been informed. Instead Mike proposed a session of solar viewing with the hydrogen-alpha telescope on the south lawn of the Queen's House NMM which could be combined with a picnic in the park. Jane has cleared the idea with the museum so Mike will publish the event through the web and e-mail in the normal way.

Star Lecture

Jane has drawn a blank with Adam Hart-Davis and Lisa Jardine. Both Eddie and Nicki are going to try Simon Singh when they attend his forthcoming lectures. Failing that, Lucy Green (co-presenter of *Stardate*) and John Mason were suggested as likely candidates. Pat will give John Mason's details to Jane. Jane is reluctant to fill-up the programme in March and April until the star lecture is in place.

The Committee also agreed to take up Francisco Diego's kind offer to host a visit to the Mill Hill Observatory during next winter. Jane will arrange in due course.

Pat circulated details of the Herstmonceux Science Centre astronomy festival next September which Mike will distribute.

Publicity

The Committee decided to start a recruitment and publicity campaign for the autumn.

The following course of action was agreed:

Lin will contact both *The Meridian* and *The Guide* magazines to see if they would be interested in publishing an article or feature about the Flamsteed (with a possible link to the Museum's Evenings with the Stars programme which is due to start again in November) for the September or October issues. The alternative, which we would prefer not to do, is to pay for advertising space.

Jane will resubmit our entry for the FAS handbook and request that it is posted on their website – this time we hope they will correct their spelling!

Mike proposes to produce more new leaflets which Nicki agreed to print and Lin to put into local libraries and other prominent places.

Jane will ask Francisco Diego to publicise our activities among the new intake of Diploma students at UCL in September. She will send some leaflets and copies of our programme for next season.

Eddie will contact Robert Massey about targeting the current summer school students.

It was agreed that in future we would target the adult GCSE classes (which we missed this spring) as a very fruitful source of new members. We are already in contact with the Greenwich Community College which seems very happy to have closer links with the Flamsteed.

We are to check whether there are extra mural astronomy classes at Queen Mary College.

Hydrogen-alpha Telescope

Gallery closures will affect our programme of solar viewing as the Time Gallery closes in mid-August and the whole of Flamsteed House will be closed by end-August until early 2006. It may be that we will have to continue solar viewing in the grounds of the main museum – the event of August 7th will be a good test – but it is of course preferable to use the ROG if possible. There is also the question of storage and access to the telescope – it may not be possible to keep it in its present site. Gloria Clifton is being very helpful and we will continue to try to find suitable sites and alternative storage.

Leaflets in foreign languages are proving immensely popular with the public and more languages are being produced and suggested eg Japanese, Arabic, Urdu, Chinese etc. Lin offered various contacts that may be able to help. Mike is to send a copy of the leaflet to Ian McDowell who has a contact who can translate into Dutch.

Any Other Business:

- a) **Horizons:** The new revamped Horizons “f@nmm” is due to be published shortly and Eddie’s article on Einstein and also atomic clocks will be submitted for the autumn edition. It was agreed to prepare an article about solar eclipses for early 2006 as there are both annular and total eclipses due to happen next year. Jane will ask Polly for publishing copy-dates.
- b) Jane to check whether we can use the Octagon Room for our Christmas Party this year as Flamsteed House will be closed and may be off limits.
- c) Lin and her choir have very kindly offered to entertain Flamsteed members with a collection of Christmas songs and carols at the party again this year.
- d) **Viewing site:** David reported that Cudham is not always locked at night and remains our best option as a dark field viewing site for the time being.
- e) Mike will distribute details of the BAA CD-ROM about the transit of Venus.
- f) It was decided to issue the normal notice about the AGM by the beginning of September with an explanatory note, written by Eddie, about the ramifications of the new constitution; we shall be hoping for more volunteers for the enlarged committee.

Date of next meeting:

Monday 26th September at 7:40 pm in the Ashburnham Arms.