

Committee Meeting of the Flamsteed Astronomy Society held on Thursday 26th August 2004 at 7.15 p.m. in the Ashburnham Arms

Present: Linn Potter (Chair), Nicki Bearcroft, Eddie Yeadon, David Barnewell, Mike Dryland and Jane Bendall

Linn approved the minutes of the meeting held on April 29th 2004

1. Matters arising

Name badges: The committee had already agreed that name badges are an excellent idea, the problem being the cost of the plastic holders. Linn volunteered to buy them from her supplier who offers trade prices. Eddie will then ask the Friends to print off members' names.

2. Event on 13th September

Eddie reported that times and details have been arranged with Sarah Tombs and that all was in hand. So far there has been a good response from members, most of whom have opted for the supper and wine reception. To date six people have booked for the lecture only and it was decided, after some discussion, that we would not be able to offer entertainment/refreshments after the lecture whilst everyone else has supper. It does make a short evening for those people who are attending the lecture only but this is a one-off event and is therefore different from normal meetings.

Jane will check with Holly re arrangements with stewards, catering etc.

As Sarah Tombs is not asking for a fee we will buy her a book token instead. Eddie pointed out that Sarah had agreed to come in return for his talk about eclipses at the opening of her exhibition last summer.

3. Arrangements for the AGM

Notices will be sent out shortly, inviting nominations for the committee. The current committee have agreed to put their names forward for re-election. When we discussed the relocation and expansion of the Society with Polly Lerner we agreed that we should revisit our original constitution and amend it where necessary. Since the Society will probably be doubling in size over the next year or so and the number of sub groups and activities are increasing all the time, we felt that it is desirable to have more members serving on the committee.

A subcommittee consisting of Eddie Yeadon, Nicki Bearcroft and David Barnewell is to be set up and they will draw up a new constitution with the Friends. One purpose of this would be to enlarge the current committee from 4 members plus Jane. As soon as the new constitution is finalised it will be presented to the members. As there will probably not be time before the AGM it was settled that, subject to the approval of the new Committee, Mike Dryland should continue to serve as a co-opted member for the time being. Any additional committee members would also have to be co-opted until the legalities are sorted out. It would be advantageous to have a representative of the very active Observing Group on the Committee.

4. Programme and Events

Nicki has been in touch with the **Horniman museum** where there is an interesting collection of sundials and she suggested that we arrange an early evening visit next June. The committee were enthusiastic and agreed to discuss the possibilities again in the New Year (Future Agenda Item).

5. Member's talks before the main lectures

The committee wishes to encourage more people to speak about topics that interest them before the main lecture starts. We agreed that talks could vary between 10 and 20 minutes, depending on the evenings programme. Linn and David volunteered to be responsible for finding the speakers and for encouraging more members to come forward. They already have willing volunteers – Eddie, David and Mike all have subjects, which they are ready to turn into talks. It was also agreed that we must encourage the sub groups – observing etc to speak briefly at each meeting. Linn will ask David Waugh and Mike Iveson whether they would consider filling a regular slot.

The Committee will arrange a special club evening when two or three members will deliver longer talks – say 20 minutes – e.g. Eddie on light years and/or Meridian lines, Mike on great refractors, David on the construction of the Flamsteed Telescope. It is also useful to have a lecture in reserve in case we are let down by a lecturer at the last minute. (Future Agenda Item)

The following programme was suggested.

AGM: David to speak about the use and storage of the Flamsteed Telescope

Tuesday 2nd November: Eddie to talk for 10 minutes about a subject he has been preparing.

Monday 6th December: Bookmart: Mike has been canvassing opinions and the response has been very positive. He has collected about 50 books already and has had promises from FAS members for more. The event would be from 6.30 to 7.30 before the main lecture of the evening and refreshments would be served during that time. It would be a very convivial occasion with an opportunity to buy some Christmas presents

Tuesday 4th January. A 20-minute slot before Bob Mison's talk

Monday 7th Feb: Perhaps Lesley Bound could be persuaded to say something about our Coronado programme of public solar viewing before or after Professor Harrison's lecture.

Christmas Party Quiz. Mike has volunteered to arrange, but needs input from the committee. He suggested that we could follow the very successful format of the treasure hunt at the picnic and hand out separate sheets to everyone, who could then choose to work in groups or individually as they wished. Mike will email suggestions to the committee for comment. He asked Jane to order display boards for

the Octagon room. It was agreed that we could base some of the questions on subjects covered during our autumn lectures and also some with an amusing or Christmassy theme. – if we can think of any!

One Tree Hill Celebrations: A message from the organiser was tabled and it was agreed to offer to arrange a solar viewing session for them during their celebrations, which will be in August 2005. They of course, can't borrow our telescopes to look at the view towards London! Jane will contact them keeping Lesley Bound informed throughout.

Graham Dolan had offered two **Behind the Scenes Tours** of the South Building and Alt-azimuth Building before the builders move in. He could take up to 15 people on each tour. We opted for Saturday 9th October at 2.00 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. This would have to be arranged on a first come first served basis, as it will be very popular with our members. Jane to action.

6. Viewing through 28" telescope.

Mike had noted that the Friends are holding a 28" viewing evening in November. The FAS is not involved but of course members are welcome to book up and pay for the event in the normal way.

We will hold our viewing sessions after the public leave on the museum's scheduled **Evenings with the Stars** as suggested by Robert Massey. As it will be too much work to telephone everyone, we will contact Robert at an agreed time in the early evening then post the information on the website, send out emails and text messages and ask interested members who do not have computers, to telephone in if they wish to come. In other words rather than us contacting the members, they must be proactive and contact us one way or another.

There are normally up to a dozen **Evening with the Stars'** events during the winter starting in January, which should give us ample opportunities to use the 28".

Jane will talk to Robert again about training FAS volunteers to assist him when using the 28" telescope as he suggested last year.

7. Website

Mike tabled a suggested update for the FAS section of the Friends website, which does not fully reflect our many current activities at present. The Committee approved his proposal and Mike will further with Polly Larner.

8. Regular Evenings for Meetings

To make forward planning easier for both the Friends and also Visitor Services we agreed that the FAS should settle on meeting on the first Monday evening of every month. The museum is marketing the revamped Neptune Court podium vigorously as a good venue for corporate events. Visitor services are anxious not to clash with our meeting times so it is important for us to try to settle on a regular schedule. Of course, this will be dependent on our lecturer's availability and preferences, so we

must remain flexible. Visitor Services have promised to work round us rather than “bump” us, but we must be aware that if the museum is earning large sums of money that we too will have to be as accommodating as possible.

The Friends have requested that we schedule our programme at least 18 months ahead. Unfortunately, in most cases this is not practical as most of our potential lecturers are unwilling to commit too far ahead. Our best way of avoiding clashes with Friends events and to help them when they are planning their schedules is to settle on a regular evening.

We would discuss this with members at the AGM.

8. Any other Business

Horizons: Ralph Taylor and Michael Bradley have written an article on the Transit of Venus, which has been sent to Polly Lerner.

Universal Appeal. Eddie proposed and the committee agreed, that as soon as we had surplus funds we would make a donation of £1,000 to the appeal. This is specifically for the future of the ROG and will be recorded in the Society’s name and therefore seems a very appropriate action. Jane to send end of year accounts to the committee. (Future Agenda Item).

FAS numbers: Jane asked the committee if we could stop allocating separate FAS numbers for members, as it served no useful purpose. The Committee agreed and Jane will take up with Sue Timmons the Friends’ treasurer.

Letter of Thanks: Linn tabled a letter from the Head of the ROG, Gloria Clifton congratulating all the FAS volunteers for their enthusiasm and hard work at the Transit of Venus. Linn will read it out at the AGM.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 12th October at 7.15 p.m. in the Ashburnham Arms