

## Society for the History of Astronomy founded in UK

Saturday 29th June 2002 saw the founding of the UK's new national Society for the History of Astronomy, in the glorious and historic surroundings of Wadham College, Oxford, England. The Society's principal aims are: To promote an academic, educational and popular interest in the history of the science of astronomy and related subjects. To encourage new research into the history of astronomy, especially amateur research at the local level, and to facilitate its collation, preservation, publication and dissemination both by conventional means and through the internet or such other new means as may subsequently become available. To bring together those with a common interest in the subject, whether amateur or professional researcher or general enthusiast, and to organize activities for the benefit and interest of the members.

Hosted by Dr Allan Chapman MA D(Phil) FRAS, well-known historian of astronomy, the Founding Meeting, chaired by Stuart Williams FRAS LRPS, took place in the Okinaga Room at 2 p.m., during which a formal Proposal and Constitution for the Society for the History of Astronomy were discussed and minor amendments made. These were then voted upon and accepted unanimously by a full meeting of more than fifty attendees.

A number of messages of goodwill were presented to the meeting, including a formal representation from the Royal Astronomical Society by Dr Helen Walker of Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, who is a Scientific Secretary of the RAS, and congratulations and good wishes sent by Professor F Richard Stephenson, President of IAU Commission 41 (History of Astronomy) and the ICHA, on behalf of the officials of those organisations.

During the meeting, the Society's first Council was elected, the candidates previously announced being formally and unanimously elected *en bloc*, without opposition. The Council now officially consists of: Hon. President – Dr Allan Chapman MA D(Phil) FRAS; Hon. Vice President – Sir Patrick Moore CBE FRS; Hon. Vice President – Dr Michael Hoskin PhD FRAS; Chair – Emily Winterburn MSc; Secretary – Stuart Williams FRAS LRPS; Treasurer – Kenneth J Goward; General Council Members – Roger Jones, Kevin J Kilburn FRAS and Dr Nicholas Kollerstrom MA Cantab PhD FRAS. They are now charged with the responsibility of setting up and managing the operation of the Society.

In addition, the Society's newly-appointed webmaster and newsletter editor, Callum Potter, and Archivist Mark Hurn and Librarian Madeline Cox were formally introduced to the meeting.

The Founding Meeting concluded with a Presidential Address by the new Society's Hon. President Dr Allan Chapman and the formal handover of the Chair to Emily Winterburn who then closed the meeting at a little after 4 p.m.

A group photograph was taken, followed by tea and an astronomy book raffle thanks to the kind sponsorship of publishers Springer-Verlag and booksellers Aurora Books who donated the prizes and have contributed to the Society's Library. Attendees departed at 5.30 p.m., all agreeing that a splendid and momentous occasion had taken place, making an excellent start to what will be a new chapter in the history of astronomy.

For general enquiries, please write enclosing a stamped s.a.e. (or two International Reply Coupons) to: Mr Stuart Williams FRAS LRPS, Secretary, SHA, Flamsteed Villa, 26 Matlock Road, Bloxwich, WS3 3QD, England. For membership details and a membership form, please send a stamped s.a.e. (or two International Reply Coupons) to Mr Ken Goward, Treasurer, SHA, 14 Keightley Way, Tuddenham St Martin, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP6 9BJ, England. Web site: <http://www.historyofastronomy.fsworld.co.uk/>

Stuart Williams

