



# H·A·D NEWS

*The Newsletter of the Historical Astronomy Division  
of the American Astronomical Society*

Number 28



August 1993

## Huntington Meeting

The June 1993 HAD meeting at the Huntington Library is now history and pleasant memories for nearly fifty people who attended. Because it was held separate from the previous week's AAS meeting, our meeting seemed to reflect the laid-back ambience of Southern California. The fact that Ron Brashear had done the organizational work well in advance must also have been a contributing factor.

The first scheduled event, a tour of Mount Wilson Observatory, took place on Sunday, June 13. About two dozen people took this opportunity to see the historic telescopes and modern equipment on the mountain. Thanks to Robert Jastrow, Director of the Mount Wilson Institute, and his staff, we were able to take a close look at some of the research currently being done. Mount Wilson is still a very active astronomical center, especially with plans in full force to resuscitate the 100-inch Hooker Telescope.

On Monday morning the sessions of papers opened with brief welcoming remarks by William Moffett, Director of the Library. The first day included two invited talks: Owen Gingerich on Copernicus and *De Revolutionibus*, and Gale Christianson on a little-known aspect of Edwin Hubble's life, his formative years at Oxford, 1910–1913. There were a number of contributed papers as well — everything from native Californian astronomy to the influence of Elizabeth Ballard Campbell at Lick Observatory, to Walter Baade, Rudolph Minkowski and Henry Norris Russell at Mount Wilson.

*Huntington Report, continued on p. 2*

## HAD to Meet in D.C.

HAD will next meet on Tuesday and Wednesday, 11–12 January 1994 in Washington, DC, with the American Astronomical Society. On Tuesday, there will be a day-long session of invited papers and a panel discussion on "Astronomy and the State: US and CIS Perspectives." Wednesday morning will be devoted to a special session on "Celestial Visibility." The only general session of contributed papers will be Wednesday afternoon. There will be room for six oral papers in this session. Other contributed papers will be assigned to the poster session. HAD poster papers will be displayed together, so they will be prominent and easily accessible. The deadline for abstracts, which should be sent to the AAS office, is 22 October.

Thanks to grants from International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) and the Smithsonian Institution's Office of Fellowship Grants, we are able to bring four historians from the Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union) to participate in the session on Astronomy and the State. CIS and US historians will present contrasting papers on specified topics, as follows:

- Astronomers and Political Repression  
Natal'ia B. Orlova—Barbara L. Welther
- Post-WW II Astronomy and Rebuilding of  
Astronomical Institutions  
Alexander Gurshtein—William E. Howard
- Astronomy and the Military  
TBD—Woodruff T. Sullivan
- International Relations During the Cold War  
Mikhail Iu. Shevchenko—Ronald E. Doel

*January Meeting, continued on p. 2*

Following the paper sessions, the Library exhibition halls were opened to HAD members, allowing us to see the current exhibit, "Constructing the Heavens: 450 Years of Astronomy," and the permanent exhibit, which includes a copy of the Gutenberg Bible, the Ellesmere Chaucer manuscript, the manuscript of Benjamin Franklin's autobiography, and much more. The day ended with a reception on the Garden Terrace and the HAD Banquet in the Overseers' Room.

The second day included more contributed papers on a variety of topics, from the Snow Telescope to Annie Cannon, to the solar corona, to medieval astronomy, ending with science and religion in the work of Jeans and Eddington. Abstracts of all the papers (including those presented at the HAD session at the Berkeley AAS meeting) have been published in the *Bulletin of the American Astronomical Society*, Vol. 25, No. 2.

The meeting formally ended at lunchtime, leaving attendees free to roam the Huntington's botanical gardens or pop into the art galleries and get acquainted with Blue Boy and Pinkie. To Ron Brashcar and the staff of The Huntington, our thanks for a well organized meeting in a most hospitable setting. ☆

To complement this session, Viktor Abalakin will present a paper on "Astronomy and the State as Observed from Pulkovo" as an Invited Speaker of the AAS. This presentation will be at 11:40 a.m. on Wednesday the 12th. Dr Abalakin is director of the Pulkovo Observatory and head of the Department of Ephemerides at the Institute of Theoretical Astronomy, St. Petersburg. It is largely due to his efforts that the [former] KGB has opened its records concerning astronomers who were imprisoned and executed during the Stalinist period.

The session on "Celestial Visibility" is being organized by Brad Schaefer. It is concerned with the visibility of sources in the sky, either for deriving astronomical information or for improving our understanding of history. Topics of interest include the transmission of light through the atmosphere, limits of vision, and the extraction of astrophysical data from historical reports using new knowledge of what was or was not visible. Invited review papers will be given by Don Yeomans and Don Olson. There will be time for five contributed oral papers. In addition there will be a collection of poster papers. If you can contribute to these sessions, contact Bradley Schaefer: 301-286-6955 or schaefer@tgrs.gsfc.nasa.gov ☆

## Bibliophiles' Corner

Since HAD Newsletter 8 (April 1988), Ruth Freitag has contributed surveys of the current literature in the history of astronomy. Included with this issue is her longest bibliography to date. Either the literature is flourishing as never before, or Ruth is just getting better and better. Seriously, her efforts are widely recognized as an invaluable resource for scholars.

In previous years, Ruth laboriously typed her surveys on a manual typewriter. It finally met the fate of all faithful typewriters. Thus, for the first time, Ruth has supplied her survey on a computer disk, enabling us to reformat it. We have tried to achieve the conflicting goals of compactness (to save on postage) and readability.

To clarify a statement in HAD News 26, Ruth informs us that the Library of Congress has received volumes 1-15, 17-21 of the Russian journal *Istorikoastronomicheskie issledovaniia*. She believes that volume 22 and maybe 23 have appeared, but they have not arrived at the LC. ☆

## Looking for a Few Good Scholars

John Lankford is searching for competent scholars who can write on the following topics for the *Garland Encyclopedia of the History of Astronomy*:

Arab Astronomy (2500 words); Navigation and Astronomy (2500); Netherlands, Astronomy in (2500); Planetarium (100); Royal Greenwich Observatory (1250); Scandinavia, Astronomy in (2500); Sextant (500); Societies, Astronomical (2000).

This volume is one of the series on the history of science under the general editorship of Marc Rothenberg of the Smithsonian Institution. The emphasis of the volume is on the period from the Scientific Revolution. Entries are due in January 1994; publication is scheduled for 1995. Interested parties are encouraged to contact the volume editor: John Lankford, 104 Willow Wick Drive, Morgantown, WV 26505; 304-599-8099 or 304-599-7949; jlastro@wvnm.vvnet.edu ☆

## HAD IRC Report

HAD's International Relations Committee has been working hard on two projects since the beginning of the year. Both involve historians of astronomy in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the former Soviet Union. The first is a symposium on "Astronomy and the State: U.S. and CIS Perspectives," to be held at the January AAS meeting, as announced on page 1. With the success of grant proposals to bring CIS historians to the meeting, the symposium is falling nicely into place. We are also pleased that the AAS has accepted our proposal to feature Viktor Abalakin as an Invited Speaker at the meeting.

In addition the committee has been working on a mechanism for providing grants-in-aid to CIS historians of astronomy. Alexander Gurshtein of the Institute for the History of Science and Technology in Moscow has agreed to head a CIS committee that will solicit proposals from CIS historians for research projects in the history of astronomy. Other members of the CIS committee are Iu. N. Efremov (Shternberg Institute), N. P. Erpylev (Russian Academy Astronomical Institute), K. B. Shingareva (Astronomical-Geodetical College), I. G. Kolchinskii (Principal Astronomical Observatory of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences), and A. A. Korsun' (Principal Astronomical Observatory of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences). The CIS committee will review the proposals and will send its recommendations, along with the proposals themselves, to the IRC, which will make the final decision on which projects are to be funded.

It is our plan to fund each project at the \$50-\$100 level. Although \$50 may not sound like much, it is actually the equivalent of up to several months salary in the CIS. We hope that donations from HAD members will be sufficient to provide support for up to ten such projects. Actual delivery of funds to individual CIS historians will be carried out through the AAS Committee on Aid to CIS Astronomers. For over a year, this committee, led by Stan Woosley, has been carrying out a program in support of CIS astronomy.

The success of this program will depend on the generosity of HAD members. We will describe how monetary contributions can be made in the next issue of HAD News.

Members of IRC are Robert McCutcheon, Chair, Steve Dick, David DeVorkin, Ron Doel and LeRoy Doggett. ☆

## Upcoming Meetings

- **Oriental Astronomy from Guo Shoujing to King Sejong**, 6-11 October 1993, Seoul, Korea. This conference will focus on Asian astronomies from the 13th through the 15th centuries. English will be the official language. For more information, contact The Secretaries, Oriental Astronomy Conference, Yonsei University Observatory, Seoul 120-749, Korea.

- **The Longitude Symposium**, 4-6 November 1993, Cambridge, Massachusetts. This conference will commemorate the 300th anniversary of the birth of John Harrison. It is being organized by the Harvard University Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments in conjunction with the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors. The program of speakers is now complete. For more information, contact The Longitude Symposium, Harvard University, Science Center B6, Cambridge, MA 02138; 617-495-2779.

- **IAU XXIIInd General Assembly**, 15-27 August 1994, The Hague, The Netherlands. This will be the 75th anniversary meeting of the International Astronomical Union. Commission 41 (History of Astronomy) will use this opportunity to sponsor one or more sessions on the history of the IAU. Anyone interested in participating may contact the U.S. member of the Commission 41 Organizing Committee, Steven J. Dick at the U. S. Naval Observatory; 202-653-1541; fax 202-653-1497; dick@ariel.usno.navy.mil ☆

---

## HAD Membership

Is this your copy of HAD News? Perhaps you borrowed it from a colleague or picked it up in your dentist's office. In any case, you're hooked. Why not join the Historical Astronomy Division and get your own copy every quarter, guilt free? We sponsor some of the most stimulating meetings of the American Astronomical Society. Also, we try to turn out a pretty decent newsletter.

For members of the AAS, membership in HAD is a mere \$4 a year. If you are not a member of the AAS, associate membership in HAD is \$10 a year. To join, send a check, payable to the American Astronomical Society, to HAD's Secretary/Treasurer: LeRoy Doggett, Nautical Almanac Office, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, DC 20392. Alternatively, we'll have a membership desk set up at the January AAS meeting. ☆

## Workshop on the History of Astronomy

At the end of June, more than forty historians and practitioners of astronomy assembled at Notre Dame University, South Bend, for a three-day workshop on the history of astronomy. Michael Crowe managed local arrangements, and Marc Rothenberg and John Lankford organized the program. Michael Hoskin, editor of the *Journal for the History of Astronomy* gave the keynote address.

Defying the custom of most scholarly meetings, all presentations were informal and questions were permitted at any time. Reading of papers was prohibited! Each session was devoted to a specific topic, with a panel of specialists exploring work in that area. Participants sat around a large table for morning and afternoon sessions. With this setting and format, discussions were especially lively. Meals and evenings provided opportunities for individual or small group conversations. Indeed, some of the most lively interactions were informal discussions in the lounge of the dormitory in which participants were housed.

The opening session, "Astronomy in Context" (L. Taub, S. McCluskey, S. Schechner Genuth, D. DeVorkin, B. Becker, chair), explored various contexts for explaining the development of astronomy from the ancient and medieval periods through the Scientific Revolution, the Victorian era and the early twentieth century. The afternoon session on "Works in Progress" was devoted to recently completed dissertations and books in press by K. Howell, G. Sweetnam, M. Crowe, O. Butler, J. Eisberg, A. Butrica and R. Schorn.

Next morning, about a dozen colleagues brought syllabi and reading lists to share in "Teaching History of Astronomy" (A. Van Helden and O. Gingerich, chairs). This session brought into sharp relief questions of academic setting and the nature of the students. Some participants teach in undergraduate science programs, while others function in the context of history departments. Some syllabi were full of observational and mathematical assignments; others emphasized historiography. "Astronomy Since 1940" (O. Gingerich, L. Robinson, J. Tatarewicz, D. DeVorkin, S. Dick, K. Hufbauer, G. Webb, T. Williams, M. Hoskin, R. Doel and J. Lankford, chairs) examined aspects of the recent history of astronomy.

The final session, "Celestial Mechanics" (C.

## History of Astronomy Discussion Group

Steve McCluskey has set up an e-mail discussion group (HASTRO-L) dealing with matters arising in research and teaching of the history of astronomy in all cultures, whether Euroamerican, non-Western, or non-literate. All periods are covered, from prehistoric to contemporary, as are all approaches, including social history, philosophy of science, archaeo- or ethnoastronomy, and detailed technical studies of observational or mathematical astronomy.

Although HASTRO-L primarily serves those who study and teach the history of astronomy, others with an interest in the history of astronomy are welcome to join. Exactly how the group will develop depends on the interests of the members, but Steve hopes it will provide several services, including informal communications among the members of the group, announcements of meetings, etc., and posting of material such as syllabi, bibliographies, and software that members may find useful. Another possibility is posting papers and abstracts before scheduled meetings to improve the quality of discussion at the meeting.

To subscribe to HASTRO-L send the following one line message:

SUB HASTRO-L *your name*

Example: SUB HASTRO-L William Herschel

to

LISTSERV@WVNVM.WVNET.EDU or  
LISTSERV@WVNVM.BITNET

---

Wilson, C. Waff, P. Kammeyer, J. Tatarewicz, R. Howland, L. and R. Golland, L. Doggett, chair), dealt with the history of the field from Newton through the post-World War II era.

At a concluding business meeting, the group voted to make formal application to the Council of the History of Science Society (HSS) for interest group status. Communication will be through an electronic bulletin board (see accompanying column) supervised by Steve McCluskey. This is intended to complement HAD News. Members of the group will meet during the meeting of the HSS in November to vote on a constitution.

The President of The Adler Planetarium extended an invitation to meet there in 1995. It was greeted with great enthusiasm. – John Lankford ☆