

Minutes of the William Herschel Society Committee Meeting held at the Herschel Museum of Astronomy on Monday 11th November 2019 commencing 7.30pm.

(Note. The next scheduled meeting is on Monday 13th January 2020 at the Herschel Museum of Astronomy commencing 7.30pm)

Present: C Draper (CDr), Chairman; R Holbeche (RH), Treasurer; S Holbeche (SH), Membership and Observing; A Symes (AS), Editor; M Tabb (MT); Dr B Fosbury (BF); Dr A Frost (AF), BPT Senior Curator; V Northwood (VN), BPT Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Museums (Maternity Cover); J Middleton (JM), Herschel Museum Administrator and J Foreman, Secretary, Minutes Secretary and website manager.

1. Apologies and welcome

Apologies were received from F Schlesinger (FS) and M Spring (MS). CDr welcomed those present and welcomed Victoria Northwood to her first meeting.

2. Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 9th September 2019

CDr referred to the minutes and asked if there were any amendments required. There were none.

Attention was drawn to the Action Table.

Actions requiring further comments:

Action on MT to continue contact with Brad Elder re production of blanks. MT commented that he had email exchanges with Brad and would copy them to JF for circulation to the committee. Post Meeting Note. Copy received by JF, 12th November and circulated. To summarise the present situation: He started grinding the test mirrors at the end of August and they are half ground. The two 6" mirrors are presently on his desk awaiting further attention. His goal is to grind out the test mirrors, repour the big mirrors and then get them ground flat over the Christmas break.

3. Chairman's Report

CDr reported that he had had a correspondence with a new member, Ronald Lewin, who had memories of the Herschels in Observatory House in Slough in the 60s, and a curious medallion from that time. The material has now been passed to AS, as it could well lead to an interesting article for the Journal.

CDr reported that several developments on the Starlit Skies campaign. He had attended the Therapeutic City Conference in September organised by a local architecture advocacy group to promote the cause. He was in contact with the Cranborn Chase AONB team about their International Dark Award Status, as we could draw on some of their local authority agreements. The CPRE Avonside Group had been given some funding to launch their own Starry Skies project with a launch meeting on at BRLSI this coming Thursday (14 Nov.); he had offered to speak about what we are doing. He had been approached by Councillor Sarah Warren, the BathNES Environment joint Cabinet lead, about some very bright aircraft warning lights at the University of Bath and had provided some assistance. He had also now written to the Vice Chancellor directly with the offer of a quick survey of their lighting issues. The next meeting of the group is Monday Nov. 18th – in the evening, so SH can attend.

BF asked what effect red light would have on wild life?

4. 2020 AGM

CDr began by reminding the meeting that the AGM would start at 2pm in Duncan Room (smaller room and cheaper) and added that the Chapmans were aware of this arrangement. Business would be the normal AGM proceedings with one special topic being RAS 200. Mike Edmunds' lecture the night before would provide a suitable introduction. A major issue would be the matter of the Society membership fee and this we will discuss more fully under the next agenda item, Finance Report. Also, there was the matter of the name of the Society and the proposal to become "The Herschel Society". He added that since the discussion with the Slough Herschel Astronomical Society had removed any possible confusion, the way ahead for the proposed name change was now clear. He emphasised that it was important to recognise the greater family, not just William. SH emphasised the important inclusion of Alexander Herschel. CDr agreed to prepare a paper for discussion at the meeting in January. **See Action Table**

CDr raised the matter of contacting The Charity Commission and recommended that this should be done in advance. RH was asked to contact the Commission. She commented that this could be done on line. **See Action Table.**

CDr suggested that there could be a need to change visuals/logo. He added that we could keep them as they are now or change to a simple logo such as the 7 foot telescope. SH suggested asking Andy Ashwin for ideas. CDr agreed to contact him. **See Action Table.** CDr added that the committee should also consider this at the meeting in January. RH raised the matter of our website and how it should look. **See Action Table.**

Regarding the talk to be given by Allan Chapman, CDr suggested that Allan could be asked to speak on Alexander Herschel, if he was willing. This was agreed.

5. Finance Report

RH presented the Report. See Appendix.

Additionally, RH referred to the paper for the AGM on membership fee increase and the tables based on the two possible subscription increases and presented the possible scenarios for discussion. See Appendix. It was agreed a proposed two tier system of £10 for digital only and £15 to include a hard copy of the Journal should be put to the AGM for approval. CDr would draft a short paper. **See Action Table**

6. Membership Report

SH presented the Report. See Appendix

7. Journal

AS reported that he had the basic outline for the Spring edition; this would include information about the AGM and an awaited article from Roger Moses. He added that he was aware of the tight timescale for completion in January due to giving adequate notice of the AGM. SH asked if AS had been contacted by Christopher Taylor of the Banbury Observatory who had an article on Herschel that might be suitable for inclusion. AS replied that he had not. SH commented that he would follow up. **See Action Table.** SH agreed to provide an article he had previously promised on the purchase of telescopes. **See Action Table.**

Post Meeting Note. Regarding the inclusion of the AGM agenda in the Journal, CDr agreed to provide an updated draft for discussion at the January meeting that AS could use as a "placeholder".

8. Lecture Programme

AS referred to the Lecture Report, See Appendix.

Regarding the January 3rd vacancy, as there were no suggestions for a speaker, it was agreed that the January slot in the programme could be cancelled and AS agreed to unbook the room. AS asked for any suggestions for the period September onwards. AS raised his concern regarding publicity for lectures and especially the upcoming November Caroline Herschel Prize Lecture. There was some discussion regarding publicity for the Prize Lecture. AS commented that Bath Library will take A4 posters. AF asked what publicity arrangements Bath University have? CDr replied that they have their own system but would follow up by being in touch with his University contacts. AF suggested using coffee shop etc noticeboards. BF agreed to place a poster on a noticeboard he was aware of.

CDr enquired as to who would be attending the reception that would follow on the Lecture.

AS spoke of his general concern regarding lecture attendance. CDr suggested issuing a questionnaire at a routing lecture asking attendees how they came to hear of the lecture.

JM mentioned that there was a “partnership” between the Museum and the Society on the matter of sharing information regarding speakers the Museum were aware of. AS commented that this arrangement had worked well in the past.

9. Museum

JM began by announcing that 2019 has been a very successful year in terms of visitors and income and had already surpassed last year. There have been 11,500 visitors not including school groups. BF asked why there has been such an improvement to which JM replied that joining with BPT had brought in more staff and volunteers; also, more publicity and more exhibitions about space and interesting talks. Regarding the “transit of mercury” event, this brought in about 60 visitors, contrasting with a normally quiet November. Additionally, the Museum was attracting a more international audience. He also referred to an upcoming evening event on November 29th. The period November-February sees a lot of primary schools with repeat visits. The Museum is open until December 31st after which it is closed until 3rd February.

AF reported that during the Winter, some work would be done on the Music Room with some instruments being mounted on the wall. March would see the RAS exhibition. Regarding the “military serpent”, that visitors tend to pick up, this would be mounted on the wall. There were also plans for general introductions for each room.

VN referred to the Sandford Award which the Museum had been up for and had been successful; additionally, Polly James has been asked to be one of the presenters. The Museum had also been shortlisted for another two awards over the next two weeks.

JM added that the Museum was also up for two business awards.

There had been a meeting with Beth Probert regarding her involvement of Cubs. She had links with Bath University that could prove useful.

Post Meeting Note. Message from VN. The Herschel Museum has received a Gold Award in the Small Visitor Attraction of the Year Category at the Bath and Somerset Tourism Awards, Thursday November 21st. The Museum was also commended in the Bath Business Awards.

10. Observing Report

SH referred to the report he had provided. See Appendix. In addition, he drew attention to the matter of “Organisational change” highlighted in the report and explained how this change had come about. He added that the change will strengthen the organising team and should help build the local stargazing community from young to old.

11. Music

In the absence of MS, reference was made to the written he had provided. See Appendix.

12. Website Report and communications update

JF reported on a message that had been received via the website Contacts page.

“I am not sure if your contact page is intended to be used this way but I thought I’d ask. Currently reading “Zwicky: The Outcast Who Unmasked The Universe”. Initial impressions good, until I came across this in Chapter 5. “Herschel was a very fine oboist who counted Mozart and Beethoven among his fans.”

This gives me a serious credibility issue, which may cast a shadow over the rest of the book. Herschel was a talented musician, but his musical career suggests that he was in some way away from the front rank. He essentially gave up music after his appointment as King’s Astronomer in 1782. At this point Mozart was 26 years old and with a staggering reputation, but Beethoven was only 11. Nothing else I’ve read about Herschel has ever indicated that either composer was even aware of him and the Beethoven age issue renders the idea of him being a Herschel fan as very doubtful. Can anyone in the society shed any light? My worry is that if the author is willing to present “fake news” on this point, then he might very well be doing so on other issues.”
Paul Dawson.

I considered the only person to ask was our President, Allan Chapman.

“I would entirely agree with Paul that Mozart and Beethoven were not to my knowledge “fans” of Herschel – although they may (speculatively) been impressed by his cosmology. I also agree with Paul that Herschel was not in the front rank. He was a solid professional, and also a very successful impresario, concert promoter, and musical entrepreneur, in a way that Beethoven and Mozart were certainly not. A first-rate oboist and keyboard performer Herschel certainly was, but not a musical genius. So yes, beware the “Fake News”.”

Paul was very grateful for Allan’s response.

JF confirmed that he had bought domain “herschelsociety.org.uk” on behalf of the Society. This action was carried out in accordance with advice from SH that it would be a good idea to associate this domain with the existing Fasthosts account already managed by JF. This in order to prevent any possible future confusion with the Herschel Astronomical Society in Slough.

Regarding our Facebook Group, the membership remains at 53 members. The Twitter blog following has increased by 11 to 323 since the previous meeting.

13. AOB

a. JM referred to a “Sparks” grant that would help with the renting of a planetarium which would provide events for “Outreach”.

b. BF referred to wonderful photos that had been taken of the James Webb space telescope by a Hasselblad photographer and appear in a Hasselblad magazine. JM indicated an interest for inclusion on the Museum website. BF was asked to copy to JM and JF. **See Action Table.** (Note. The James Webb space telescope is planned to be the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope).

c. JF referred to the information Brian Robertson has passed on to him regarding the Society for the History of Astronomy (SHA) Autumn Conference and AGM to be held on Saturday 26th October 2019 at the John Lee Theatre, Birmingham. He added that he had circulated the information to the committee. The papers included “speaker biographies” and JF suggested that AS may find some useful when searching for possible speakers in the future.

Future Meeting Dates 2020

13th January
AGM 7th March
16th March
11th May
20th July

The meeting finished at 9.05pm

Meeting raised	Description of action	Placed on	Status
19.9.18	To continue contact with Brad Elder re production of blanks	MT	Ongoing
14.1.19	To take forward HFMP (including HFMP maintenance and investigation terms and conditions HFMP scan sources)	MS	Ongoing
9.9.19	To prepare lecture on “the sky”, final title to be considered, for 2020	BF	Ongoing
9.9.19	To prepare a draft for AGM 2020 regarding Journal	RH/CDr	Ongoing
9.9.19	To make contact with Slough Herschel Astronomical Society	CDr	Complete
11.11.19	To prepare a paper for discussion at the January meeting on the Herschel family	CDr	
11.11.19	To contact Charity Commission regarding possible Society name change	RH	
11.11.19	To contact Andy Ashwin re possible logos for the website	CDr	
11.11.19	To consider possible logos, such as the 7ft telescope, and any changes to website appearance	Committee	
11.11.19	To draft short paper on the 2 tier membership system	CDr	
11.11.19	To contact Christopher Taylor re article on Herschel for the Journal.	SH	
11.11.19	To provide article on purchase of telescopes for the Journal	SH	
11.11.19	To copy info re James Webb space telescope Hasselblad photos to JM and JF	BF	

Appendixes

Finance Report to Date 31/10/2019

Since last Committee Meeting:

- Unauthorised payments taken from the Current Account by Direct Debit -British Gas Services £23.00
- Lloyds Bank has refunded the money to us in full as the payment should not have been made
- Repaid Hudson Energy the money they refunded us as Lloyds had already sorted this out.
- Income greater than expense.

Main Accounts

Since last Committee Meeting: 01/09/2019 –31/10/2019

INCOME

SUBSCRIPTION	£436.00	
DONATION	£140.00	(Jaworksi £50, Kubler £50 + 3 smaller donations)
MISC. INCOME	£68.79	£45.69 returned from Hudson Energy, £23 from Lloyds bank due to additional unauthorised British Gas DD, £0.10 Simon testing new Online Payment system
INTEREST	£29.56	
BATH ASTRON.	£7.00	
TOTAL	£681.35	

EXPENSE

MISCELLANEOUS	£248.95	1 Unauthorised Direct Debit from British Gas, pay back Hudson Energy as Lloyds already paid back Direct Debit
POSTAGE	£95.67	
STARLIT SKIES	£33.50	Ticket to Therapeutic City Conference
ONLINE PAYMENT	£9.59	17 Transactions
TOTAL	£387.71	

Reserves stand at (approx.): £13,974 as of 31/10/2019

Caroline Herschel Prize Lectureship Funds

Expense: none in this period

Reserves: £9010.51

Journal Costs: Preparation for AGM

Met with Charles to discuss Paper for AGM on Membership Increase. Produced tables based on the two possible subscription increases – two-tier membership or across the board price rise.

Scenario 0: No Change to Membership Fees

- Membership fees remain at current level
 - £10 standard, £13 for overseas (non EU)

Scenario 1: Two Tier Membership Fees

- Members 'going digital' keep current subscription rate
 - £10 standard, £13 for overseas (non EU)
- Members receiving printed journal have increase of £5/annum
 - £15 standard, £18 for overseas (non EU)
- **1A:** Current number of 'digital' memberships remain (17%)
- **1B:** Digital membership increases to 35%

- **1C:** Digital membership increases to 50%

Scenario 2: Blanket Increase of £5 for all

- An increase of £5 for all members
 - £15 standard, £18 for overseas (non EU)

Outcome of Changes to Membership Fee

Scenario	Income	Journal Cost per Year £	Difference £	Journal cost as % of income
0	2085	1460.46	624.54	70%
1A	2900	1460.46	1439.54	50%
1B	2755	1351.38	1403.62	49%
1C	2590	1127.96	1462.04	44%
2	3105	1460.46	1644.54	47%

Assumptions:

1. Membership remains at current level
 - a. Total Members: 237
 - b. Total Paying Members: 204
 - i. Of which 15 Overseas memberships
 - ii. Of which 189 UK/EU memberships
2. Print 12 extra copies of the Journal in case of new members
3. Costs to print Journals a based on recent figures from Ralph Allen Press and varying per copy depending on total amount of copies required (see printing cost bands table)
4. Postage estimated from previous costs
5. Income shown is from Subscriptions only. (Donations/Misc. Income not included)
6. For ease of calculation assume Honorary members all require printed copies of the journal

Comparison to other local Astronomical/Historical Societies

- Looked at membership of 5 other local Astronomical Societies. The range for individual membership was from £18 to £40
- The Jane Austen Society has individual membership rate of £28

Income from Subscribers

Scenario	UK/EU Subscriber		Overseas Subscriber		UK/EU Fee £	
	Digital	Print	Digital	Print	Digital	Print
0	38	151	3	12	10	10

1A	38	151	3	12	10	15
1B	66	123	4	11	10	15
1C	95	94	8	7	10	15
2	38	151	3	12	15	15

Printing Cost Bands

Minimum Amount Printed	Cost per Copy £
100	3.62
150	2.76
200	2.33
250	2.08

Journal Cost

Scenario	Journals required in each print run	Total Cost per print £	Total yearly cost (2 print r £
0	241	561.53	
1A	241	561.53	
1B	223	519.59	
1C	163	449.88	
2	241	561.53	

Membership Report to 31st October 2019

46 expired memberships in last 12 months. 6 have not renewed in the past month.

	7 th July	27 th Aug	31 st Oct	31 st Dec 2018	11 th Feb 2019	17 th Mar	2 nd May	11 th July	30 th Aug	31 st Oct
Total Membership	253	257	252	257	247	243	237	238	235	246

Expiry Year	Membership Type					Grand Total
	Individual (UK)	European Individual	Overseas Individual	Honorary	Volunteer HMoA (Hon)	
2019	48	2	3			53
2020	137	7	10			154
2021	1	1	1			3
2022			1			1

2023		1				1
2026	1					1
Unlimited				19	14	33
Grand Total	187	11	15	19	14	246

Lecture Report to 11th November 2019

Lectures since the report to the last committee meeting on 9th September:

Fri 6 Sep 19 Dr David Tsang – Exploring the Properties of Extreme Matter using Gravitational Waves and Gamma Ray Bursts

David Tsang was born in Canada, and did his undergraduate degree at the University of British Columbia. He did his Masters and PhD in Physics at Cornell University, and worked as a research scientist at Caltech, McGill University, the University of Maryland and the University of Southampton. He is now a Lecturer in the department of Physics at the University of Bath specializing in theoretical astrophysics.

The lecture was a fascinating tour through some of the most extreme events in the cosmos such as neutron stars merging and how we can detect them. He enlivened the lecture with some of the best animations that we have seen.

Attendance 38 (28M, 4S, 5V, 1 Free). Takings £87.

Fri 5 Oct 19 Dr Stuart Eves – Joint WHS/BIS lecture: William Herschel and the Rings of Uranus

Stuart Eves is a satellite-system engineer. In 2018 he formed his own space consultancy company, SJE Space, after spending 14 years with Surrey Satellite Technology Limited (SSTL) and 16 years with the UK Ministry Of Defence. He has been a fellow of both the Royal Astronomical Society and the British Interplanetary Society for more than 25 years.

In the lecture he presented a very plausible story of how William Herschel could have seen the rings of Uranus, drawing attention to some intriguing sketches that WH made and finding a whole lot of factors that could have made the rings both more prominent and more easily observed in the late 1700s. The lecture was full of interesting points.

Attendance 39 (23M, 6S, 10V, 1 Free). Takings £106.

Coming soon:

Tue 26 Nov 19 Dr Anna Lisa Varri – Carline Herschel Prize Lecture at Bath University: Small stellar systems, big astrophysical questions

Fri 6 Dec 19 Dr Robert Massey & Dr Alexandra Loske – Moon: Art, Science, Culture

Fri 3 Jan 20 Now vacant – suggestions anyone (we may omit this date)?

Fri 7 Feb 20 Dr Cees Carel – Dark matter

Fri 6 Mar 20 Prof. Mike G. Edmunds – Astronomy in an Age of Revolutions: The Foundation and Founders of the Royal Astronomical Society 1820

Fri 3 Apr 20 Prof Michael Perryman – Hipparcos and Gaia: space astrometry — unravelling the formation and evolution of our Galaxy

Fri 8 May 20 Dr Robert Fosbury – Observing the Sky

Observing Report to end of October 2019

Events held on:

- 13th Sep – Rode Cubs observing;
- 20th Sep – Observing at Wellow;
- 25th Sep – 4 short talks by James Fradgley, BA meeting;
- 28th Sep – Guide Leader training in astronomy;
- 5th Oct – Rovers for World Space Week supporting WMA, Wells Library;
- 16th Oct – Getting to Grips with Astronomy, Herschel Museum;
- 18th Oct – ‘Getting to Grips Pt I’, Beckington AS 21st Birthday, Beckington;
- 19th Oct – Observing at Wellow;
- 24th Oct – Astro Sleepover for Yr5/6, St Julian’s Primary, Wellow;
- 26th Oct – 4 public talks during Exmoor Dark Skies Festival, Dunster;
- 30th Oct – Exoplanets for Amateurs, Mark Woodland, BA meeting;

Organisational change

The Bath Astronomers are setting up as a society with its own constitution and committee. The intent is to transfer all aspects of the existing virtual group e.g. aims, name, logo, marketing materials, donated telescopes, intellectual property, and register with the Federation of Astronomical Societies. The new Society will work in partnership with the William Herschel Society in providing observing opportunities for the public and encouraging the uptake of astronomy.

WHS members can attend BA monthly meeting at a reduced entry fee of £2.

We would like to investigate a reciprocal arrangement with WHS for BRLSI meeting attendance by members of BA.

Herschel Music Archive Project (HMAP)

Matt Dicken and I have set up a data project within Bath Spa’s data repository – by creating up an HMAP area on BathSPAdata/Figshare. Setting up the online catalogue has been done with the help and advice of Dr Miranda Barnes, Research Publications Librarian at Bath Spa with whom we had several meetings over the summer.

[https://data.bathspa.ac.uk/Herschel Music Archive Project HMAP](https://data.bathspa.ac.uk/Herschel_Music_Archive_Project_HMAP) .

At present the frontpage has only Bath Spa Logo. Would the society like the its logo on the front page also?

Matt Dicken and I have continued to input data into the catalogue. We have put all the keyboard pieces (there are about 100 entries in the catalogue to cover all the keyboard music) together as one unit ready to upload into the area. This is near ready to upload and we have a meeting on the 20th November to facilitate this. Our intention is that the other areas – orchestral music, chamber music, vocal music and other will be done in the same way, each as a unit.

However there have some setbacks recently. Matt has been away in South America doing his doctorate research and I have had little contact with him in the last few weeks – however he is back for the meeting on the 20th November. I had my computer stolen at Bordeaux airport and it has taken me some weeks to get another set up with all the right applications and collect up and redo lost data.