



Obituary

Peta Ann Bosley (1954–2021)

On April 2021 April 28, Peta lost her battle with pneumonia. In these times of coronavirus, it came as a shock to everyone that she should succumb to something so ordinary, but it turns out that her health had been compromised by a fight with cancer a few years earlier.

Peta Ann Cavanagh was born in Sunderland, and still had links with the Sunderland Astronomical Society up until her passing. After excelling at school, she went to Queen Mary College at the University of London where she studied geology and astrophysics, eventually achieving a BSc in physics and astrophysics.

It was whilst at university that she met Steve Bosley and clearly they hit it off, becoming an 'item', eventually marrying and in the words of Steve becoming 'lifelong soulmates'; a true team, as he put it.

After jobs in a TV rental shop, and then volunteering to work in conservation on artifacts from the *Mary Rose* as they were being recovered from the bottom of the Solent, Peta took on careers first developing Royal Navy missile control systems with Ferranti, and then working in a variety of roles with IBM for 25 years. Eventually she retired and returned to her love of astronomy, at which point she joined the Hampshire Astronomical Group (HAG).

Both Peta and Steve very quickly became involved in the Group's affairs, being elected to the committee in 2015. Getting actively involved with various organisations was a trait they shared, and their membership of HAG was to be no exception.

The couple travelled extensively, with Africa being a particular passion. Observing wildlife during the day and then the beautiful clear skies of the southern hemisphere at night was a heady mix, drawing them back again and again. They joined a Transolar Travel trip to observe the total solar eclipse of 1976 October with British Interplanetary Society and BAA members, from Chwaka Beach on the island of Zanzibar, following their first ever safari. That was to prove an expensive trip as subsequently they retraced and extended their tracks across the continent. In the same year, in the Serengeti, they passed a weather-beaten road sign to Olduvai Gorge, made famous by Louis and Mary Leakey; palaeoanthropology was another shared passion. Four years later they were back and in the gorge!

Most recently, they engineered a side trip on a Namibian safari to see the Hoba meteorite (the largest in the world). On this occasion, Steve acted as tour guide for a family of German tourists and it turned out that one of them worked as a maintenance engineer on the SOFIA airborne observatory – astronomy is a small world. Next on the to-do list was to have been Chicxulub on the Yucatán Peninsula, epicentre of the dinosaur-killing mass extinction event, but that was not to be.

As previously mentioned, Peta was deeply committed to the various organisations she joined and this included the British Interplanetary Society (of which she was a Fellow), the British Astronomical Association (where she became a Trustee in 2019, after serving on the Council since 2017), the Society for Popular Astronomy, the Society for the History of Astronomy and of course HAG. This was in addition to attending astronomy conferences across the UK, organised by the likes of the Federation of Astronomical Societies and Southern Area Group of Astronomical Societies.

She helped set up a meteor detection system for HAG under the aegis of Peter Campbell Burns and Richard Kacerek, co-founders of the UKMON meteor detection system, but was keen to ensure that the Group joined NEMETODE too, to maximise coverage.

Peta also took over organising the speakers for HAG's monthly meetings; she worked hard to ensure there was something for everyone and to turn these events into a self-funding revenue stream. Speakers were often 'sourced' at the various meetings that the couple attended. Steve readily admits that Peta would usually be the 'front man', accosting speakers at these various functions to invite them to talk at the Memorial Hall in Clanfield, but not until after they had heard them speak first! She was especially gratified to see the number of members of the public in attendance increasing significantly.

When she decided to help source and sell various embroidered T-shirts and fleeces to promote the HAG brand, she quickly realised that this was something she could do for the BAA as well. Peta also contributed to the outreach undertaken by HAG, going to various venues to spread the word and joy of astronomy, and she supported the University of Portsmouth maths students who visited the Clanfield Observatory, describing to them the basics of astrobiology.

This latter interest drove her to sign up for the Exoplanet Division of the Asteroids & Remote Planets Section when it was set up by Roger Dymock in 2018. She presented to their first conference, held at Clanfield Memorial Hall in 2019 September.

Her final contribution to astronomy was as a BAA representative on



Peta Bosley. (Photo by Steve Bosley)

the organising committee of the 2020 National Astronomy Week, following in the illustrious footsteps of HAG's very own Robin Gorman, who established these events.

Peta took her responsibilities as a BAA Trustee very seriously, perhaps with a conservative approach with which she would have been disappointed at the thought of the BAA leaving Burlington House. Regardless, her business brain would have decided to go with what is best for the future of the Association.

She will be sorely missed by the many organisations that she has touched over the years.

Peta is survived by her husband Steve, son Anthony and grandchildren Freddie and Beatrix. Our thoughts and wishes are with them all at this time. 🌟

Graham Bryant

President, Hampshire Astronomical Group



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