



A new home and observatory for CMHAS

Shortly after their 50th anniversary a few years ago, the Crayford Manor House Astronomical Society (CMHAS) had to leave their long-time home at the Manor House in Crayford, Kent and find a new venue. For various reasons they decided not to take their 60cm telescope, built in the early '70s by John Wall, so this was donated to the Yorkshire Astronomical Society.

A new location was found at the Parsonage Lane Pavilion, Sutton-at-Hone, just across the border in Dartford (thus adding a 'D' to the end of the society name). This site is just inside the M25 and only a few miles from the Dartford river crossing but it is a surprisingly dark site given the surroundings and has a good southern horizon. The new spot was an ideal site for an observatory, but what about the telescope? With perfect timing, Dr Peter Hindle donated a 40cm Meade and, with this in place, the society decided to raise the funds for a new observatory.

and who is greatly missed. Dick would have been very impressed by the way that the society has organised the fundraising, building and operation of the observatory and I am sure he would have had strong opinions about how the new telescope should be used.

On January 8 I packed my Essex passport and drove over the newly 'free-flowing' Dartford crossing into Kent in order to represent the BAA at the grand opening ceremony. It so happened that comet C/2014 Q2 (Lovejoy) was then a nice 4th magnitude object below Aldebaran, and I had a good view of it in binoculars as I trudged along the very muddy path linking the road to the Pavilion. When I arrived society members were also observing the comet from just outside the new observatory.

After various formalities a very large turnout of members and local dignitaries watched as society chairman Simon Dawes, Dartford Mayor

Cllr Avtar Sandhu and Dr Peter Hindle cut the ribbon to formally open the observatory. By this time it had clouded over so it wasn't possible to use the telescope to view the comet, and we retired inside to eat the very nice observatory-shaped cake.

The Society has always been very active and the new observatory means that they will be able to maintain their observing tradition into their second 50 years.

Nick James



Comet C/2014 Q2 (Lovejoy) imaged with the iTelescope 106mm Takahashi FSQ at Siding Spring, 2014 Dec 30, 14:59–15:18 UT. Alan C. Tough.



Members of CMHAS erecting the dome.

Planning started in 2013 and much of the building work was done in the summer and autumn of 2014 with many society members contributing their varied skills to the project. The society also received considerable support from the local parish and borough councils.

The new observatory is named in memory of Richard (Dick) Chambers, a prominent member of both the BAA and CMHAS who died in 2012



The new observatory completed.

Letters

What happened when I was Editor!

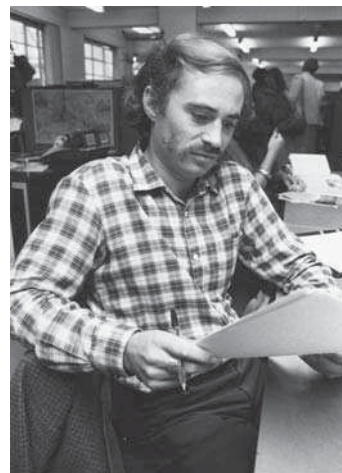
From Mr Nigel Henbest

I was fascinated to read Hazel McGee's account in the February *Journal* of the previous incumbents of the hot-seat as Editor. It might be useful, I hope, to put the record straight on some of the changes to the *Journal* that took place in the mid-1980s, before Jacqueline Mitton took the helm.

As the Association's Public Relations Officer, I was asked to prepare an eight-page 'Christmas Supplement' for the 1984 December edition of the *Journal*. Following the publication of this new informal section called *Scope*, Colin Ronan asked if I would succeed him as Editor.

At that time, several aspects of the *Journal* were clearly superannuated. I took my cue from Colin to use my experience on *New Scientist* magazine as an inspiration for designing a more contemporary-looking *Journal*.

The 1986 December issue was the turning point. It not only introduced colour covers –



Nigel Henbest in about 1985

Martin Moberley's lunar eclipse on the front, and a stunning display of Halley's Comet stamps on the back – but also the new sections 'Observer's Forum' and 'BAA Update.'

In that issue, I also re-ordered the material into a more logical sequence, with news stories before the papers, and the other informal material (letters, reviews, Observers' Forum and BAA Update) at the back of the issue.

Last but not least, I also re-designed the non-refereed papers into a much more free-flowing three-column grid, that basically created the look of the *Journal* as we know it today.

Nigel Henbest (*Journal* Editor, 1985–1987)

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