

Obituary

Stuart Hawkins (1924–2019)

The stars lost a true champion when George Stuart Hawkins, known to all who knew him as Stuart, passed away on 2019 Aug 24. He was probably best known in BAA circles as one of the founder members of the Commission (then Committee) for Dark Skies, formed in 1989.

Stuart's funeral took place on Sep 20th in Bridport, Dorset, where he and his wife Pat had lived for over thirty years. The CfDS was represented by fellow committee members Graham Bryant and Howard Lawrence.

Born in 1924 January, Stuart became a BAA member in 1975. He would speak fondly of his experiences as a young sailor on HMS *Rotherham* in the Indian Ocean during the last phase of World War II, escaping from the heat of the engine room whenever possible and gazing from the darkened deck of the ship at pristine night skies above, with the Milky Way 'stretched out from horizon to horizon'. It was during this period that his deep love of astronomy was formed. On leaving the Royal Navy he continued his seaborne career in the Merchant Navy, finally disembarking in the 1960s and taking up employment with the Department of the Environment.

A modest and unassuming man, Stuart promoted the cause of dark skies for decades, not least through letters and e-mails to organisations both large and small. His conversations with officials, from DEFRA ministers to local councillors, were pursued with as much commitment as his approaches to his local supermarket about its projected lighting scheme.

He took part with other CfDS members in the presentation of the very first CfDS Good Lighting Award in England, given to Martin Hazell of the Highways Agency (HA) in 1990 on a rainswept roundabout in Dorset. This award was for the HA's environmentally friendly approach to the illumination of the roundabout on the Charmouth bypass, one of the first full cut-off lighting schemes in the United Kingdom. The decision of the Agency in 1995 to use only flat glass and strictly downward-directed main road lights in the UK owes much to Stuart's early work.

In 2009, he was also instrumental to the decision of Dorset County Council to switch off most of its road lights from midnight to 5 a.m., a move which has saved hundreds of thousands of pounds per year ever since. A familiar face at the CfDS table at many events during the 1990s & 2000s, Stuart was well known to the regulars at Astrofest, the Norfolk Equinox Sky Camp, the South-West Astronomy Fair and other venues. One of his last such appearances was in 2014 July, drawing on his background in environmental affairs when meeting large numbers of the delegates at the Local Government Conference in Bournemouth.

Stuart was a founder and long-term member of the Bridport Astronomical Society, and a trusted friend and mentor to Dorset's astronomical community. His many observations of the stars and planets from his back garden in Bridport, with a large homemade Newtonian reflector, were shared

with other astronomers. It was in character that his telescope motor was carefully muffled to avoid waking the neighbours during the small hours of the morning.

His determined and focused approach to the promotion of astronomy and the goal of darker skies – as well as his ready smile – will remain with not just CfDS members and supporters, but all who knew



Stuart Hawkins, pictured in 2018 May at Portsmouth FC. Colin Hawkins

him. We have lost a founding member of CfDS who had a quiet determination and a gentle disarming personality; he will be sorely missed.

We are indebted to Pat Hawkins for information that she has relayed to us. 🇬🇧

Bob Mizon, Coordinator, CfDS

BAA Handbook 2020: A correction

The 'Phases of the Moon' table (p. 27) of the 2020 Handbook is erroneously a reprint of the previous year's data.

Please replace it with the table shown below.

Steve Harvey, Editor, BAA Handbook

EARTH

Perihelion	Jan. 05d 07h 49m	(147,091,144 km, 0.983243564 au)
Aphelion	Jul. 04d 11h 56m	(152,095,296 km, 1.016694252 au)
Equinoxes	Mar. 20d 03h 50m	Sep. 22d 13h 31m
Solstices	Jun. 20d 21h 44m	Dec. 21d 10h 02m
Obliquity	2000 23.43929°	2020 23.43669°

MOON

PHASES OF THE MOON

2020

New Moon		First Quarter		Full Moon		Last Quarter	
d	h m	d	h m	d	h m	d	h m
Jan. 24	21 42	Jan. 03	04 45	Jan. 10	19 21	Jan. 17	12 58
Feb. 23	15 32	Feb. 02	01 42	Feb. 09	07 33	Feb. 15	22 17
Mar. 24	09 28	Mar. 02	19 57	Mar. 09	17 48	Mar. 16	09 34
Apr. 23	02 26	Apr. 01	10 21	Apr. 08	02 35	Apr. 14	22 56
May 22	17 39	Apr. 30	20 38	May 07	10 45	May 14	14 03
Jun. 21	06 41	May 30	03 30	Jun. 05	19 12	Jun. 13	06 24
Jul. 20	17 33	Jun. 28	08 16	Jul. 05	04 44	Jul. 12	23 29
Aug. 19	02 42	Jul. 27	12 33	Aug. 03	15 59	Aug. 11	16 45
Sep. 17	11 00	Aug. 25	17 58	Sep. 02	05 22	Sep. 10	09 26
Oct. 16	19 31	Sep. 24	01 55	Oct. 01	21 05	Oct. 10	00 40
Nov. 15	05 07	Oct. 23	13 23	Oct. 31	14 49	Nov. 08	13 46
Dec. 14	16 17	Nov. 22	04 45	Nov. 30	09 30	Dec. 08	00 37
		Dec. 21	23 41	Dec. 30	03 28		

APSIDES

2020

PERIGEE				APOGEE			
Date	Diam.	Date	Diam.	Date	Diam.	Date	Diam.
d h	' "	d h	' "	d h	' "	d h	' "
Jan. 13	20 32 39	Jul. 25	05 32 26	Jan. 2 01	29 32	Jul. 12 19	29 34
Feb. 10	20 33 09	Aug. 21 11	32 52	Jan. 29 21	29 29	Aug. 9 14	29 32
Mar. 10	06 33 28	Sep. 18 14	33 17	Feb. 26 11	29 25	Sep. 6 06	29 28
Apr. 7 18	33 29	Oct. 17 00	33 29	Mar. 24 15	29 23	Oct. 3 17	29 24
May 6 03	33 13	Nov. 14 12	33 24	Apr. 20 19	29 24	Oct. 30 19	29 24
Jun. 3 04	32 48	Dec. 12 21	33 02	May 18 08	29 28	Nov. 27 00	29 26
Jun. 30 02	32 23			Jun. 15 01	29 32	Dec. 24 17	29 30