

Obituary

Arthur Frank Edwards, 1918–2009

Many members of the Association are active and prominent, while others quietly maintain an interest in astronomy and support the Association throughout the years. Only a very few have been members for almost 70 years.

Arthur Frank Edwards was born in Yardley, Birmingham, in 1918. He had a happy childhood, which he shared with his younger brother Peter. Both were keen on cricket, and Frank also developed an interest in astronomy. In 1936 (at 18 years of age) he had occasion to write to the *Birmingham Gazette*

to explain that a letter that had been published announcing a transit of Mercury was in error, as the planet currently lay at superior conjunction! On another occasion he rushed into the house and pulled the family outside to witness an aurora. By this time he had acquired a 10-inch reflector with a Calver mirror dated 1895. Maintenance of this telescope caused at least one domestic crisis when his mother was unable to remove the stains on the bath left by the resilvering of the mirror. After leaving school, Frank obtained employment in the motor taxation department of Birmingham City Council.

Frank joined the BAA in early 1940; but the war intervened, he was called up and sent to Sandhurst, and in late 1941 was sent to India to serve as a Lieutenant. While sailing down the west coast of Africa he recorded in his diary his first sight of the southern skies. On 1941 December 17, while off Freetown, Sierra Leone, he wrote: 'I have been up on deck trying to trace some of the southern constellations. I managed to find Cetus, and from there traced Eridanus down to Achernar, and Aquarius with Piscis Australis.' He also noted Orion, Taurus, Jupiter and Saturn overhead.

Frank's tour of military duty ended in 1946, by which time he was a Major in the Judge Advocate's Office in Madras. On being demobilised he returned to Birmingham and to his job in the motor taxation office, and was able to resume his passion for collecting recorded music – especially organ music, being an accomplished organist himself. He also returned to cricket and, of course, astronomy. He was active in local astronomical circles, and presented several lectures. His observational activities were general, but he had a great interest in the Sun, and had considerable



knowledge of its nuclear processes and evolution. His library included the three-volume *Amateur Telescope Making*, but he did not venture to make a mirror himself.

Frank married Betty in 1951, and soon afterwards they moved to their new house, which they named 'Starhome', in Taunton, Somerset. In 1961 they moved to Gloucester, although the massive iron tube of the Calver reflector

had to remain in Taunton, and the optics were never again mounted. Frank remained the rest of his life in Churchdown, Gloucestershire. The demands of bringing up a family of three children brought an end to his observational career, though for

a time he was Secretary of Wyvern Astronomical Society. (The records of this organisation, including minutes and correspondence 1959–1970, are held in Gloucestershire Record Office.)

Frank was an incredibly conscientious man, frequently working late into the night; but he still had time to play bridge and skittles, and these pastimes he continued beyond his retirement in 1978. He also found a use for the remains of the Calver mount by instructing his son in the construction of a 13-inch/f/9.2 reflector; but due to the vertiginous nature of using a 10-foot focal length Newtonian, the instrument was soon dismantled. Into his eighties Frank also maintained an excellent garden at his home – in itself a lasting testament to the breadth and energy of a remarkable man. His wife Betty died in 1996, and they are survived by their three children, Jane, Tim, and Kate.

R.A. Marriott

Information for this brief note was kindly supplied by Tim Edwards.

New members

The British Astronomical Association cordially welcomes the following new members:

Elected 2009 December 12

Booth Guy, Higham, Kent
Bryssinck Erik, Oost-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Carroll Patricia, Ballyfermot, Dublin, Ireland
Chapman David, Llandrindod Wells, Powys
Clark William M., Folkestone, Kent
Coleman Kriss LeCurt, Wisconsin, USA
Davies Justyn, Uplyme, Dorset
Dickens Stephen, Brentwood, Essex
Evetts Nicholas, New York, USA
Foster Nigel Alan, Coventry, West Midlands
Harris Vernon, Ashford, Kent
Herbert Richard Henry, Cowley, Middx.
Hill Delores, Arizona, USA
Hotakainen Markus, Espoo, Finland
Howes Sean, Loughton, Essex
Hudson Phillip, Carlisle, Cumbria
Hudson Adrian, Cullompton, Devon
Ingram Stuart, Finchley, London
James Keith, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.
Jury Geoffrey Michael, Seaford, E. Sussex
Kanade Madhura, Reading, Berks.
Kennedy Alan, Ferryhill, Co. Durham
Lloyd Daniel Laurence, Esher, Surrey
Menicot Christiane, Folkestone, Kent
Moezzi Suzanne, London, SW17
Moldoveanu Razvan, Aldershot, Hampshire
Petrie Richard, Guildford, Surrey

Petrie Conrad, Guildford, Surrey
Piorkowska Edyta, Loughton, Essex
Piorkowski Mariusz, Loughton, Essex
Reeve Whitham D., Alaska, USA
Rutherford Frederick, Diss, Suffolk
Taylor David, Forfar, Angus
Thomas James, Somerton, Oxfordshire

Elected 2010 January 27

Barnard Justin, Thurton, Norfolk
Broke Nicholas, London, NI
Brough John, Kenilworth, Warwickshire
Buettner Dietmar, Chemnitz, Germany
Clark Noel, Meopham, Kent
Collings Patricia, Boston, Lincs.
Coombes Nigel, Bridgend, Glam.
Cooper Gary, Castleberg, Co. Tyrone
Evans John, Great Bookham, Surrey
Evans Anthony, Witham, Essex
Foley Gavin, Long Buckby, Northants.
Gay Christopher, Redhill, Surrey
Glenny Michael, Andoversford, Gloucester
Lees Stephen, St Helens, Merseyside
Mead Philip, Cambridge, Cambs.
Modaheer Jagbir, Flintwick, Beds.
Odasso Alessandro, Milano, Italy
Owen David, Aylsham, Norfolk
Owens Camilla, Blandford, Dorset
Poole Timothy, Chandlers Ford, Hampshire
Richter Willem, Mitcham, Surrey

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