

## Obituary

# Dr Glyn Marsh, 1954–2017

Glyn Marsh was born in Preston, Lancashire, on 1954 March 14, the fourth of five children of Alfred and Lily Marsh. The family were members of the Preston Carey Baptist Church community and welcomed many different people to their home, helping the young Glyn to become used to making new acquaintances. At this time he was also a member of the Boys Brigade and played in the band.

Glyn's father worked for British Rail, which enabled the family to travel widely around the country and abroad. As a boy he became interested in the natural world, and although the family home did not have a garden, Glyn learned to cultivate plants and vegetables taking advantage of nearby plots available to residents.

His burgeoning interest in nature and the environment led him to take part in geology field trips, bird-watching, hiking and camping in the nearby countryside. Regular visits to Eastwood Grange at Ashover in Derbyshire provided opportunities for exploration of the natural environment.

Here the early romance between Glyn and his future wife Christine began. They had been at school together from the age of four so they already knew each other well, studying the same subjects with similar interests. At a Christmas reunion in 1971 their friendship took a more significant turn and they were married in 1973 July.

Glyn and Christine had two children, Anthony



**Glyn Marsh at the Mills Observatory, Dundee, after the BAA meeting in 2016 September.**

and Angela, and passed on to them their many interests in nature, the arts and science. Glyn's first interest in astronomy came about when he read an astronomy book belonging to his older sister. When Anthony requested a telescope to view Halley's comet, Glyn's early interest was rekindled and eventually became a lifelong passion for the subject.

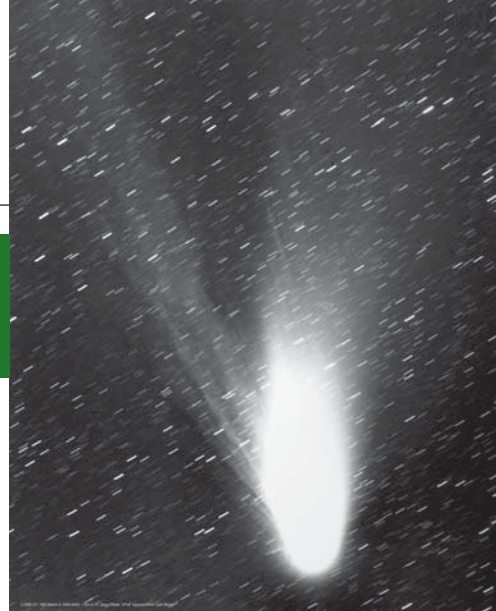
Glyn enjoyed his school days and showed an interest in science from an early age. His eldest sister was his science teacher during his first year at the local secondary-modern school. Because the syllabus subjects avail-

able were restricted he chose to study chemistry 'O' level at night school whilst studying biology at school. He then took a physics 'O' level whilst studying for his 'A' levels at sixth-form college. He had wanted to ensure that he could gain a place at university with the intention of reading plant science, but as a result of a serious motor cycle accident at the age of 17, he was hospitalised for months and the course of his life was changed. He eventually started work as an industrial chemist at the age of 19.

For the next 37 years he worked in the nuclear industry. During that time he studied for a degree in chemistry, a Masters in material science and a PhD in high-temperature corrosion. Travelling abroad to countries where nuclear power plants were established enabled him to visit astronomical observatories in both the northern and southern hemispheres. Taking early retirement gave him the opportunity to move to the Isle of Man where he was able to take advantage of dark skies and spend more time extending his interest in astronomy.

Glyn will be remembered as a very modest but extremely capable amateur astronomer, who observed whenever conditions allowed. He was particularly renowned for his expertise in telescope repair and restoration. He immersed himself in the fabric of the astronomical societies he joined (the BAA, TA, Preston & District AS and the Isle of Man AS) and was a valuable contributing member of each.

He was a veteran comet observer and film photographer, and excelled at these difficult skills. His photographs of the comets Hale-Bopp and Hyakutake, taken in the mid 1990s



**Photograph of Comet Hale-Bopp, C/1995 O1, taken by Glyn Marsh on hypered 4415 film with the Mond astrograph on 1997 March 8.**

using astrograph lenses and large-format film (10×8 inches), were amongst the best and most detailed taken in the UK.

He was a great friend to all, and freely offered his help, advice and expertise to anyone who asked. As a regular attendee at meetings he was always to be seen deep in conversation with observers, discussing instruments and events. A recent outstanding memory of Glyn came at the BAA Comet Section meeting at Northampton in 2013. In front of a fascinated audience he constructed a comet nucleus from frozen raw materials, which showed structure and composition including out-gassing. Anyone who saw the demonstration will never forget it (including the very strong associated smell!).

He had equipped himself with an impressive personal observatory at his Manx home. This included older instruments as well as the most modern-technology telescopes. He was in the middle of a complete restoration of the historic Sir Robert Mond/Cooke astrograph telescope, which he had rescued from destruction in the late 1980s at the Norman Lockyer Observatory in Sidmouth. He had generously agreed with the same observatory to return the restored instrument to them at his own cost. He showed this generosity to all who asked and he will be truly missed by all the good friends he made in the astronomical community over the forty-year period he was involved with it.

A service of thanksgiving was held on 2017 August 25 at Inskip Baptist Church in Lancashire, where tributes were given by Anthony Marsh, Jonny Aiken and Denis Buczynski. The congregation was well in excess of two hundred people, including many family members, old school-friends, members of churches he had attended, work colleagues and neighbours as well as his friends and acquaintances from the astronomical community. Subsequently a funeral service was held on September 1 at the Bethel Church on the Isle of Man, followed by the burial at Santon parish churchyard. There were over a hundred people in attendance including family members, friends and neighbours from the Isle of Man as well as many members and friends from the IOM Astronomical Society.

My thanks for information and details in this note go to Glyn's wife Christine and their son and daughter, Anthony and Angela.

**Denis Buczynski**



**Creating a comet at the BAA Comet Section meeting, Northampton, 2013 May 8. Photo: David Storey.**