



Melvyn Douglas Taylor – visual observer par excellence



Figure 1. Melvyn Taylor relating the story of John Goodricke to attendees of ESOP 2010.



Figure 2. The plaque commemorating John Goodricke. It is on the wall outside the Treasurer's House, along Minster Yard on the northern side of the Minster.

► organisations that make their lighting more sky-friendly. Just as important has been the Commission's success in instilling an awareness of light pollution issues among the non-astronomical public.

Much, however, remains to be done. In 2003, a Parliamentary Science and Technology Select Committee made more than 100 recommendations about improving night lighting, but the Government acted on just one of them: as part of the 2005 Clean Neighbourhoods Act, they declared intrusive light – such as a security light shining into a room – a statutory nuisance. There is still no law in the United Kingdom specifically to protect the night sky. A report by a 2009 Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, titled 'Artificial light and the environment', has not been acted upon. More recently, the LED street lights that have gradually been replacing the old sodium and mercury vapour lamps have proved to be too bright and to produce unnecessary glare. The ongoing saga of Brexit is also making it very difficult to make progress with government bodies.

Lee Macdonald concluded the meeting by thanking all the speakers for five great talks. He also thanked the members of the Newbury Astronomical Society, whose help with running the meeting was essential to making it a success. In particular, he thanked Newbury AS member Nicky Fleet for her wonderful job of catering, including a fine buffet lunch. 🍴

Alex Pratt

Melvyn Taylor, one of the Association's most active visual observers, passed away on 2017 Aug 12, shortly before his 70th birthday.¹ He left a large number of unrecorded observations of variable stars, comets and other objects that were within reach of his small telescopes, and a long-term project is underway to add these to the Variable Star Section's database, the Comet Section's image archive and other Sections' records. Progress reports are published in the Association's newsletters.

After his funeral and cremation, his family wished to find somewhere appropriate for his last resting place and they considered favourite locations from his hill-walking career, such as Ilkley Moor. The Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District were perhaps too far afield and few of us could still ascend to the Hörnli Hut on the Matterhorn.

Their final decision was to choose somewhere in the historic city of York, a place that Melvyn loved to visit, to walk around the old streets, attend the meetings of York Astronomical Society and Yorkshire Philosophical Society, and take a



Figure 3. Melvyn Taylor's resting place, adjacent to York Observatory, Museum Gardens.

professional interest in the architecture of the Minster.

He helped to organise the 2010 European Symposium on Occultation Projects (ESOP) held in York; he was in his element guiding attendees to the plaque commemorating John Goodricke, who discovered and accurately measured the periodicity of Algol (Figures 1 & 2).²

Melvyn's family contacted York Museums Trust and permission was granted for a location in the Museum Gardens, adjacent to York Observatory,³ on condition that no plaque or memorial was allowed. His ashes were interred at the base of an unmarked sapling a few metres south-east of the Observatory, an octagonal building housing a 4-inch Cooke refractor (Figure 3).

If you are visiting York, please go along to the Museum Gardens and Minster Yard, and remember the contributions of two of Yorkshire's most notable variable star observers. 🌌

1 Pratt A., 'Obituary: Melvyn Douglas Taylor (1947–2017)', *J. Brit. Astron. Assoc.*, **127**(5), 307 (2017)

2 Yorkshire Philosophical Society article on John Goodricke: bit.ly/2GipS5C

3 York Observatory: bit.ly/3agJtQY

Notice

Nominations for the Ballot for the BAA Council & Board of Trustees

An election will be held in 2020 October for the Council of the Association and the Board of Trustees. A ballot list will be sent to members with the August *Journal*.

Under the constitution approved in 2015 May, the elected Council comprises the President, Treasurer, three Secretaries, and up to five further members of the Association. Additionally, all Section Directors, Postholders, the elected Board members and the Vice-President (*ex officio*) are automatically members of the Council.

The Board of Trustees comprises the President, Vice-President, Business Secretary, Treasurer and five elected members, all of whom will also be Council members. You can stand for election to Council without being considered for the Board, but you cannot be elected to the Board without also becoming a member of Council.

If you would like to be nominated as a Trustee or a member of Council, you must be a paid-up member. Please ask two other paid-up members to propose and second you and then sign the letter or form yourself to show you are willing to stand. If you wish to nominate someone else, the same conditions apply. If standing as a Trustee, you must confirm that you have read and understood the responsibilities of the Trustees of a Charity as set out on the website of the Charities Commission and that you are prepared to accept and fulfil these responsibilities to the best of your ability.

All nominations must be in writing and sent to the BAA office to arrive by Sunday, 2020 May 10. A suitable form (if wanted) may be downloaded from the BAA website at: britastro.org/nomination2020. Signed and scanned forms or letters may be returned to the office by e-mail [office@britastro.org] or by post.

Bill Tarver, Business Secretary