



Obituary

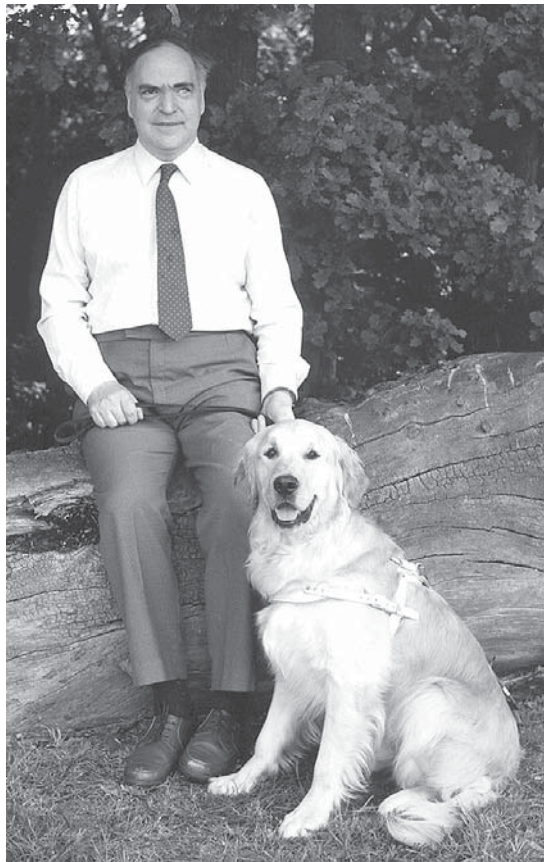
Angus McKenzie, 1933–2005

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Angus McKenzie MBE at the age of 71 after an illness lasting for several months.

Angus was a well respected and long standing member of the Hampstead Scientific Society and the BAA, having joined the HSS at the age of 14 in 1947. He was interested in all aspects of science, in particular, chemistry, radio and above all else, astronomy. As a youthful enthusiast, he was greatly encouraged during the 1950s by the HSS' late astronomy secretary and BAA Curator of Instruments, Henry Wildey.

Angus was born in September 1933 and was educated at St Paul's School, Hammer-smith. He went on to study for City and Guilds in electronic engineering and acoustics, but failing eyesight caused him to abandon the course at the end of the second year. It was typical of Angus, that even the total loss of his eyesight in 1959 did not prevent him from remaining passionately interested in astronomy for the rest of his life. Having joined the British Astronomical Association in his teens, he remained a member until his death and would frequently attend meetings accompanied by his faithful guide dogs Simon and latterly, Ward.

It is often said that the loss of a sense, such as eyesight, leads to the development of other senses to compensate. In Angus'



Courtesy Kirsty McKenzie

case this was clearly demonstrated. He built a career in audio and radio, at first running a recording studio and later becoming an audio and radio consultant. He engineered and produced numerous recordings of classical music and carried out much research into stereo, binaural and quadraphonic sound. He wrote many technical papers and gave

many lectures on topics as diverse as radio and hi-fi, amateur radio, classical music, astronomy and the London underground railway. He broadcast on both radio and television and was the author of many books on the subjects of hi-fi and amateur radio.

His great passion for the London Underground, on which he travelled frequently, led him to produce an auditory guide to the system in 1994 which was available free of charge to blind persons. This innovative guide, a kind of 'sound map', led the user from station to station providing clues as to their location from the pitch of track noises and the different sounds emitted by tube train brakes. I well remember the lecture he gave to the HSS in which he vocalised the different noises made by different makes of tube train and the sounds which they emitted when accelerating, braking and passing over points.

Angus was also a regular speaker and fund raiser for the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association and in recognition for this work he was awarded the MBE in 1997. He was the first blind member of Mensa and was a fellow of the Institute of Electrical Engineers and the Audio Engineers Society.

For many years Angus lived in Finchley in a house crowded with electronic equipment with shelf upon shelf of records and CDs, each labelled meticulously in Braille. I always marvelled that he could find a particular recording instantly. He had a talking computer and the house was equipped with a gigantic rotating radio aerial which could be seen from miles away and was used by him to communicate with fellow radio 'hams' throughout the world.

Angus leaves two daughters, a son and two granddaughters and a multitude of friends, who will mourn the passing of a man who never let a physical disability get the better of him.

Doug Daniels

(Astronomical Secretary, Hampstead Scientific Society)

Erratum – February Journal

We regret an error which occurred in the report of the Ordinary Meeting of 2004 May 26 in the February *Journal*, page 48, where it is incorrectly stated that the speaker said that the currently accepted rotation period of Mercury is 4.4 days. 4.0 (3.995) days is the period of the rotation of the atmosphere of Venus, not Mercury. Our thanks to Dr Roger Griffin for pointing out this error.

New members

The British Astronomical Association cordially welcomes the following new members:

Elected 2004 May 26

- Blackwell** Alan, Nottingham
- Brownridge** Carl Richard, Exeter, Devon
- Colquhoun** Hugh, Clydebank, West Dunbartonshire
- Eziefula** Obiako, London NW9
- Gawthrop** Gary James, Swinton, South Yorkshire
- Gibbons** Ralph, Chesterfield, Derbyshire
- Gibson** Nicholas Martin, Spilsby, Lincs.
- Haddock** David John, Worcester

Hendry John David Robert, Felton, Northumberland

Jones William, Sheffield, Yorkshire

Knowles James, Chesterfield, Derbyshire

Leiper Fiona, Lentrán, Inverness

Loran Michael, London N6

Moffatt Terrence, Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire

Parks Julian, New York, USA

Sinfield Aston, London SW12

Waller Graham, Loughborough, Leics.

Elected 2004 June 26

Beesley David Edward, Belfast

Belfield Mark Jonathan, Weybridge, Surrey