*Obituary*

# Thomas Harry Hope Lloyd–Evans (1940–2014)

The sudden death of the highly respected astronomer Dr Tom Lloyd–Evans on 2014 June 12 at the age of 73 came as a great shock to his family, colleagues and many friends.

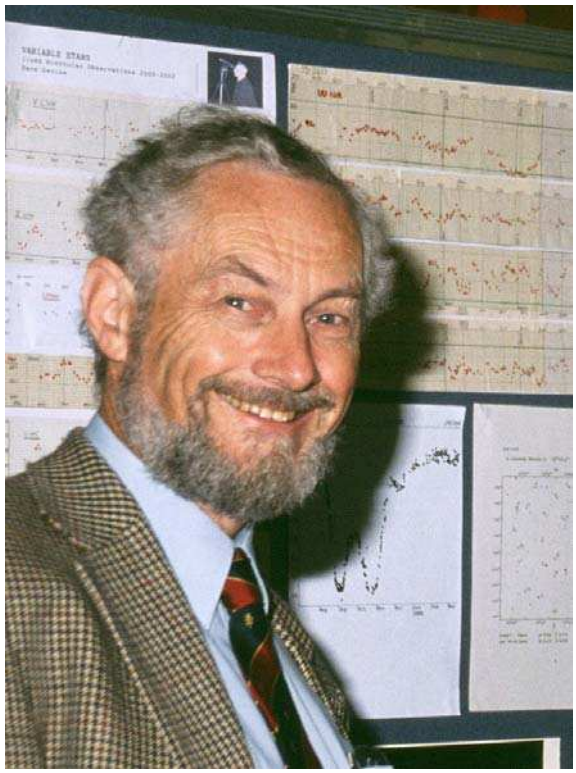
Tom was born at RAF Wilmslow (his father was a founder member of the Royal Flying Corps), brought up in Scotland at Kinnettles near Forfar and educated at Fettes College and then St Andrews University. His astronomical interests were sparked as a schoolboy and never left him.

Tom and his younger brother Robert were encouraged by their parents and teachers to develop model-making skills and intellectual pursuits including astronomy. The boys had a bedroom which had a flat roof with a brilliantly clear sky outlook. From the late 1950s during vacations from school they built wooden box cameras with ex-WD Aero-Ektar lenses, and began meteor and aurora photography.

Tom joined the BAA in 1956, and between 1958 and 1965 he and Robert carried out a systematic programme in which an objective prism was fitted to one of the cameras to capture meteor spectra. It was an outstanding success, with 555 hours of camera work yielding 17 spectra, one of which, a –4 mag Lyrid on 1960 April 22, gave 70 lines. These were measured at the Astronomy Department at St Andrews University, at which Tom was then an undergraduate. This remarkable work was published by the BAA[1] and drew high praise from the then President, and the Director of the Meteor Section, H. B. Ridley. Tom soon became Assistant Director of the Section.

News of this highly accomplished young man soon reached Dundee Astronomical Society and Tom was invited to become a member, thus beginning a long and fruitful association, and his election as an Honorary Member when he left Scotland.

Having completed his PhD in 1966 Tom moved to the Radcliffe Observatory in Pretoria where he spent 6 years using the 74-inch [1.88m] telescope in a variety of photometric



and spectroscopic studies of variable stars. One of his tasks was to compare the performance of the 1-metre James Gregory telescope at St Andrews with that of the half-size pilot model which, the world's first Schmidt–Cassegrain camera, had been installed in the Mills Observatory, Dundee then in St Andrews in the early 1950s.[2] Tom considered the smaller telescope to be superior, size for size.

The radical reorganisation of South African observing facilities in 1974 saw the closure of the Pretoria site and the removal of the telescope to the recently established observing station at Sutherland, 250 miles north-east of Cape Town. Together with other Radcliffe staff Tom transferred to the newly formed South African Astronomical Observatory, the successor to the Royal Observatory and now occupant of its headquarters in Cape Town.

Tom was particularly interested in variable stars, carbon stars and planetary nebulae and among his many achievements was the announcement in 1981 with Ian Glass of a period-luminosity relationship for Mira stars in the Large Magellanic Cloud,[3] and work with an international team investigating polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in old stars, also in the LMC. He had many other interests in South Africa: archaeology, hill-walking, botany, scuba diving to observe the exotic fauna of the tropical seas, and Scottish country dancing, where he met the lady who was to become his wife, chemistry teacher Marlene Hemmes. They married in 1985 and had two children, Robert and Anne.

At 60 Tom retired and brought his family back to St Andrews, to Kinaldy Meadows a few miles south of the town which had clearer skies, and set up a small observatory with a 14-inch [35cm] Meade reflector, to continue astronomy as he had begun, as an amateur, although he was awarded office space and an honorary lectureship at the University which he used to the full. Tom was also a member of the International Astronomical Union. He was an active visual variable star observer who reported thousands of observations to both *The Astronomer* magazine and the American Association of Variable Star Observers, besides many contributions on meteors, aurora and noctilucent clouds.

However he was often frustrated like the rest of us, at the increasing light pollution and cloudiness even in the east of Scotland. If he couldn't observe he would be fiddling with his telescopes making adjustments. He was also very helpful in refereeing papers for the BAA Papers Secretary.

Despite his formidable knowledge and scientific insight Tom was rather shy and modest. He had a slight speech impediment, a quiet hesitant voice which listeners sometimes had difficulty in following so he was not an effective orator, but outstanding in discussion and debate. He had a dry sense of humour and a friendly demeanour.

He was President of the Astronomical Society of South Africa 1991–'92 and an honorary member in 2001, an honorary member of the BAA and a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society.

I am grateful to Roger Wood and Dave Gavine for much help in preparing this obituary.

**Roger Pickard**

1 'Observations of Meteor Spectra', *J. Brit. Astron. Assoc.*, **76**, 229, 231–243 (1966)
2 King H. C., *The History of the Telescope*, London, 1955, 374–377
3 *Nature* **291**, 303–304 (1981)

## New Honorary Members

Congratulations to the following, who have been members of the Association for a continuous period of fifty years at the start of the 2014–2015 session, and therefore now become Honorary Members:

| | | *Date elected* |
|---|---|---|
| Mr | Richard P. Allan | 1963 Nov 27 |
| Mr | Peter J. Byrne | 1964 Jan 01 |
| Mr | Barry Hetherington | 1964 Feb 26 |
| Mr | John E. Isles | 1964 Apr 29 |
| Mr | Anthony Marlow | 1964 Jun 24 |
| Dr | Peter R. Owen | 1963 Nov 27 |
| Mr | George G. Rathbone | 1964 Jan 01 |
| Mr | Robin S. Scagell | 1964 Jun 24 |
| Dr | Denis J. Shaw | 1963 Nov 27 |
| Mr | William C. Smith | 1963 Nov 27 |