

Minutes of the William Herschel Society Committee Meeting held at the Herschel Museum of Astronomy on Monday 9th July 2018 at 7.15pm.

(Note. The next scheduled meeting is on Monday 10th September at the Herschel Museum of Astronomy commencing 7.30pm. Please note change of starting time.)

Present: C Draper (CDr), Chairman; Prof F Ring (FR), Vice President; F Schlesinger (FS); R Holbeche (RH), Treasurer; S Holbeche (SH), Membership and Observing; A Symes (AS), Editor; B Robertson (BR); M Tabb (MT); C Dixon (CDi), BPT Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Museums; J Middleton (JM), Herschel Museum Administrator and J Foreman (JF), Minutes Secretary and website manager.

1. Apologies and Welcome

Dr M Spring (MS). CDr welcomed those present.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7th May 2018

CDr referred to the minutes and asked for any amendments. There were none. Attention was drawn to the Action Table. Most Actions covered under Agenda items but some require comments here.

AS to access website when JF not available. JF and AS have met to discuss and AS is now able to carry out amendments to the website as and when needed.

MT to carry out video/DVD conversions. This was no longer considered to be classified an Action and should be considered Complete.

MT to investigate cost of producing blanks for 7ft telescope. MT gave an update on progress and stated that Bristol Foundry had quoted a price of £1750 for the manufacture of four pairs of speculum metal blanks; each pair a 164mm diameter primary and 30mm diagonal. In addition, two cast iron discs for grinding/polishing tools would be needed if we are to finish some of the mirrors using the replica polishing machine. Including abrasives and pitch, he said that £2000 should be sufficient. Rhoda Morris was happy to pay the cost of two pairs for inclusion in the replica 7ft telescope they are making for Shanghai.

At this point JM referred to the recent donation of two very small forged mirrors by an American Professor and these were passed around the Committee to view. CDi commented that these had been manufactured in accordance with Herschel's notes. (Manufacturer's note on presentation box "Earth Shaker Foundry and Forge). (*Post Meeting Note. The donor of the mirrors is Brad Elder, PhD. Professor of Biology at Doane University, Nebraska whose hobby is making speculum metal mirrors. His maximum size is 125mm diameter, but he is keen to meet our need.*)

CDr to discuss with Carole Mundell a suitable University contact. CDr commented that Carole had joined and taken part in the Museum Advisory Committee and he was therefore more relaxed on this matter. This Action therefore to be considered complete.

AS to investigate firm date for November Bath University Lecture. CDr commented that the arrangements were more for Carole Mundell to arrange. Action on AS no longer required.

SH to copy BA website Privacy Policy note to JF for WHS website. JF commented that SH had amended the WHS website accordingly.

3. Chairman's Report

Professor Carole Mundell and her two colleagues are in contact about selecting the winner of the Caroline Herschel Prize Lectureship, and CDr added that he is

supporting her regarding practical arrangements thereafter, including fixing the date and place of the lecture.

CDr referred to the note of his very interesting discussion with the RAS Librarian about their Herschel Archive, and similar material elsewhere. He added that there is an obvious attraction in putting together a guide to the various sources of material on the Herschels and plans further discussions to that end.

The presentation by and discussion with Will Herschel-Shoreland and his sister Cassie were both very interesting and well timed, as was the follow up smaller meeting. The family are clearly thinking about a range of longer term issues (as are the Herschel Museum) and it has been agreed to stay in touch as thinking develops. CDr added that the next step is a visit by a team from the Museum and he will join them if the dates work.

The Starlit Skies film has now been published and CDr remarked that we can think about how to encourage wider dissemination. JF commented that he had put a link to the film on the “Home Page” of the WHS website; also links advertised through the WHS Facebook Group and Twitter Blog.

4. Finance Report

RH announced that recent expenditures covered the Lina Forged Line Dance and the Starlit Skies film production. She added that money spent compared to this time last year had increased. CDr commented that his view was that when good causes arose we should be financially supportive especially as money kept in the bank attracted little interest.

CDr raised the recurring matter of increasing the membership cost and commented that if RH considered we had reached a point when such a step was advisable, she should notify us.

5. Membership Report

SH gave an update. See Appendix for his written report.

6. Journal

AS reported that he had several things to put in to the next edition. BR suggested that the Minutes of the March AGM and Chairman’s Report should be included. AS replied that he would look at how much material was presently on hand for inclusion and see how much space was available. FR commented that the printers could for example adjust font size if a little extra space was required. JF referred to a message that had been received through the website Contact page, a copy of which had been sent to AS and FS. The person making contact who is also a WHS member, was writing a paper on William Herschel and Germany and had through previous contact with the Society, agreed that it was far too long for the Journal but had put it on “www.figshare.com” under the reference “William Herschel and Germany”. He asked that a reference be included in the next edition. He added that he might produce a shorter more research-oriented version later but suspected that that might also be too long. AS agreed to reply to him. **See Action Table.**

FS raised the matter of disposal of spare copies of the Speculum/Journal that he had accumulated. CDr commented that we should keep a spare copy of each. CDr suggested that the Museum might be able to accommodate them. CDi replied that this was timely as the Museum was in the midst of a clear out but added that the right conditions would be required noting that the vaults, though having plenty of space,

would not be suitable. JM commented that the editions would have useful articles for research and reference. CDi asked how many copies would need to be accommodated. FR replied just over a yard of shelf (*Post Meeting Note. FS has done a recount and the number of copies is 167*). SH asked how far back electronic copies were held by the printers? FR replied that he had several years of editions on his computer.

FS stated that he had 41 copies of Volume 16. CDi commented that JM might be able to sell at half price in the Museum. AS commented that it was always useful to give copies to lecturers. CDr proposed that FS give some 10 or so to AS.

7. Museum

CDi gave an update, with JM. Main points:

*Herschel Museum of Astronomy Forward Plan 2018-2020 has gone to the Museum Education Committee via the Herschel Advisory Group. A few amendments adopted.

*Quite a new Trustee Board. Away Day in September. An opportunity to consider proposals by the Herschel Advisory Group.

*Focus of Herschel Museum Statement of Purpose presently astronomy focused. Needs to be broadened to include Georgian science more widely, include music and beyond William and Caroline Herschel.

*Museum Education Committee has new Chair, Julie Finch, who is also a new Trustee. She wishes to get involved in the various advisory groups.

*September is deadline for the Herschel Museum team to confirm the programme for 2019 in order to start marketing etc. early. Good to include observing events. SH agreed to provide. See Action Table. Opportunity to continue involvement in WHS lectures. Regarding science focused events, FR commented that Prof Mike Edmunds of Cardiff University would be a good contact. CDdr added that just a couple of science related events for the year would be appropriate. Photography theme for next year including infrared photography etc.

*JM reported that Brian May's publishing company would be launching a book on Moon Missions and the Museum could be involved in publicity (as with other books they have published).

*JM referred to the solar gazing event held at the Museum on June 21st which 53 people attended. Tickets are on sale for the upcoming event to observe the lunar eclipse.

*CDi clarified the "Call for content for the British Science Week 2019 Activity Packs produced by the British Science Association" (reference papers circulated to the Committee) and the Museum involvement. This was an opportunity to put something online regarding astronomy subjects that could be downloaded as a pack during Science Week. SH had suggested some subjects and is in touch with Polly on taking forward. CDi emphasised the need for support to raise the profile. There was also a matter of funding that needed to be addressed.

*JM referred to the Science Museum task of moving their storage from the West of London to Walton and whether we had any interest in what they might have. FR commented that the Science Museum had many things of astronomical interest and had one room dedicated to Herschel. He suggested the arrangement of a visit. CDr asked if CDi would be interested in what might be available to the Museum. She said she would speak to Izzy.

8. Lecture Programme

AS referred to his written report. See Appendix .

Additionally, he added that regarding the Peter Ford/Deepali Gaskell lecture, Peter was taking the lead. CDr asked if this could now be considered a firm commitment for 30th November. AS replied that he would confirm with Peter. **See Action Table.**

Regarding a speaker on the subject of light pollution, AS mentioned that BRLSI were running a theme on “Cities” for the first half on next year and this would be an opportunity to show the Starlit Skies video. CDr agreed to discuss with Tom Harper. **See Action Table.**

FR suggested that Professor Brian Warner of the Department of Astronomy, University of Cape Town, would be good choice for the March lecture next year. He added that Prof Warner had written several books on the Herschels at the Cape, visited Southampton frequently and Peter Ford was in contact with him. This suggestion was well received and AS to investigate further. **See Action Table.**

9. Observing Report

SH referred to events held up to the end of June 2018:

19th May at Wellow with 8 attendees

22nd to 24th June at National Trust Top of the Gorge Festival by Space Detectives and with Wells and Mendip Astronomers with 100+ attendees

28th June, talk at Percy Community Centre on Solar Astronomy.

Events that did not proceed due to weather:

12th May planned for Wellow

9th June planned for Wellow

16th June planned for Wellow

SH referred to a recent Royal Astronomical Society Outreach event which he attended. He added that he had found out about a charity called Scopes4SEN and had put St Philip’s Primary Academy in touch with them and the school now possesses 2 entry level telescopes.

He reported that the Southern Area Group of Astronomical Societies (SAGAS) is the pilot for a new initiative across 3 societies to increase Outreach opportunities by organising events and supplying equipment i.e. the IR cameras for their James Webb programme.

SH mentioned the International Astronomical Union 100th Anniversary taking place next year and the funding submission to provide materials for a roadshow of Starlit Skies of 5 local venues which are to be decided.

10. Music

MS had provided an update prior to the meeting:

“As regards music, I am progressing my ideas of a project to produce a catalogue of all Herschel’s music and the family’s activities that would be housed by the Museum and available to scholars online. I have had a meet with Charles on this and we are meeting Claire Dixon in the week after next. I will have more to report on this at the next committee meeting.”

FR spoke of the Countess of Munster (*Minutes note, died Nov. 1979*) who had been a good organist and had at one time played the Bath Abbey organ. Lady Munster had an original collection of Herschel scores and it was hoped that she would donate these in her will to a Bath recipient but instead left them to the Royal College of Organists.

He added that she was a direct descendent of the Herschels. FR suggested that this would be a good time to trace them and would be a good project for one of MS's students. CDr asked FR to pass what information he had onto him. **See Action Table.**

11. Website Report

In addition to the message received via the Contacts page referred to under the Lecture Programme, a message had been received from a lady in Jackson, Mississippi, asking if we could help with the current email address of a Japanese friend. The link with the Society being an article written by the friend that had appeared in an edition of the Speculum a couple of years ago. Thankfully, MT was able to provide information on a useful contact.

The WHS Facebook Group now had 44 members (an increase of 2 since the last meeting) and the Twitter blog, 230 followers (an increase of 16 since the last meeting).

12. AOB

a. FS raised the matter of the WHS advert that is placed in the British Astronomical Association Journal every year at the cost of £86.40 and asked if we should continue the payment. SH commented that most astronomy magazines will include an events notice for free. It was agreed that as there was no evidence of increased membership due to the advert, the payment should stop. FS was asked to pass the BAA contact details to RH to arrange cancellation. **See Action Table.** It was also agreed that RH would be the WHS contact for the BAA. FR to notify BAA. **See Action Table**

b. FS also questioned who should be the contact for the Society for the History of Astronomy. It was agreed that SH would be the new contact. FR to notify SHA. **See Action Table.**

c. JM mentioned that he had found an original tape of the "Sky at Night" broadcast in 1981.

d. BR referred to the latest edition of the Society for the History of Astronomy magazine and some interesting articles that were included.

e. CDr referred to the "Astrofest" he had attended and of a speaker who offered a talk on how William Herschel had seen the rings of Uranus and suggested that he might be a good addition to our programme. CDr agreed to circulate the proposal again for comment. **See Action Table.**

f. SH asked if the Museum had received any visits due to the Sky at Night. JM replied that he was not aware of any.

g. CDr suggested that the start time should be changed to 7.30pm as this would suit some members better. This was agreed,

Future Meeting Dates 2018

10 September

12 November

Please note. Meetings will begin at 7.30pm, instead of 7.15pm.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

Meeting raised	Description of action	Placed on	Status
17.7.17	To access website when JF not available. Download WordPress software.	AS	Complete
20.11.17	To carry out video/DVD conversions	MT	Complete
20.11.17	To investigate cost of producing blanks for 7ft telescope	MT	Ongoing
12.3.18	To discuss with Carole Mundell a suitable University contact	CD	Complete
7.5.18	To investigate firm date for November Bath University Lecture	AS	Removed
7.5.18	To consider JM notes regarding Herschel Museum for next meeting	Committee	Complete
7.5.18	To consider Herschel Museum of Astronomy Forward Plan 2018-2020 and any thoughts by end of May	Committee	Complete
7.5.18	To forward recordings of concerts to MS	MT	Complete
7.5.18	To copy link of website page to SH	JF	Complete
7.5.18	To copy BA website Privacy Policy note to JF for WHS website	SH	Complete
7.5.18	To add BAA website link to "Links" page of WHS website	JF	Complete
9.7.18	To reply to author of article on William Herschel in Germany	AS	
9.7.18	To confirm November Peter Ford lecture	AS	
9.7.18	To discuss with Tom Harper Starlit Skies video for BRLSI Cities theme	CDr	
9.7.18	To investigate Prof Warner as potential speaker	AS	
9.7.18	To pass info re Herschel scores held by Royal College of Organists to CDr	FR	
9.7.18	To pass BAA contact details to RH to arrange cancellation of advert	FS	
9.7.18	To notify BAA that RH new WHS contact	FS	
9.7.18	To notify SHA that SH new WHS contact	FS	
9.7.18	To circulate details of proposed speaker on Herschel observation of Uranus' rings.	CDr	

See Appendices below

Membership Report to 7th July 2018

14 expired memberships of which 1 pending subscription, 1 deceased, 1 insufficient payment and 11 non-renewals.

Paid Membership stands at 253 (excluding 1 pending subscriptions above)

Expiry Year	Membership Type					Grand Total
	Individual (UK)	European Individual	Overseas Individual	Honorary*	Volunteer HMoA (Hon)*	
2018	78	2	4			84
2019	105	6	12			123
2020	5		1			6
2021		1	1			2
2022			1			1
2026	1					1
Unlimited				22	14	36
Grand Total	189	9	19	22	14	253

Payment by Banker's Order for 104 members (48% of annual subscriptions)

Gift Aid declarations/Covenants is place number 108

Email details are held for all but 47 members

Gift Aid returns made to HMRC on 22nd and 23rd May for donations of £1,011.50 and £106.00 respectively for tax year 2017-2018.

Lecture Report to end of June 2018

Lectures since last committee meeting on 7th May:

11th May Dr Roger Moses: The Apprentice – Memories of the Bronze Age of Space Science.

This drew a small but select audience and was a fascinating personal insight into research which started off using Victorian methods and then modernised rapidly.

18th May Prof Mike G. Edmunds: The Great Quasar Debate 1963 – 1984

This was the postponed (snowed off) Annual Lecture and ended up competing with “The Party in the City” at the opening of the Bath Festival. An excellent lecture, throwing light on some larger than life personalities like Fred Hoyle. Some very well-informed questions and contributions from the audience, although a two people remarked to me as they left that it was a bit advanced for them. I wonder if this is a group that we could help with some “introduction to Astronomy lecture talks”?

Coming soon:

13th July Dr Daniel Batchelder - Paler Blue Dots: Technology Developments on ISS for Finding Earth 2.0

7th September Luke Lucas in conversation with Charles Draper – From Caroline Herschel to Mars Express, a career in Space Engineering (title still under discussion)

5th October Terry Ransome – Joint WHS & BIS Lecture: To Mars via Kazakhstan Beagle2, lost on Mars but found 11 years later

? November – University Lecture

30th November - Peter Ford & Deepali Gaskell Hindu contributions to Astronomy (title still under discussion)

Required for BRLSI Cities Theme (Running until June 2019)

A speaker on the subject of light pollution / dark skies relevant to the cities theme?