



*Advancing
Astronomy and
Geophysics*

ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

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**MINUTES OF THE
COUNCIL MEETING
29 MARCH 2012
AT 1300 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER**

1. PRESENT: Professor R.L. Davies, Professor O. Lahav, Professor C. Tadhunter, Professor A.M. Cruise, Dr L. Fletcher, Ms A. Bailey, Dr E. Bunce, Professor Y. Elsworth, Dr R.T. Holme, Professor A.W. Hood, Professor D.W. Kurtz, Professor S. Miller, Professor D.J. Southwood, and Professor R.E. Spencer

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D. Elliott (Executive Secretary); Ms P. Mortimer (Executive Secretary-Designate)

APOLOGIES: Professor M.A. Barstow; Professor K. Blundell; Dr I.A. Crawford; Professor F. Honary; Professor D.W. Hughes; Professor M. Kendall and Dr A. Norton

The President welcomed Pamela Mortimer. He went on to formally record the thanks of the Society to the University of Manchester for hosting a very successful NAM and providing splendid accommodation for the, abbreviated, meeting of Council. He added that the success of the NAM, which was attended by its current and next Presidents, would strengthen cooperation with the German Astronomical Society.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 10 February 2012, were approved with the addition of the following to the final sentence of paragraph 3.2... 'and in any case review the position before the October meeting' and the inclusion of 'University College' before 'London' in paragraph 4.4.

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Professor Southwood reported that, following the success of the Astronomy Forum, and with the encouragement of the CEO of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), he had contacted and, in turn, received positive replies from the Presidents of the Geological, Hydrological, Meteorological and Challenger Societies concerning the creation of a Geophysics Forum. Its purpose would be to bring together senior representatives from the geophysics and geodesy communities (that is, the specialisms covered by the IUGG), to discuss issues of common concern with NERC, the principal funder of relevant research in the UK. The next step would be a meeting to consider how the Forum would be managed.

3.2 Professor Southwood confirmed that Professor James Dungey was most agreeable to the establishment of a 'named' lecture in his name. Imperial College were hoping to mark his 90th birthday in January 2013 with an event with which, Council agreed, it would be desirable to link the

first Dungey Lecture. This would require identifying the lecturer in advance of the other 2013 award winners in December 2012.

3.3 Professor Southwood reported that one of the recipients of the most recent round of RAS Fellowships, Dr Benjamin Joachimi, had withdrawn following his success in obtaining a more substantial award, for which he deserved to be congratulated. This allowed the vacated fellowship to be offered to Dr Sarah Badman, who planned to hold it in Leicester. Council reaffirmed its unwillingness, on grounds of limited resources, to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants who requested it, except in the case of candidates who had been invited to interview.

3.4 The Executive Secretary reported that the RAS-OAD Visiting Experts Scheme had been advertised with an applications deadline of 31st May 2012. In addition to the Executive Secretary, Professor Tadhunter had agreed to represent the Society in the selection process (which would be handled, for the most part, by the OAD in S. Africa)

4. PRESIDENT'S BUSINESS

The President, in view of the constrained time, deferred his business until the May meeting.

5. TREASURER'S BUSINESS

The Treasurer up-dated Council on the status of the tender for the Journals publications contract. He outlined the main features of the existing contract and the short-listing process which resulted, in order to hold more detailed discussions, in site visits to Wiley-Blackwell, the present publisher, and Oxford University Press (OUP). Both publishers had provided impressive proposals which offered significant improvements on the current arrangements. The next stage was to obtain clarification of some outstanding questions from Wiley-Blackwell and OUP - and feedback from university librarians about the relative weight they gave when purchasing journals to price, impact factors and the reputation of the publisher. Professor Cruise concluded by saying he was confident of being able to make a firm recommendation to Council in May. Council underlined the importance, in any new arrangements, of retaining existing subscribers.

6. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

6.1 With some marginal corrections, Council approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2012 which will be presented to the AGM and lodged with the Charity Commission.

6.2 Council approved the composition of the 2013 Awards Panels, noting that responsibility for the James Dungey Lecture would fall to the 'G' panel viz

'A' Awards:

Clive Tadhunter (Chair, nearby galaxies/AGN, observations)
Martin Barstow (Secretary, stellar astronomy, observations)
Katherine Blundell (AGN/stellar jets, observations/theory)
Richard Ellis (Galaxy evolution/cosmology, observations)
Rob Jeffries (Galactic astronomy/brown dwarfs, observations)
Anthony Whitworth (Star formation, theory)
Rene Oudmaijer (Binary star systems, observations)
Sarah Bridle (Cosmology, theory/observations)

'G' Awards:

Farideh Honary (Chair, STP)
Mike Kendall (Earth Science)
Barry Parson (Earth Science)

Lyndsay Fletcher (Secretary, Solar)
Emma Bunce (Solar)
Andrew Fazerkerly (STP)
Steve Miller (Planetary)
Silvia Dalla (Solar)

7. PUBLICATIONS

The report of the GJI Editorial Board was noted. It was observed that any departure from the long established practice of passing the cost of publication to subscribers, rather than by imposing page or author charges, would pose severe problems for the viability of both of the Society's research journals.

8. OTHER

8.1 The minutes of the A&G meetings of 10 February & 9 March 2012 were approved and signed.

8.2 In receiving the Officers Report for February 2012 Council noted the exceptionally high number of applications for under-graduate bursaries which, probably, was related to the decision of the Nuffield Foundation to discontinue its equivalent awards. Following a brief discussion about the pros and cons of rationing bursaries by institution and some expression of annoyance with 'proxy applications' submitted by colleagues on behalf of non-fellows, the Chair of the Grants Panel, Professor Cruise, undertook to review the operation of the Scheme and report to Council in May.

The following candidates were elected to fellowship:

Surname	First Name
Acreman	David
Bennett	Simon
Bersier	David
Bochinski	Jakub
Braviner	Harry
Chaston	Ian
Conselice	Christopher
Desai	Pragna
Evans	Gary
Haynes	Christopher
Hunt	Jason
James	Matthew
Jasinski	Jamie
Karl	Sandra
Kovieraite	Ilona
Malapaka	Shiva
Margree	Sarah
Mingarelli	Angelo
Muff	Darren
Nalson	Ellie
Pearson	Richard
Prise	Ailsa
Rahimi	Awat
Relf	Graham
Rosslowe	Christopher
Scaife	Anna

Smedley	Sarah
Smith	Matthew
Smith	Christina
Thomson	Stephen
Timmins	John
Watkinson	Catherine

9. AOB

9.1 Council was invited to send comments to the Policy Officer, Dr Massey, on the Society's draft paper, tabled for information, which would be submitted to the Higher Education Commission inquiry into postgraduate education.

9.2 Council noted with some disappointment that, owing to space limitations, student posters could not be exhibited for the entire duration of the Manchester NAM and instead were displayed in 2 consecutive sessions. This had impeded the judges from making direct cross comparisons between posters in different sessions and reduced the time available to speak to poster presenters.

Council rose at 1355

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R.L. Davies
President

11 May 2012