

# **MEXBOROUGH & SWINTON ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY**

## **Annual Report & Statement of Accounts**

For the year to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2007

# Annual Report for the year ended March 31<sup>st</sup> 2007

## **Trustees' Report**

The Trustees of Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society are pleased to submit their report and accounts for the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007.

Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society is a registered charity governed by a constitution.

This Report and the attached Accounts comply with all current statutory requirements, the Society's Constitution and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (Revised 2005)".

## **Charitable Objects**

The object of the Society is the advancement of education for the public benefit in astronomy and its associated sciences.

## **Organisation & Governance**

The Society is run entirely by a membership of volunteers, who pay an annual membership subscription and are not eligible for reimbursement of any out-of-pocket expenses. It is an unincorporated association governed by a constitution (last amended February 2004) and managed by an Executive Committee (the Charity Trustees) who are elected annually by and from amongst the membership.

The Executive Committee meet once per month and decisions are made on a simple majority basis unless Constitutional or legal requirements mandate a greater majority. The Executive Committee members also have powers and spending limits within their specific areas of responsibility which they may exercise without prior consultation; however all actions and spending must be reported to the next meeting of the trustees.

## **Related Organisations**

The Society is a member of the Federation of Astronomical Societies (FAS), a national body established to promote co-operation between astronomical societies and provide information and advice to its members.

Two trustees of Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society, Mr O'Dell and Mr Gawthrope, serve on the Council of the FAS; Mr O'Dell as Membership Secretary and Mr Gawthrope as Website Co-ordinator.

The Society made a subscription payment to the FAS of £52.50 in the year and also purchased additional Public Liability cover, to cover events held away from the Observatory and meeting room, as part of a group scheme at a cost of £40.

The Society's meeting room is a rented room in the Swinton Working Men's Club & Institute (SWMC). It is a requirement of the SWMC that all adult members of the Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society must be members of the SWMC. Subscription payments totalling £47 were made to SWMC, in addition room rent was paid in the amount of £550.

The Observatory is built on land rented from Yorkshire Water Services for an annual rent of £50.

## **Review of the Year**

### **The International Year of Astronomy 2009**

The Society welcomes the announcement that 2009 is to be designated The International Year of Astronomy (IYA2009). This will be a global celebration of astronomy and its contributions to society and culture, stimulating worldwide interest not only in astronomy, but in science in general. The official slogan of the IYA2009 is "The Universe: Yours to Discover"; this sentiment aligns perfectly with the objects of the Society.

Whilst plans are only at a very early stage the Society intended to play a full and active part in supporting IYA2009 in the UK and will work with the wider UK amateur astronomical community through the FAS to develop and promote this event.



## **New Horizons**

The New Horizons project represents a major medium-term project for the Society; at its core the project entails a capital outlay of circa £65,000 to replace the existing telescope and drive with a high-quality research grade instrument with computer control and digital imaging facilities.

As reported last year the New Horizons fund-raising initiative commenced in March. Society member Andrew Devey undertook a sponsored bench press achieving 104 repetitions (target 100) of 100kg; this raised total sponsorship of £1491.

Other fundraising activities have included the development of astronomical CDs and postcards which are offered for sale at the Society's Community Access and Public Outreach events. To date 1 CD and a 4 of photographic prints are available for sale; with 3 further CDs are under development. Income from this source in the year to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2007 was £319

Whilst the fundraising efforts have been significant and successful grant-based funding will be sought to allow delivery of the New Horizons project at the earliest opportunity; ideally the project would be delivered for IYA2009.

## **Observatory Enhancement**

The planned work to automate the observatory shutter opening and closing was not completed over the summer of 2006 as anticipated in the Society's Annual Report to Mach 31<sup>st</sup> 2006. It is now expected that installation and commissioning will take place over the summer of 2007.

## **Weekly Meeting Programme**

The weekly meeting programme is a core activity of the Society. The meetings feature slide shows and presentations delivered by both professional and amateur guest speakers and members of the Society; occasionally a meeting is given over to a quiz or video presentation. Attendance by both members and visitors has remained consistently high.

## **Membership**

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 membership of the Society totalled 49; 3 new applicants were accepted in the year: Nicholas Reynolds, Michael Crowley, and Leslie Mason. The Society extends a warm welcome to all new members.

It is with great sadness that the Society notes the passing away of our member and friend Frank Harrison on July 30. Frank joined the Society in 2003 and in his time with the Society he demonstrated constant enthusiasm for and commitment to our objectives and became a greatly valued and respected member who will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

## **Accommodation**

The Society's landlords, SWMC, instigated a review of our tenancy which led to the imposition of rent payments of £50 per calendar month after protracted and at times difficult negotiations. The agreement reached limits future changes in rent payments to retail price index increases. Whilst the trustees fully appreciate the commercial and financial pressures on SWMC the new rent payments do represent a significant increase, £600 per annum, on the Society's operating costs. The trustees feel however that the advantages offered by a permanent base for the exclusive use of the Society justify this sum; it is unlikely that even occasional room hire could be obtained for the same cost.

The Society remains concerned however that commercial pressure may force the closure or sale of SWMC; the effects of the smoking ban introduced by the Health Act 2006 on a venue such as SWMC are still unknown.

## **Community Access & Public Outreach Programme**

The Society once again operated its Community Access Programme (CAP) with public viewing evenings between September and March and a programme of Sunday afternoon solar viewing events over the summer. Unfortunately many of the events for which visitors have to pre-book suffered from poor weather conditions which led to poor attendance on some of the events.

Public interest in the Society's CAP between September and December was not so high as might be desired; however interest did increase in the latter half of the programme between January and March. The level of interest from school and community groups is very encouraging; groups have visited from Abbey Special School (Kimberworth), North Wheatley C of E Primary School, and

Wickersley School and Sports College. The latter group had the content of their evening tailored to the A level physics syllabus.

In addition to regular scheduled evenings special events were added to the programme such as the occultation of Saturn by the Moon on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007 and the lunar eclipse on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007.

Several members undertook a Solar Sunday programme at locations across South and West Yorkshire as well as the observatory. Whilst income was less than hoped the events raised the profile of the Society with the public as well as providing a pleasant social event for the members involved.

CAP events continue to be an important source of income; in the year to March 31<sup>st</sup> income from our CAP and public outreach income totalled £446.



Visitors enjoying the Saturn Special event

### **Website Development and Exploitation**

The Society launched an online image gallery to make its website more visually appealing and to act as a showcase for members' work. In addition an interactive sky chart tool has been developed; these represent the first phase of developing greater astronomical web content.

An astronomical online store has been developed under the Amazon Associates programme. Revenue from the Society's web affiliate programmes in the year to March 31<sup>st</sup> was £123 from Amazon and £180 for TradeDoubler

### **Health & Safety**

SWMC recently undertook a full fire risk assessment of the building and raised some concerns with the Society. As a result all electrical appliances have undergone Portable Appliance Testing (PAT), a number of members are qualified to undertake PAT testing and have kindly offered their services free of charge.

Firelec Safety Co. Ltd. have kindly offered to provide regular checks of the observatory and meeting room fire extinguishers and to install at the observatory a fire alarm, sensors, and call points, to BS6389 Part 2(2002) – it is anticipated this will be installed and commissioned in the near future. These services are to be provided at no cost to the Society for which the Society is very grateful.

There have been no accidents or injuries to members of the Society or visitors at the meeting room, observatory, or external event managed by the Society.

### **Strategic Aims**

The primary aim of the Society in the short to medium term remains as stated previously: to secure the necessary funding to implement the New Horizons project. In addition to the on-going fundraising initiatives further grant making programmes will be investigated and pursued.

The Society will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008, the following year as already noted is IYA2009; the next UK National Astronomy Week (NAW) is also planned for 2009. These events all provide opportunities to raise the profile of the Society and further the objects of advancement of astronomy and its associated sciences; a key aim therefore is to prepare for and maximise these opportunities.

### **Financial Policies & Commentary**

#### **Financial Management and Reserves Policies**

The Society has a Financial Management Policy which defines the controls to be implemented to ensure that the Society's assets are secure. This policy meets the requirements of the Charities Act 1993, the Charity Commission guidelines "Internal Financial Controls for Charities" and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (Revised 2005)".

The Society is currently operating with two funds. The General Fund is an unrestricted fund which is used for the day-to-day operation of the Society such as subscription and community access

programme income, operating costs and utility bills. The New Horizons fund is a restricted fund opened in 2006 in order to support the New Horizons project fund-raising initiative; it receives donations from New Horizons specific fund-raising activities and any grants secured. When making public appeals for the New Horizons project the trustees have made provision that any surplus in the New Horizons fund on completion of the project may be transferred to the General Fund to further the objects at the trustees discretion or retained within the New Horizons fund to offset increases in operating costs arising from the capital investment which the project entails.

The Society operates with an unrestricted reserve at a level set by the trustees; currently this is £1,000. The reserve is held to allow the Society to offset fluctuations in income receipts and short term cash flow variation and to provide for contingencies. Reserves are held without any exposure to the stock market.

At March 31<sup>st</sup> 2007 the General Fund had a balance £1,667, slightly higher than the reserve level stated, however the reserve policy is due to be reviewed once the 2007/8 subscription renewal cycle is completed in April 2007 and the Society has arranged suitable insurance cover in August 2007 when the current long-term undertaking with Ansvar Insurance is due to expire. Recent increases to the cost of the meeting room at SWMC, noted above, have also driven the need to review the current reserve policy. Given these factors the trustees felt it justified and prudent to maintain a slightly higher reserve pending a full review; any surplus remaining after that review will be transferred to the New Horizons fund to support that project.

### **Financial Performance**

Financial performance in the year to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2007 has been broadly consistent the trustee's forecasts and expectations.

The Society enjoys a sound financial base following a major overhaul of subscriptions and fees undertaken in February 2004; the core operating expenditure required was on target to be met by subscription and fee income, however following the SWMC tenancy review this fell some £550 short.

Total income receipts to unrestricted funds are again consistent with last year this is illustrated by the graph on the following page. Expenditure is also consistent with the notable exceptions that last year included significant and atypical expenditure on Meeting Room and Observatory Development.

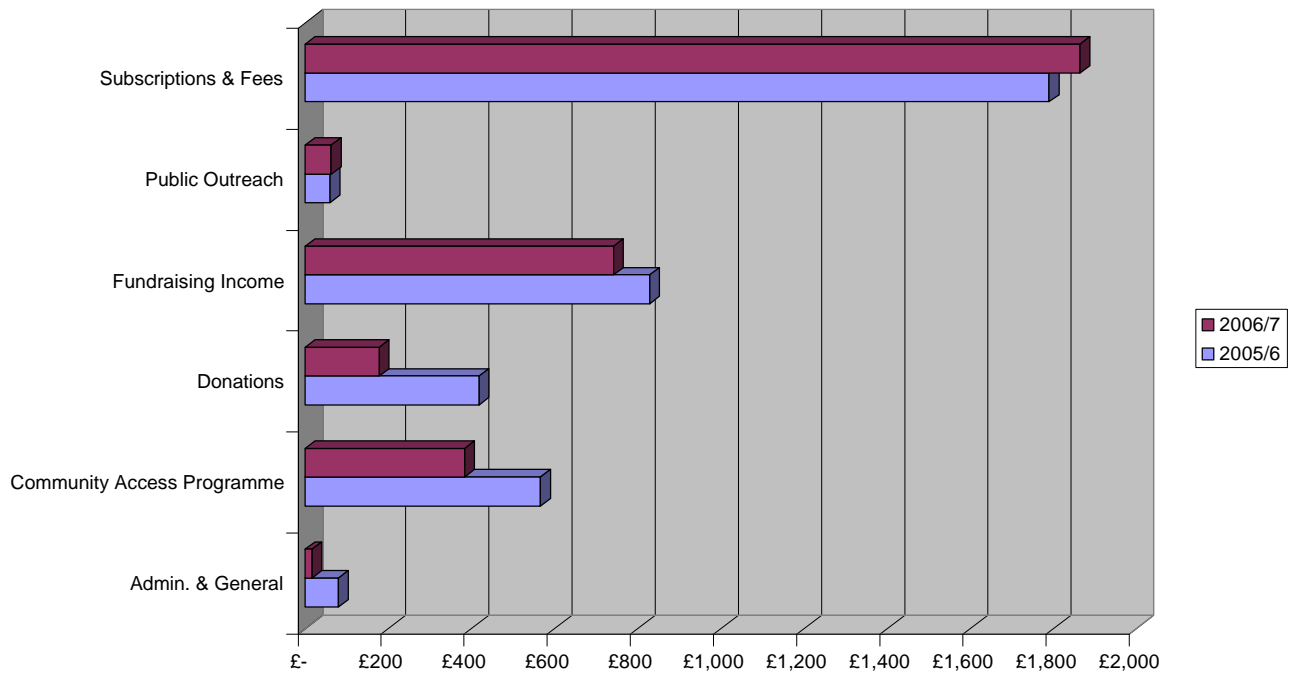
The Society receives a great deal of support in kind from the members. Members invest many hours in preparing the entertaining and informative presentations they give; though it is difficult to establish an average for the time invested a conservative estimate of 8 hours to prepare and deliver a presentation would not be unreasonable. As members cover 40 weekly meetings per year this totals some 320 hours per annum. The trustees also invest considerable time and effort both in preparing for and attending formal meetings, and discharging the duties of their individual offices. Whilst the effort will vary according to the demands of business and some officers such as the Chair, Treasurer, and Librarian are required to fulfil duties at all weekly meetings a monthly average of 20 hours per trustee would be a fair estimate (a total of 2,880 hours per annum). This time is given freely and is therefore not included as value in the accounts; however at the National Minimum Wage (£5.35 per hour) the total time invested voluntarily would be valued in excess of £17,120 per year; the true value to the Society is of course much greater than this.

In addition to time members routinely make material donations such as library items, or prizes for fund-raising raffles. Furthermore many costs such as internet hosting and stationary, printing, or postage costs are not reclaimed from the Society, reducing operating expenditure.

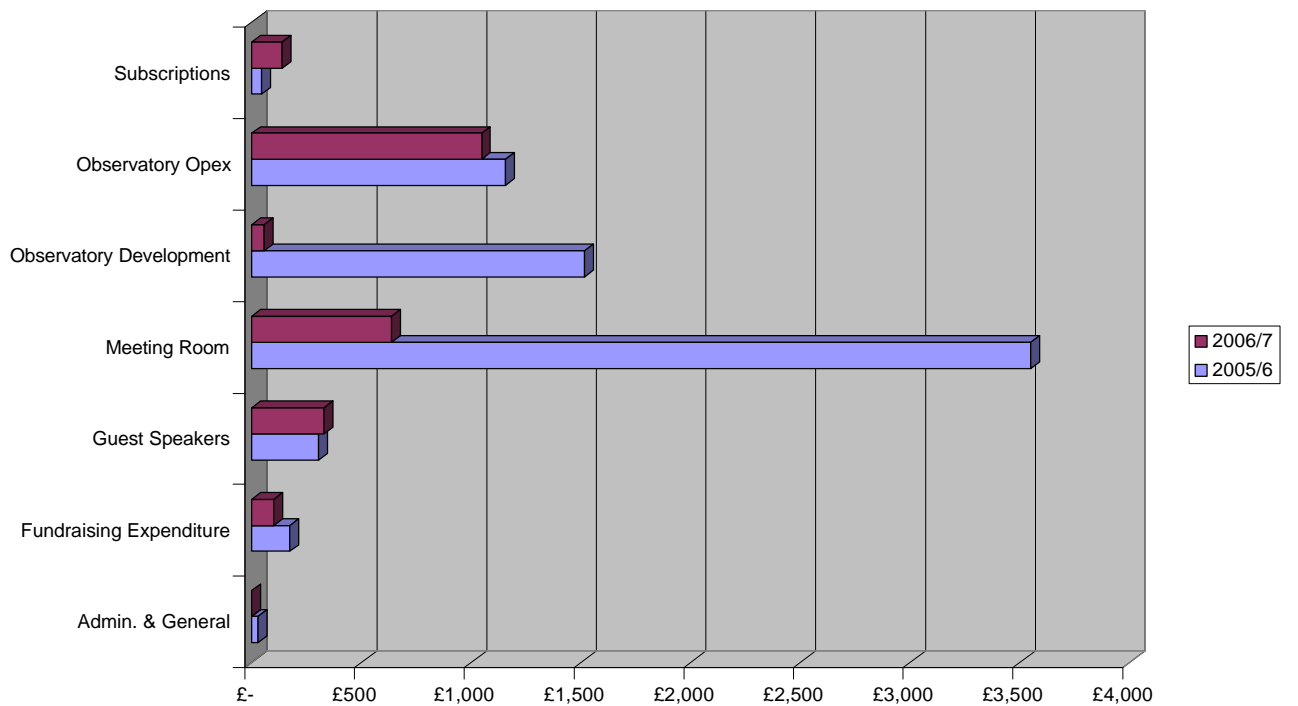
### **Major Risks**

The Trustees have not identified any major risks to which the Society is exposed.

## General Fund Income Comparison



## General Fund Expenditure Comparison



## **Charity Trustees**

Dr Allan Chapman	<i>Honorary President</i>
Mr Leslie Holmes Marsden	<i>Chair</i>
Mr Shaun O'Dell	<i>Secretary</i>
Mr Gary James Gawthrope	<i>Treasurer</i>
Mr Michael John Waterfield	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
Mrs Joyce Mary Botterill	<i>Librarian</i>
Mr Joseph Jones	<i>Observations Officer</i>
Mr Glenn Michael John Marsden	<i>IT Officer</i>
Mr Anthony John Morris	<i>Curator of Instruments &amp; Observatory</i>
Mr Philip John Muffett	<i>Programme Co-ordinator</i>
Mr Ben Callear	
Mr Michael Kerry Collinson	
Mr Barry Jackson	

Joseph Jones resigned from the position of Observations Officer on September 19<sup>th</sup> 2006; the post was left vacant. The Society would like to note its gratitude to Mr Jones for his efforts on its behalf.

## **Charity Number**

Registered Charity in England & Wales, N<sup>o</sup>.1064103

## **Principal Address**

147 Queen Street  
Swinton  
Mexborough  
South Yorkshire  
S64 8NG

## **Bankers**

National Westminster Bank Plc.  
Bank Street  
Mexborough  
South Yorkshire  
S64 9QE

## **Insurers**

### **Broker**

Access Insurance Services  
50 Chapel View  
South Croydon  
Surrey  
CR2 7LF

### **Underwriter**

Ansvar Insurance Company Ltd.  
Ansvar House  
St. Leonards Road  
Eastbourne  
East Sussex  
BN21 3UR

Approved and adopted by a meeting of the Executive Committee on May 9<sup>th</sup> 2007 and signed on their behalf



L.H. Marsden  
Chairman

# Accounts for the Year to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2007

## Receipts & Payments Account

	Unrestricted Funds to nearest £	Restricted Funds to nearest £	Total Funds to nearest £	Last Year to nearest £
<b>Receipts</b>				
Admin. & General	16	50	66	80
Community Access Programme	384	-	384	566
Donations	178	430	609	1,303
Fundraising Income	742	2,951	3,693	1,034
Public Outreach	62	-	62	60
Subscriptions & Fees	1,864	-	1,864	1,790
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>3,246</b>	<b>3,432</b>	<b>6,678</b>	<b>4,832</b>
<b>Payments</b>				
Admin. & General	-	-	-	30
Fundraising Expenditure	100	-	100	173
Guest Speakers	332	-	332	305
Meeting Room	640	-	640	3,549
Observatory Development	57	-	57	1,518
Observatory Opex	1,048	-	1,048	1,157
Subscriptions	140	-	140	45
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>2,317</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,317</b>	<b>6,777</b>
Net of receipts/(payments)	929	3,432	4,361	(1,944)
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
Cash funds last year end	740	1,091	1,831	3,727
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>4,522</b>	<b>6,192</b>	<b>1,831</b>



## Statement of Assets and Liabilities

### Cash Assets

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
Nat West Current	599	852	1,450
<i>Add: Cheques not cleared at bank</i>	32	-	32
Nat West Savings	866	3,649	4,515
Transfer Account	10	-	10
Petty Cash	195	11	206
PayPal	-	10	10
<b>Total Cash Funds</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>4,522</b>	<b>6,224</b>

### Other Assets held for functional use

All assets shown belong to the Unrestricted (General) Fund

#### **Observatory - built c. 1990**

Building and contents including astronomical telescope and associated sundries insured value. Includes members' key sets. £ 55,300

#### **Solar Max Telescope (purchased June 2003)**

Coronado 60mm Solar Max Telescope with H-alpha filter	£	3,154
Eyepiece set for Solar Max	£	246
Orion optics field tripod	£	289
GPDx Mount	£	695
Sky Sensor 2000	£	859
Dovetail plate and counterweight	£	54

#### **Meeting Room (Rented) Contents**

Dell Inspiron Laptop (450MHz, purchased 2000)	£	1,600
Phillips Data Projector (purchased 2000)	£	3,500
Overhead projector (purchased 1996)	£	300
Kodak Slide Projector (purchased 1996)	£	1,300
Panasonic AG7350 SVHS video recorder (s/h price)	£	1,000
DVD Player	£	60
Amplifier	£	20
Library	£	1,800
(books, videos, CD-ROMs; all in good condition, items of varying age)		
Furnishings (purchased 1999)	£	500
	<b>£</b>	<b>70,677</b>

## Notes

### Trustees' Expenses

No expenses were paid to any of the Trustees during the year, except to reimburse them for purchases made on behalf of the Society.

### Trustees' Indemnity Insurance

No charitable funds have been used to purchase insurance to indemnify the Trustees against the consequences of any neglect or default on their part.

### Accounting Policies

Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society is a registered charity and as such is governed by the Charities Act 1993. Under this Act and the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2000, it is classified as a small charity since it has neither gross income nor total expenditure of more than £100,000 per annum. Section 42(3) of the Act therefore entitles this charity to take advantage of the more limited and simplified presentation of its financial statements. As a result of this and to be consistent with previous years, only a Receipts and Payments Account has been prepared and presented.

Bank Interest is included in the Admin & General category.

All Income, including grants and investment income is recorded when received.

All Expenditure is recorded when paid.

Gift aid reclaimable on donations is included in the amounts of income once received

### Basis of Valuations

Valuations have been provided for assets held for functional use; where possible the brand new purchase price/replacement cost is given. If this is not readily available a second-hand purchase price is given.

### Independent Scrutiny

In the year ended March 31<sup>st</sup> 2007 neither the total expenditure nor the gross income of the Society exceeded £10,000 and there is therefore no requirement for independent scrutiny of these accounts.

### Cheques not cleared at bank at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 the following cheques, with a total value of £32, had not cleared at the bank:

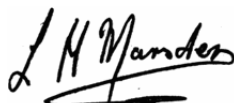
313 (12 January 2006) Sue Cartwright £10

328 (21 September 2006) Sue Cartwright £10

341 (22 March 2007) Chris Watson £12

For comparison, the value of cheques not cleared at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 was £50.

Approved and adopted by a meeting of the Executive Committee on May 9<sup>th</sup> 2007 and signed on their behalf



L.H. Marsden

Chairman