

## 2014 AGM draft Minutes

10/11/2014 7.30pm in the Barber Hall

Minutes of 2013 AGM were agreed and signed after a comment from the floor asked that thanks to past Directors, Mike Gillard, David Knight & Dave Lee be added. The Chairman stated that thanks from the Board on behalf of the Members had been sent to both individuals at the time of their stepping down, so was content to have this note added.

The minutes of the 2013 AGM were agreed and signed.

### NLO AGM 10th November 2014 -- draft Minutes

Chairman's Welcome. Thanks for coming along to the 2014 NLO AGM. We intend to repeat the format of last year and devote the whole evening to NLO Business, with reports from our varied interest groups following elections to the board. We will have a coffee break at half time when the votes will be counted. Many thanks to Mike and Peter for being our tellers tonight. Can I just say we very much welcome members putting themselves forward as candidates for the Board. I think it is very healthy for a society such as ours to have a regular influx of new Directors, each with new ideas, aspirations and experience, so thanks very much to all who have put themselves forward.

Chairman's Report. (Current membership = 302 paid up members) You will have all seen my *[written]* report, so I won't elaborate too much on that, suffice to say that I hope all members are satisfied that the NLO remains in good heart. Our visitor numbers are being maintained and our three main public outreach events of this year were all well attended. Our NSEW Family Day event in March so ably supported by Colyton Grammar attracted a great audience on the day. NSEW is always a bit of a mouthful so you will be glad to hear that this year it is being condensed to British Science Week. Next year we shall be holding it on March 14th and Sarah Usher has just confirmed that Colyton are very happy to support us again. Our Astronomy Fair was another roaring success, but I shall leave the reporting of that to Kate Nursey later on this evening. Sidmouth Science festival has now just completed its third season and this one was probably its most successful to date. I think the NLO's participation in this event is very important. Not only does it re-affirm our community links but this event also widens our horizons. It's refreshing to see Lego robots and jet cars enter the astronomical domain and reminds us that we are about science communication in general and shouldn't restrict ourselves to the stars! So a big thanks to Dave Bramley and the Sidmouth Science Festival team for all their input. As I mentioned in my report we were sorry to see the departure of the Radio Group from the NLO. We had thought that differences of opinion had been resolved after fairly exhaustive discussions with Radio Group members by Derek and Kathleen following on from last year's AGM. Unfortunately, that was not the case and they made a unilateral decision to reform as Sidmouth Amateur Radio and now operate from the Thorn Golf Centre. Although the radio rooms are currently being used for storage, if there is sufficient interest we would be willing to support a reformation of the NLO Radio Group. As you know Dave Lee has resigned as editor of the NLO News and Pete Youd has very kindly agreed to take on the role. We have also sadly seen the demise of the monthly "what's on" letter which was produced by Roger Davies. We are looking for volunteers to restart that one as well. Lastly a few words of thanks that weren't expressed in my report. First of all, we have now received a very generous donation of £5000 from the estate of John Pope. We were all very saddened to hear of his passing just before our astronomy fair in August. As you all know John was an accomplished telescope engineer and we have a lot to thank him for. As Gerald White says, "if it was not for John Popes support in the early days the NLO would probably not exist today". We were glad we were able to say our good byes to John at the wake that was fittingly held here at the NLO for his family and friends. The directors feel that John's legacy should be put towards some specific goal or project, and so we are inviting you the members to come up with some suggestions. Answers on a post card please, as to what you would consider to be the most fitting tribute by which to remember John. The directors will consider all entries but will make the final decision. I should also like to thank John Capon from Otter Windows who donated a complete new sound system and speakers for us. This is a major upgrade which now operates free from the crackle and pop which we suffered from the old system. Speaking of upgrades I should also mention a welcome improvement to the WIFI network here. Alan Green succeeded after much hand wrenching to get us a fibre optic broadband supply and our IT group of Dave Jones, Stephen Walker and Alan Shuttleworth undertook a major improvement of the WIFI network which is now password protected and is now accessible from all nooks and crannies of the NLO grounds. From time to time we receive very generous

donations not so much in monetary value but priceless in terms of historic value. A few weeks ago Deidre Forman came to visit us bearing gifts of wonderful photo albums of James Lockyer's eclipse trips. Her great aunt Kitty was married to James. Not only are there photo albums but there are also a wonderful collection of post cards written by James to his adopted son Desmond Cleeve. James was his uncle and adopted his nephew when Desmond's mother Josephine died 6 weeks after childbirth. Unfortunately Desmond lost his life in WW2 otherwise he may have followed his father and have ended up as an NLO director. Much work goes on behind the scenes at the NLO. Keeping the wheels turning of our historic telescopes is no mean feat, so many thanks to Allan Brittan our chief telescope engineer and also Brian, Peter and Derek who have done wonders with the planetarium and siderostat but have also carried out much improvements to the 20" in the Connaught dome. And my final vote of thanks goes to you the members who help out at all our events. Remember the society is not only about enjoying and enthusing in astronomical matters but also about spreading the word and engaging in science communication -- particularly with the young. By all accounts the next generation are in for a rough time and need to be scientifically literate to cope with environmental problems heading our way. To my fellow directors thanks for your help and advice over the last year, and a big thank you to our retiring Directors Alan Martin and Kate Kay. You have both given so much to the NLO in terms of advice, time and dedication, but I'm quite sure that we'll still see a lot more of you. Kate has very kindly agreed to facilitate a Members Forum, about which you will hear more later. I should also like to give notice that I intend to retire as Chairman in a year's time. I've been in the seat for 5 years now and I think it healthy for the NLO that someone else takes a turn at the helm. So please don't be shy, it's a very rewarding job, if anyone wishes to take over you have a year to think about it!

David Strange     Chairman

#### Chairman's written Report

We've had another busy year at the NLO and are indebted to all those supportive NLO members who show up regularly to staff our events. In reviewing our calendar for the year, we have had 36 School and Group bookings, 27 Open evenings and 13 open afternoons as well as our regular three main open days of the year. Our NSEW event in March was well attended with support from Colyton Grammar with their excellent hands on activities room, storytelling from Michael Maudsley, and a great talk about the Space Shuttle from Rolf Williams. We were also very pleased to be able to support the Afterglow Theatre group from Exeter University who gave a very impressive acoustic performance in the planetarium. The South West Astronomy Fair in August repeated its success of prior years with a larger marquee this year. Many thanks to Kate for the very smooth running of this event. Now in its 9th year, this event all seems to go like clockwork. We were blessed with good weather on the day and with everyone's help were able to dismantle it all before the storm hit on the Sunday. Our next full day event is during Sidmouth Science Festival Week which runs from 12th --19th October. Our themed day on 19th October is entitled "Past, Present & Future". We are very grateful to the Sidmouth Science Festival committee for help in organising this event and are very pleased for the NLO to be involved. Full details can be found on [www.sidmouthsciencefestival.org](http://www.sidmouthsciencefestival.org)

The board were very sorry to see the departure of the Radio Group from the NLO. This has largely been as a result of conflicting interests between the Radio Group and the Radio Astronomy Group. One can fully understand the Radio Group's desire to be able to transmit over the entire radio spectrum as their license allows them to do so. However, one can equally understand the Radio Astronomy Group's need to operate in a radio quiet zone free from VHF interference. I would like to thank the NLO Radio Group for their past contributions and support of the NLO and wish them well in establishing a new group in the Sidmouth area. I would also hope that in time an NLO radio group will reform using HF bandwidth and perhaps with more of an interest in radio science. Thanks were and had been expressed to past Directors, David Knight, David Lee and Mike Gillard when they stepped down.

Our Friday evening sessions are as busy as ever. There are currently 5 young Astro Scouts and Kathleen organises a varied programme where they embark on graded learning curve progressing from Sky Explorer, Sky Cadet to Astro Ranger. We are always willing to take on new astronomy enthusiasts so please contact Kathleen directly if you have a budding astronomer in the family. The Observers Group have held a really interesting program throughout the year which has been masterminded by Sandy and Kerry. During the year our Spitz planetarium has undergone extensive maintenance work, and thanks to Derek, Brian and Peter it is now operating at its best ever. The other

good news to report is that we have been donated a Spitz A3P from Wynyard Planetarium. This is believed to be the same vintage as ours and will stand us in good stead as a supply of spare parts for many years to come. Our telescope maintenance team have also given the siderostat a thorough upgrade. It now has a smart new run-off shed and a redesign of the light path gives a really prominent display of the solar spectrum complete with easily-visible dark Fraunhofer lines. The regular monthly video presentations from Steve Boyce pays tribute to the excellent work carried out by our astro-imagers. As technology marches on our targets become more varied and detailed, it must be only a matter of time until we make a discovery.

The science output from the Lockyer Technology Centre is to be commended. The NLO are now part of the UK Meteor Network <http://www.ukmeteornetwork.co.uk/about-ukmon/> and are regularly supplying data on radar and video recordings of meteors. Our detections of bright fireballs have received worldwide acclaim on the news channels. We are also monitoring activity on the Sun on Very Low Frequency radio to obtain early warnings on Coronal Mass Ejection events. Ken Bailey has had success in installing a magnetometer and so we are also monitoring the Earth's magnetic field looking for geomagnetic storms.

The Met Group now have a wonderful widescreen display in the LTC of the global weather status from Meteosat. This is a high resolution display showing animations of the progress of storms and weather systems over the entire globe. I would also like to remind members that all are welcome to attend the NLO History of Science Group on the first Tuesday of every month at 2.30pm when George Wilkins arranges a varied selection of historical talks covering all aspects of science.

On the educational side during the past year, our Introduction to Astronomy and Introduction to Basic Astro-Imaging courses have been well attended. Please look at our website for details of courses we are running this autumn. Our thanks must go to Kate and our regular band of presenters who offer such interesting days for our visitors.

As an organisation with charitable status we are always very thankful to receive gifts and donations throughout the year. In particular, we are very grateful to Otter Windows who donated a complete sound system, including four microphones, speakers and amplifier for the Donald Barber Lecture theatre, which is a significant improvement on our old system.

Finally, many thanks to all our NLO volunteers for your continued support throughout the year.

David Strange

5th September 2014

The Reports were unanimously agreed.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Bill Hitchings reported that the Society's finances were healthy, thanks especially due to the relatively small group of volunteer Members who staffed open days.

- Three years of arrears of Gift Aid amounted to receipt of £4600. In future, year-on-year claims would be submitted by the Treasurer.
  - Sales from the shop netted £68 on a gross £900 turnover
  - As previously commented, the Society's electricity bill is roughly £200 per month (£5400 over last 17 months)
4. Accounts acceptance: proposed Alan Green, seconded Kathleen Dollery
  5. Re-appoint as the Society's auditors Easterbrook Eaton Ltd & to authorise the directors to fix their remuneration: proposed Kate Kay, seconded Barry Sangster.
  6. There were no comments of the revised and newly published Rules
  7. Members' Forum Kate Kay

Lessons from previous attempts to operate the Management Committee had been taken into account with the trial of a Members' Forum with Kate Kay as facilitator for a year. The proposal was that two members from each Interest Group should meet every two months, to act as a discussion forum and to encourage greater inter-group membership involvement. Notes would be taken and ideas would be communicated to the Directors. No Director should be part of the Members' Forum.

Questions from the floor focused on the restrictions on who could attend. What about the majority of members who were not active Interest Group members? It was suggested that various groups might meet on alternate meetings though this would not foster cross-fertilisation of ideas.

#### 8. Election of Directors

This year, with two Directors retiring (Alan Martin, Kate Kay) and a further two resigning constitutionally (Steve Boyce, Alan Green), there were 4 places to be filled. Five members were nominated so a paper ballot took place. Steve Boyce, Alan Green, Brian Ward-Smith and Peter Youd were declared elected.

Thanks given to the retiring Directors, Kate Kay & Alan Martin and to the unsuccessful candidate Colin Smith.

Whilst the votes were counted, refreshments and astro-images were presented followed by various presentations from the History Group, Spectroscopy Group, Observers, LTC, & Astroscouts.

The Board of Directors for the following year are therefore:

David Strange – Chairman, Bill Hitchings – Treasurer, Richard Crisp - Company Secretary, Steve Boyce, Allan Brittan, Kathleen Dollery, Iain Grant, Alan Green, Derek Moreton, Brian Ward-Smith, Pete Youd.

9 David Strange brought the meeting to a close.