

NORMAN LOCKYER OBSERVATORY SOCIETY LIMITED

Annual General Meeting Minutes of the meeting held 9th November 2020

1. Welcome and Apologies

No apologies

2. To approve the Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting

Proposed: Kathleen Dollery. Seconded: David Jones. Approved.

3. To receive the Annual Report from the Chairman

Chairman's Report

After a successful 2019 when we saw many of our projects reach fruition, 2020 has dealt everyone a severe kick in the teeth with the rapid spread of COVID-19. January started well, with visits from Cranbrook Beavers, South Steiner School, Weymouth Astro and Howden's Joinery staff who have very kindly supported us over many years. However, news that the virus was developing into a pandemic meant that we had to cancel our British Science Week Family Day event with Colyton Grammar School on 7th March at short notice. Since lockdown, the NLO has remained closed, however the Astroscouts have now started to meet outside in line with government regulations and many thanks are due to Kathleen and Andy for leading them.

However, we continued to meet as a society, regularly every Friday evening from 7.30pm – 9.30pm via Zoom with an Observers' Group talk followed by the Main Hall talk. The history group under Keith Orrell and Alan Martin have also continued with a highly successful series of Zoom talks on the first Tuesday of the month at 2.30pm. We have also started a new Cosmology discussion group very ably led by Leigh Edwards and this is held on the fourth Tuesday in the month at 7.30pm also via Zoom. All NLO members are welcome to join in these groups, so please send an email to enquiries@normanlockyer.com and we will arrange for your details to be sent on to the respective host.

Also thanks are due to Kerry Powell for sending out a regular round robin of observing reports and to

Alan Smith for his weekly sky notes. On the educational side many thanks are due to Kate Kay for continuing to run the extremely popular GCSE Astronomy course (8 attendees). We are also very pleased to welcome Hilary Naylor as our new NLO secretary, a post we have been trying to fill for the past year!

Although the NLO is closed to visitors we have not completely shut up shop! The premises still need to be maintained and many thanks are due to Heather and the gardening team for their regular visits. We have also had a visit by East Devon Property Services manager and extensive repairs will hopefully start to be carried out over the next few months. Many of you will recall Lockyer's sidereal clock which resides in the entrance hall. I am happy to say that it has been repaired and now fully functioning again with many thanks due to local Sidmouth clock restorer Colin Boyd. The NLO was also in receipt of the gift of a fine clock & barometer from Mr. Brian Norman & family. The clock had been presented to his great grandfather Thomas on his retirement from his post as Bosun on HMS Volage. This was the ship that took Lockyer to the ill-fated solar eclipse at Norway in August 1896. Many thanks are due to Brian for this gift, and we will display the clock in our Lockyer cabinet with an original photo of the Volage crew.

Unfortunately the NLO Plate Digitisation project with Exeter University was not able to proceed as their application for Leverhulme Trust funding did not succeed. However, we are very happy to announce the project will continue in house, as BAA archivist and NLO member John Chuter has very kindly agreed to make a start on scanning our lantern slides with his own equipment at home.

August the 16th marked 100 years since Lockyer's passing and although we were unable to mark the occasion at NLO we did write an article for Sidmouth Herald:

https://www.sidmouthherald.co.uk/news/norman-lockyer-observatory-centenary-1-6788546?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=Social_Icon&utm_campaign=in_article_social_icons

Observing the sky is, however, one pastime that can be carried out by all from our back gardens even though we have been housebound over the past six months, and the sky has obliged! We had the grand comet C/2020 F3 (NEOWISE) appear in the morning sky in early July and put on a great display for the next few weeks, and we have been sharing many images. We were happy to open up the NLO (socially-distanced!) for ITV's News at Ten:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ciG0yTR6Q4&feature=youtu.be>

This year also sees a very favourable opposition of Mars and the NLO will be joining in with National

Astronomy week 2020 “Mars Encounter” at <https://astronomyweek.org.uk/> when we hope to be transmitting live images through our telescopes. It was the similarly placed October opposition of Mars in 1862 that enthralled Norman Lockyer and demonstrated what an excellent observer and draughtsman he was. Many of his drawings were used to generate Martian maps of the day.

We have also agreed to support Devon Dark Skies week 23rd – 30th October:

<https://www.naturaldevon.org.uk/devon-dark-skies-2020/>

with a virtual planetarium show and live imaging of the planets if clear. This will be broadcast live on our NLO YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTk1IYVJH6sLweU5FoqroTA>

We have sadly lost three of our very respected members this year, Dr. Petar Goulev who passed away in January had supported and worked on our archives for many years. John Bardsley who died in May after a long illness, had for many years led our Observers group and as a skilled clock repairer succeeded in rebuilding the working mechanism of our fine Orrery. Kate Nursey also passed away in May and will be remembered for the many years she helped manage our Astronomy Fair. Our thoughts and condolences are with their families.

Thank you for renewing your membership which currently stands at 196 paid up members, made up of 125 full members, 27 couples and 16 Astroscouts. I am so very sorry you are currently unable to come and use NLO facilities. NLO Directors are meeting monthly over Zoom and regularly review the situation and bear in mind the latest government advice. We wish you all a safe and healthy remainder of the year and do hope that life will get back to normal in 2021.

David Strange

NLO Chairman

David Strange added to this that tonight saw news of a successful vaccine and so we may be back to normality by Spring. He drew the parallel between using the new technology of Zoom meetings and the use of the new invention of the telephone in the Spanish flu epidemic, 100 years ago.

This year we have appeared on national Japanese TV, News at Ten and have been mentioned on The One Show. He is giving a talk to the Antiques Telescope Society.

He ended with the optimistic thought that we can now see light at the end of the tunnel.

4. To receive the Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018

Treasurer, William Hitchings commented that it has been a year of two halves.

He thanked those who had renewed their subscriptions.

Near the bottom of page 3 there is a new item of "loan Interest" from a loan we took to complete the JEC and the extension to the LTC. We were offered £50,000 from EDDC and took £25,000 of it. Due to the generous donation from the Jean Edyvean estate and Sidmouth Town Council we were able to repay £20,000. It was decided to keep the £5,000 in case we need to borrow the other £25,000.

We spent £3,270 on equipment, principally a new computer for the lecture theatre and a new light bulb for the planetarium projector.

Most people have renewed, and we have had a £10,000 government grant because of Covid. and should be getting a further £1,300 for the current lockdown.

Proposed: Alan Green. Seconded: Kathleen Dollery. Approved.

For current auditors to remain: (Easterbrook Eaton Ltd)

Proposed: Hugh Taylor. Seconded: Alan Green. Approved.

5 To Appoint Directors.

As there were five nominations and five vacancies, Alan Green, Sandy Moreton, Pete Youd, Steve Boyce and Vikki Brown were elected as directors.

Proposed: William Hitchings. Seconder: Andy Anning. Approved.

6 AOB

Kathleen Dollery thanked those who were keeping the NLO running.

David Alexander thanked Alan Smith and Kerry Powell for the informative emails they send out. David Strange mentioned Alan Smith's emails be put on the blog.

At 7:49pm the Chairman closed the formal proceedings of the AGM and then invited the various interest groups, Member's Forum and Work groups to report on their achievements for the past year.

The meeting closed at 8:29pm

Hilary Naylor

NLOS Company Secretary