

Appendix A

Report of the Chairman

While the past year has in many ways been challenging, I see it as a time when we have been able to position ourselves to go on to greater things. We began the year by finding out what members expected from the society and we have done our best to provide a well-rounded set of activities which satisfy all branches of our fascinating hobby. As you will know, I am unable to continue as Chairman after the AGM due to family illness and changes in my working life, but I hope and believe that the committee will continue to be as inclusive as possible in catering for as many as practicable of the wide range of interests in astronomy.

Highlights of the year for me are:

- Membership has grown through a series of effective and interesting events;
- We have updated the constitution and relevant policies, and our risk assessments are in final review;
- We have confirmed and achieved our charitable aims with the Charity Commission;
- While we were all saddened that we felt Starfest could not run in 2017, plans are in progress to ensure that the 2018 event runs and is sustainable with the resources we have;
- The bank have been a thorn in our side, making life difficult in terms of day to day running but, as Sheila will report, we have managed by mainly using the cash holding and we are now in a position to control the account;
- We have maintained a healthy level of outreach with superb support for public observing at Dalby from members;
- We have submitted data to the pro-am collaboration for observing Comet 67-P Churyumov-Gerasimenko;
- Bryan has excelled in providing an interesting range of talks (and thanks to everyone who added value with quizzes, music, organising trips, helping at the domes etc. - they know who they are); and
- Probably most important, we have turned the Dalby Astronomy Centre into a workable hub for observation, public and member events with 5 instruments of 10" or greater aperture (with the 16" Lightbridge as our biggest 'light bucket') and a pier mounted Meade 12" computerised 'scope that was a research grade instrument when first manufactured.

So we are now in a position to build using that hub, our other observing locations, and the outreach events that are planned. The events at Ayton will, I have no doubt, continue to be popular and our public standing grows all the time. Howard has done a great job in getting the meteor monitoring camera and software up (though he does need volunteers to get some glitches out of the system and carry out routine housekeeping), the Meade at Dalby gives us a platform for both visual work and is a superb resource for astrophotography, we also have a large number of very capable scopes for visual observation, interest in naked eye and binocular observing has grown (and will continue to do so I suspect), we have more beginners who are

seeking help with equipment and the core of the old guard of observational astronomers marches on.

So with all this to celebrate I shall say goodbye as your Chairman at the end of this meeting but the new Chair (or rotating duty if we have no volunteer) will find that all these positives add up to something significant in achieving our charitable aims and promoting our wonderful hobby.

Thank you to each and every member and clear skies!

Mark Tissington