

Report on the Proceedings of the
Second National Convention of Australian
Amateur Astronomers held at the Observatory
Port Macquarie - N.S.W. - during Easter 1968.

The Convention opened on Friday evening April 12th at 8 p.m., when the Registration of Delegates, Members & Visitors commenced. The remainder of the evening was an informal gathering in which introductions & discussions occurred between groups & persons.

Several new friendships were made & reunions of members & others who attended the First Convention at Canberra during Easter 1967. Supper was served & the meeting was adjourned until the next day.

The Proceedings of the Second Convention started at 9.30 a.m. on Saturday April 13th. The Chairman was Mr. Albert York F.R.A.S. - President of the Port Macquarie Astronomical Association.

The Mayor of Port Macquarie Alderman C.C. Adams extended a Civic Welcome to the Delegates, Members & Visitors from Overseas and Astronomical & Allied Societies of Australia.

Dr. N.E. McLaren one of the Patrons of the Port Macquarie Astronomical Association briefly reviewed the activities of the Association and conveyed a hearty welcome to all in attendance.

The Official Opening and Address was accomplished by Dr. Harley Wood - the N.S.W. Government Astronomer, in his address he conveyed valuable advice to the young men whose intention is to graduate as Astronomers or Allied Professions, this was very much appreciated by several students present.

Lectures & Papers, apologies & messages of goodwill were received from the Astronomer Royal - Sir Richard Woolley, Patrick Moore, Major General R.C.A. Edge - Director General of the Royal Ordnance Survey - Amateur Astronomers & etc. in Brazil, U.S.A., England, Germany, Austria, Mexico, South Africa the Vatican Astronomer & New Zealand - also from Astronomical Societies & persons in several parts of Australia.

Mr. W.A.L. Forsyth Deputy Director of the Deep Space Information Facility at Tidbinbilla, Canberra lectured to the assembly on "The Review of the Surveyor Program", a model of the Space Ship was displayed which created intense interest. We were very fortunate to have Mr. Forsyth, his Wife and Daughter with us.

During the adjournment for morning tea - the Delegates, Members & visitors were fully engaged discussing the preceding lectures.

The Second Session occurred at 11.30 a.m. & the Chairman was Mr. W.A.L. Forsyth. Michael Silver aged 15 from the Caulfield Technical School, Melbourne described the methods he used to construct his observatory & telescope, he is well advanced for a boy of his age and we are very grateful to Mr. Athol Platt & "Rotary" whose generosity enabled Michael to be present.

Mr. Joe Czynski delivered a lecture entitled "Weather-Forecasting by Computer". Mr. Joe Czynski is the Secretary of the Ballarat Astronomical Society who will be the host society of the Third Convention to be located at Ballarat during Easter 1969.

After the lunch period the Third Session was chaired by Mr. J. Czynski. Dr D.C. Trainor of the N.S.W. Branch of the British Astronomical Association, Sydney lectured on "solar Observing for Amateur Astronomers". The lecture was much appreciated by an attentive assembly.

The following lecture was rendered by Mr. Cass Alexander of the Astronomical Society of Victoria. The lecture is entitled "Unmanned Exploration of Space". Cass is only 19 possessing a very impressive physique, he has a very clear delivery and the favorable reports received from the Victorian Astronomical Society were well maintained - we will hear more of this young man in the future.

Mr. R.C. Mattingley aged 14 of the Junior Astronomical Society of Brisbane lectured to the convention on "Stonehenge meets a Computer". Ross dealt very capably with this interesting subject.

The Chairman during the Fourth Session was Mr. R.C. Mattingley. Mr. J.M. Dunn of the Pacific Astronomical Society lectured on the "Earth's Atmosphere", it was a very interesting paper and the result of much research.

Mr. S.J. Elwin of the N.S.W. Branch of the B.A.A.

delivered a lecture entitled "A Polar Refracting Telescope" containing much valuable information.

During Saturday evening interesting films were presented - "Mars & Beyond" and a descriptive film of Port Macquarie.

A lecture was rendered entitled "The H.V. McKay Planetarium Melbourne" compiled by Mr. P. Marshall of the Victorian Institute of Applied Science, the writer has visited this installation and it is a "must" for amateur astronomers visiting Melbourne.

Lectures were read and copies distributed to the assembly on the following subjects.

1. The Anglo-Australian 150 inch Telescope to be installed at the Siding Spring Observatory, Coonabarabran - N.S.W.

2. The Mills-Cross Radio Telescope at Molonglo near Canberra.

3. The close relationship between Triangulation of the Earth's Surface, Geodesy & Astronomy from Major General R.C.A. Edge M.B.E, Director General of the British Ordnance Survey.

4. Astronomy for Surveyors - by Mr. J. Love, L.S., Head, Department of Surveying, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

History of the Far North Queensland Amateur Astronomers, Cairns, Queensland.

5. History of the Canterbury Astronomical Society of Christchurch, New Zealand.

6. The Leopold Figl Astrophysical Institute of Vienna, Austria.

During supper the Delegates, Members & Visitors engaged in varied discussions, asking questions concerning the lectures, there being ample material for exchange of ideas & etc..

The Convention resumed activities on Sunday April 14th at 9.30 a.m. - Mr. Keith Selby of the James Cook Astronomers Club being Chairman of the Session. The proceedings started with a display of Models, Telescopes & etc. There were several very interesting & varied exhibits.

Mr. Alister McDonald of the Townsville Moonwatch Group lectured on "Artificial Earth Satellites" - the paper was compiled by Mr. Alan Stephenson & contained much interesting research.

Mr. David Harlos of Orlando, Florida, U.S.A., observing the announcement in the "Sky & Telescope" that the Second Convention would be held at Port Macquarie decided that he would do all possible to be present, he distinguished himself in Science & was prominent in the High School Astronomical Club, the Club made him their delegate. All combined to raise the necessary cost, they cleaned cars, sold cakes & etc., interested the local newspaper & raised two-thirds of the fare, thus he qualified for Government assistance & he travelled by air to Sydney & on to Port Macquarie. David delivered, a lecture on his research into "Quasi-Stellar Objects" - there were several questions & considerable discussion resulted from the Lecture.

Two very interesting lectures were provided by Mr. W. Moser of the N.S.W. Branch of the B.A.A. - the latest information concerning the Russian 235 inch Telescope & the "Tunguska Explosion" - these two lectures created considerable interest & the "Tunguska Explosion" in Siberia in 1908 might have been caused by a Comet. It appears that the 235 inch telescope is on the way to completion.

The Chairman of the Sixth Session was Dr. Harley Wood, Government Astronomer of N.S.W..

Mr. Ron. Cable, F.R.A.S. read a paper called "Mirror on the Wall or having another look at ourselves". It created intense interest & was a deviation from the previous lectures.

Chris Irvine of the Illawarra Astronomical Society produced paper entitled "Mathematical Astronomy", this paper dealt with the solution of Spherical Triangles to obtain Latitude, Time, Azimuth & etc.. It was very interesting.

Mr. Albert York lectured on "The Clock Paradox in the Dilation of Time". This paper caused considerable interest & several questions were aimed at the lecturer and he had a quick reply to the enquirer.

Sunday afternoon was free - the members of the Port Macquarie Astronomical Association entertained the visitors in their homes and transported them to the local scenic attractions.

The Farewell Dinner was held at attractively situated Port Macquarie Golf Club House. From the Club House there is a fine view of the countryside and East across the Pacific Ocean.

The Dinner commenced at 7.30 p.m. and Dr. N.E. McLaren Patron of the Port Macquarie Astronomical Association acted as Chairman.

Speeches were delivered by Mr. Albert York F.R.A.S. President of the Port Macquarie Astronomical Association remarking generally on the history of the Association.

Our Overseas Visitor Mr. David Harlos described his activities at the Orlando High School Astronomical Club.

Appreciations were related by Dr. Harley Wood - the N.S.W. Government Astronomer and Mr. J.N. Webb - the Convention Secretary of the Port Macquarie Astronomical Association.

Mr. Fred Flowers - the Assistant Convention Secretary of the Port Macquarie Astronomical Association replied on behalf of the Astronomical Associations.

The Delegates Report was presented by Mr. J. Czynski - Secretary of the Ballarat Astronomical Society.

Presentations were made by Mr. Albert York F.R.A.S. to Mr. David Harlos of Orlando, Florida, U.S.A.

The Closing Remarks & the Loyal Toast were made by Dr. N.E. McLaren.

The Vote of Thanks to the Chairman was rendered by Mr. W.A.L. Forsyth - Deputy Director of the Deep Space Information Facility at Tidbinbiilla near Canberra.

The Convention Secretary attended the First Astronomical Convention at Canberra during Easter 1967 and gained useful information concerning the organisation of Conventions - it appears to be very desirable to continually remind the Astronomical Associations, Clubs & Societies that the Convention is to happen during the following Easter, forward on to the Secretaries regularly all the information available together with a "State of the Convention Report". Write to various Astronomical organisations in Australia & abroad and they will forward on interesting lectures, it is preferable to possess too many lectures than too few. The Convention Secretary will write hundreds of letters and spend much time obtaining lectures & etc. All lectures should be duplicated and the copies distributed to the members at the Convention.

The roll at the Second Convention at Port Macquarie amounted to 50 members & other detached persons. A member attended from Townsville in North Queensland and another member visited the Convention from Ballarat, Victoria, so distance has little effect on the interest of the delegate or member. David Harlos journeyed all the way from Orlando, Florida, the U.S.A..

The Annual Conventions bring Delegates and Members together from several parts of Australia, the acquaintances made & the publicity gained through newspapers & etc. tends to create more interest in the activities of the Astronomical Associations, Clubs and Societies and assists in bringing about increased membership, this is particularly the case in Port Macquarie where the Observatory is regarded as one of the principal ornaments of the town.

We feel that the Second Astronomical Convention of the Port Macquarie Association was a success and are confident that the Third Convention at Ballarat, Victoria will be equally successful. The Fourth Astronomical Convention will be located at Adelaide in South Australia during Easter 1970. All Societies will be promptly informed & it would help the Convention Secretary a great deal if replies were forwarded as soon as possible after notification.

We would like to finish this report by thanking all Members and Delegates, visitors & etc. for their assistance and attendance at the Second National Convention of Amateur Astronomical Associations, Clubs & Societies for their efforts in helping to make the Second Astronomical Convention a success.

For the Organising Committee.

(J.N.Webb).
Convention Secretary.