

the constitution to make it easier for younger astronomers holding temporary or non-tenured positions to be represented on Council. It was also pointed out that student members are not entitled to vote at Society meetings. It was proposed that a formal approach be made for such constitutional amendments. Council is obliged, under the constitution, to circulate its own full list of nominations for all positions, as well as inviting nominations from members. After considering this question Council had proposed that members be asked for their suggestions before Council decides on its list. The meeting concluded with the election of Council members for 1985-86. A list of the new Council appears at the front of this journal. To fill the vacancy of Immediate Past President council has exercised its option under the constitution and appointed Dr D. C. Morton as a second Vice-President.

Obituaries

Harley Wood

Harley Weston Wood who died at his home at Kenthurst on 26 June 1984 was an outstanding astrometrist and a leader of the astronomical community in Australia.

He was born at Gulgong N.S.W. on 31 July 1911. He was educated at Mudgee High School where his interest in astronomy was first aroused, and he constructed a small telescope. He won a Scholarship to Wesley College and a State Bursary to Sydney University which he entered in 1929. He graduated BSc. with first class honours in mathematics and physics in 1933 and MSc. in 1934. In 1965 the University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Science for his published work in astrometry.

After a short period as a school teacher he was appointed in 1936 Assistant Astronomer at Sydney Observatory. When James Nangle died in 1941 Harley was appointed Acting Government Astronomer and became Government Astronomer in 1943. The major task of the Observatory at that time was the Astrographic Catalogue which was an international project formulated in the 1880s to photograph the whole of the sky from a number of different observatories with standard 33 cm refractors. The catalogue was to contain the position and brightness of stars to fainter than 12th magnitude. Sydney was allocated a large zone of the southern sky and the first photographs were taken in 1892. However there had been many setbacks to the work and by 1941 only 19 of the planned 52 volumes of the Sydney Catalogue had been published. Harley Wood's energy and his inspiration of other members of his staff made possible the completion of the measurement and reduction by 1955 and the printing of the last of the 52 volumes by 1964.

Then in 1948 the General Assembly of the IAU asked Harley to complete the Melbourne section of the Catalogue which was left unfinished when Melbourne Observatory was closed a few years earlier. Three volumes had been published out of eight planned and a vast amount of manuscript was available. The work was completed at Sydney and printed mainly in Paris under the direction of Dr Jules Baillaud who was Chairman of Commission 23 of the IAU which had charge of the whole catalogue project. Baillaud spoke very highly of Harley for his major contribution to this vast international undertaking.

After the end of the Second World War Harley began planning the modernisation of the equipment at Sydney Observatory and initiated new programmes of observation. The astrograph from Melbourne Observatory was obtained and a new dome was built for it. This was much more convenient than the old Sydney astrograph which had an awkward mounting in a large rotating tin shed. An excellent new four component lens by Taylor, Taylor and Hobson was added to the astrograph and a new long screw measuring machine by Hilger was used to measure the plates. In 1958 Harley began a programme to photograph a large section of the southern sky with the new astrometric camera. In 1961 a new coordinate measuring machine was ordered from Grubb-Parsons. This was delivered in 1966 and used photoelectric scanning to bisect the image of the star.

The measuring agents in each coordinate were Moire scales. Because of delays and difficulties with this machine the measurement of the plates was not begun until after Harley's retirement in 1974. Although photography of the sky was completed from -36° declination to the south pole it was possible to measure only the zone from -51° to $-63^\circ 30'$, when the N.S.W. Government announced in June 1982 that astronomical observations at Sydney Observatory were to cease. As can be imagined this was a bitter blow to Harley and greatly saddened the last two years of his life. In spite of illness he organised protests to the Government from the Australian and international astronomical communities but to no avail.

We turn now to Harley Wood's impact on astronomy over a wider area. He was a member of the Australian National Committee for astronomy from its inception and was appointed its Chairman by the Academy of Science from 1966 to 1974. Harley was a member of the IAU from 1947 and attended General Assemblies at Dublin 1955, Hamburg 1964, Prague 1967 and Brighton 1970. He served on the organising committees of Commissions 8 (Positional Astronomy), 20 (Minor Planets) 23 (Carte du Ciel) and 24 (Photographic Astrometry). During his period as Chairman the major task of the National Committee was preparing for the General Assembly of the IAU which was held in Sydney in 1973. Harley was chairman of the local organising committee and put a tremendous amount of work into it. By his inspired leadership he was able to gather the support of all Australian astronomers and of many other people. Many times at later assemblies of the IAU I was told by overseas colleagues what a successful and enjoyable meeting they had in Sydney.

Harley took a leading part in the movement which led to the formation of the ASA in 1966 and was its Foundation President

1966-68. During this period he chaired the committee which drew up the Society's constitution. When the rules were amended in 1978 to permit the election to life membership of residents within Australia Harley was the first to be so honoured. He was for a long time interested in the search for a suitable site for a large astronomical telescope in Australia. In cooperation with interested groups from overseas and the ANU he travelled to inspect a great many sites in N.S.W. which had been chosen initially on the basis of suitability of climate. It is interesting to note that the site at Siding Spring Mountain was favourably mentioned at a meeting at Sydney Observatory in 1957 before any of the sites were visited. As a result of a promise of the N.S.W. Government, Harley was also seeking a site for a country station for Sydney Observatory which was greatly hampered by being in the very centre of a large city. Unfortunately this plan was doomed to final disappointment.

A long time member of the Royal Society of N.S.W. Harley served on its council for an extended period. He was secretary for several years and President in 1949-50. He strongly supported the New South Wales branch of the B.A.A. which meets at Sydney Observatory. He served on its committee from the time he came to the observatory and was president on two occasions.

Throughout his career he was a supporter of education in astronomy. He lectured on spherical astronomy in the Department of Applied Mathematics at Sydney University from 1959 to 1971 and to adult education courses arranged by the Workers Educational Association and the Department of Adult Education of the University. He wrote three books on general astronomy 'The Southern Sky', 'Unveiling the Universe' and 'Planets, Suns and Galaxies'.

Harley was loved and respected by a wide circle of friends both in Australia and overseas. The hospitality extended in their home by Harley and Una is remembered with pleasure by the great number of visiting colleagues who called at the Observatory when in Sydney.

He had happy relations with his staff and his guidance and inspiration led to achievements which were outstanding for an institution so small as Sydney Observatory. This is clearly shown by the letters which were received from leading astronomers in Europe and America when it was learned that the Observatory was to close. I worked with him for over thirty years and throughout that time could not have wished for a better relationship than existed between us. Even after his retirement he was still a considerable support to the Observatory and served on the Board of Visitors.

Harley will be greatly missed by us all but we can look back and be thankful for a life of great service and achievement. He was one of whom it can be truly said 'Well done thou good and faithful servant'

Bill Robertson

Ron Giovanelli

Ronald Gordon Giovanelli, DSc, FAA (1915-1984) was a foundation member of the ASA and President from 1968 to 1971. His distinguished career spanned more than forty years during which he made major contributions to science and technology. ASA members will remember him mostly for his original researches in solar optical astronomy.

The formation of the ASA was in large measure due to his foresight and energy. It is interesting to recall here his modest account of the 'birth' of the ASA as recorded in the minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the ASA in November 1968—'Dr J. P. Wild (in the chair) after welcoming the participants called on Dr R. G. Giovanelli to outline the history of the ASA. Dr Giovanelli likened the final emergence of the Society to the build-up of a signal amidst noise. There had been rumblings over the years but it was not until early in 1966 that their amplitude exceeded that of statistical fluctuations'. The names of W. Buscombe, S. C. B. Gascoigne, R. G. Giovanelli and J. P. Wild seemed to be linked with the generation of the first signal of statistical significance.

Ron was a member of the first Council and together with Harley Wood, Paul Wild, Steve Smerd and Kevin Sheridan helped draw up the Constitution of the ASA. The Constitution Committee met regularly at the Sydney Observatory under the chairmanship of Harley Wood (then NSW Government Astronomer) to produce the draft constitution which, with small amendments, was adopted and published in the Proceedings of the ASA, Feb. 1968. After each lengthy meeting the committee adjourned to the nearby historic Hero of Waterloo hotel where further debate on the more difficult points continued. This hotel had some family significance also for Ron as it had been painted on canvas by his artist wife Katherine. Ron married in 1947 and Kath was his inseparable companion at many scientific meetings including those of the ASA.

It should be remembered that whilst Solar Astronomy was his greatest interest and to which he contributed so much nevertheless Ron was able to devote only a small part of his time to this research as his work load as Group Leader, and later Chief of the CSIRO Division of Physics was most demanding.

Ron Giovanelli began his research in solar physics as a Research Fellow at the Commonwealth Solar Observatory (now Mount Stromlo Observatory) in 1937. When war broke out he joined CSIRO, was sent to the National Physical Laboratory in England where he specialised in optics, light and photometry and on his return to Australia set up a light and optics section at the National Standards Laboratory in Sydney and made significant contributions to the war effort.

After the war he established a group for observational and theoretical studies of the Sun. He soon formed an alliance with solar radio astronomers from the nearby Division of Radiophysics, a relationship which endured until his death in 1984 and from which a number of solar optical-radio investigations resulted. He set up modern solar optical