

Cleveland and Darlington Astronomical Society  
Minutes of Ordinary Meeting Held on Friday, November 12th, 2010 at 1930hrs  
in Wynyard Woodland Park Planetarium

Barry Hetherington, in the Chair, opened the meeting at 1936 hours.

1. Notices

- i) Ed Restall told us that for the rest of the winter car-drivers should approach the Planetarium through the lower gate, as the upper one will be locked. Ignore the 'No entry' sign!
- ii) Ed advertised a public show at the Planetarium on 17 November, near the peak of the Leonid meteor shower. Three researchers from Durham University would be giving talks. That day would also be Ed's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday (I think that's what he said ...).
- ii) Neil Haggath reminded us that the next meeting would be on Friday 10 December, when Graham Darke of Sunderland A.S. would be talking about the Barringer meteor crater in Arizona.
- iv) Neil also reminded us about February's meeting, which combines the AGM and Members' Night. He would very much like further volunteers to give a short presentation as part of the latter.

Neil then introduced the speaker for the evening, our very own Andy Fleming. Neil commented that, like Andy, he too was a long-term member of the Planetary Society.

2. Lecture for the evening -- "30 years of the Planetary Society"

Andy's 30-slide PowerPoint presentation was peppered with video clips as he took us through how the Planetary Society was formed and has developed into the worldwide organisation it is today. It was founded by Carl Sagan, Bruce Murray and Louis Friedman after the glory days of public interest in space exploration in the 1960s and 1970s, and after Sagan's 'Cosmos' series had given a huge boost to public interest. The Society initially aimed simply to demonstrate by its fast-growing membership that there was continuing strong public support for planetary exploration and especially the search for extra-terrestrial life.

But it soon became clear that they would need to be more proactive, and now, with over 300,000 members worldwide, it part-funds and supports many projects. Examples include work on solar sails, a Mars microphone, a free weekly Planetary Radio 30-minute podcast, and the maintenance of a comprehensive and up-to-date catalogue of all known exoplanets.

Membership is \$57 per year, or \$43 for seniors and students. It's easy to join from their website at [www.planetary.org](http://www.planetary.org) The Planetary Society is also on Facebook and Twitter.

3. Questions, Vote of Thanks and Closure of the Meeting

Andy took questions from the floor on light sails, international aspects of the Planetary Society, the costs of the Apollo project, and near-earth asteroids (especially Apophis).

The Chairman drew the question period to an end, proposed a vote of thanks to Andy for his excellent talk and closed the meeting at about 2100.

RNC (AM had been unable to attend), 7/12/10