

Heritage Committee Report

The current members are:

Chair: Randall Brooks (2006-09)
Canada Science and Technology Museum

Members:

Vic Gaizauskas (2007-10) HIA/NRC

Elizabeth Griffin (2006-09) HIA/NRC

Richard Jarrell (2008-11) York University

Nathalie Martimbeau (2007-10) Harvard University

David Turner (2006-09) Saint Mary's University

Activities of the Committee

As noted above, we have interviewed senior astronomers about their careers and the evolution of Canadian astronomy during their careers. 5 more were added at last year's conference in Victoria. This has been a joint project with the Canada Science and Technology Museum and the original digital video files are held in the CSTM's Archives. We were indeed fortunate to have interviewed Graham Odgers just weeks prior to his passing. Copies of the interviews may be obtained by contacting the Museum's Archivist.

Several of the papers presented during the Heritage session held in Victoria have appeared in the JRASC (Oct. 2008, v.102, #5). This was organized by Paul Feldman and Elizabeth Griffin but, unfortunately, the Editor did not mention that the papers were based on those given at CASCA in Victoria. The theme was tied to the 90th anniversary of the Plaskett Telescope at DAO.

The closure of the DDO in 2008 obviously has generated considerable discussion and consternation. At a future CASCA conference, I hope we will be able to hold a session similar to that held in Victoria to analyze the impact and important role DDO played in the education of 3 or 4 generations of astronomers as well as the Observatory's scientific achievements. As this report is being prepared, the RASC Toronto Centre is planning to assume responsibility for the public education side of the Observatory's operations. I can also report that the Canada Science and Technology Museum was offered, and accepted, to preserve in its astronomy collection some of the secondary

equipment such as photometers, calibration equipment, measuring engines, PDS machine and other small pieces with one dating to ca. 1910. Most were from the 1950s-early to early 1980s and has filled a void that had previously been identified in the Museum's collection.

Other activities that members of the committee have carried out include:

Vic Gaizauskas has published a memoir of the DDO during his student days, 1950-51, in JRASC 2008, v.102, 224.

He is gathering documents for an article on his experiences during the site-testing surveys of Mt. Kobau, B.C.. This will be a personal account of events that led to the cancellation of the QEII Observatory Project.

David Turner continues to be called upon to talk about the stars and their origin which are found on the ceiling of the restored St. John's Anglican Church in Lunenburg, NS. Last summer he had a student assisting with archival research on the origins of the constellations painted on the ceiling in the 19th century.

Randall Brooks contributed the commentary and discussion on an upcoming reprint and translation of a 1768 volume by the Duc de Chaulnes, "Nouvelle Methode pour Diviser les Instruments de Mathématique et d'Astronomie". The new work is scheduled to appear in June.