



The Object Glass

The Newsletter of the Antique Telescope Society

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This is the inaugural issue of a newsletter for the Antique Telescope Society that we hope will help members feel more connected to our organization in the interval between issues of our Journal. I'd especially like to thank Ronald Smeltzer, who not only suggested that the Society would be well served by such a publication, but volunteered to put it together and see it through publication. For this your Board is very grateful. A number of years ago, ATS Past President Ron Maddison also proposed that we publish a newsletter, but printing and mailing costs were such that we feared it might detract from our ability to do a credible Journal as well. Electronic publishing (and Ronald's stellar efforts) now make it possible.

... Ken Launie, ATS President

... **from the Editor.** I have agreed to produce a newsletter for the Antique Telescope Society twice a year. The intent is to keep the membership in touch with the Society between issues of the Journal and to publish news of interest to members. This inaugural issue tries, in part, to provide ideas for contributions by members for future newsletters. The Editor does not intend to be a major author for future issues. The nature of the material suitable for the newsletter does not compete, in general, with that suitable for postings on the Forum or for publication in the Journal. The kinds of materials envisioned for *The Object Glass* include short news items, book notices, published paper notices, news of members, news about the society, notes about useful web sites, and short feature articles. As of now, there is no plan to include advertisements of items for sale or wants; if there is a groundswell of members desiring to have a sale or wants section, this will be reconsidered, but probably the Forum is a better venue for advertisements.

The Editor does not wish to do any significant editing of member-submitted articles, which should be submitted in final form for publication. The Editor will of course review submitted articles for obvious problems. Unsigned notices that appear are by the Editor. Book notices will be based upon the Editor having seen and very possibly owning a copy of the book unless otherwise stated such as by quoting a review of the book.

In part by way of introduction to the members who do not know me, it is noted here that the Editor's primary interests are rare books and publications and research related to rare books, although he does have two 18th-century English telescopes, about one of which see a feature article in this issue. Therefore, member contributions about hardware are especially encouraged as such probably address the interests of the majority of the membership. I look forward to receiving contributions of all types for *The Object Glass* from fellow members.

News and Notices

Member-publisher paper... Duane H. Jaecks. "An investigation of the eighteenth-century achromatic telescope." *Annals of Science*, vol. 67, no. 2, 149-186, September 2010.

Book notice ... M. Mazzoni and A. Righini, eds. *Fotografia e Astronomia*. Firenze: Fratelli Alinari, 1999). 69 pp., 75 historic illustrations of telescopes, observatories, and astronomical photographs. Probably only available from the bookstore at the Fratelli Alinari headquarters and museum in Florence, where the editor found it for sale this past October.

New Book ... Ileana Chinnici, ed. *ASTRUM 2009 – Astronomy and Instruments – Italian Heritage Four Hundred Years after Galileo*. Livorno: Edizioni Musei Vaticani, 2009. 240 pp, Fourteen essays occupy 121 pages, a catalog, 113 pages, and a bibliography, 4 pages. There are hundreds of color illustrations of instruments, early book illustrations, photographs, and other graphics.

New Book ... Bernhard Brandl, et al, eds. *400 Years of Astronomical Telescopes*. n.p.: Springer, 2010. Papers from the late 2008 conference of the same name. Authors of papers on the history of optical telescopes are Albert Van Helden, Giorgio Strano, Jim Bennett, James Lequeux, David Devorkin, W. Patrick McCray, and Guy J. Monnet. The subject of other sections of the book include non-optical telescopes, telescope technologies, history of astronomy, political issues, and concepts for future telescopes. Very expensive.

New book ... Robert W. Duffner. *The Adaptive Optics Revolution: a History*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009. Reviewed in *ISIS*, vol. 101, no. 3, 673-4, September 2010. Not seen.

New Book ... Gudrun Wolfschmidt, ed. *Cultural heritage of astronomical observatories: ... Proceedings of the International ICOMOS Symposium in Hamburg, October 14-17, 2008*. Monuments and Sites series, No. XVIII. Berlin, ICOMOS-Hendrik Bäßler-Verlag, 2009. 378 pages. This is the book that was available on line as a pdf for a while and then withdrawn. Copies of the book have been available free except for the postage cost from the Paris headquarters of ICOMOS. Just type "icomos paris" into Google or start at ><http://www.international.icomos.org/publications/index.html><, click on "vol. XVIII" under

Monuments & Sites and send an email request. The editor found that a polite request and paying the postage cost in advance was all that was required to obtain a copy of this attractive, extensively-illustrated book. PayPal, credit cards, and 5 euros sent by air mail are possible ways to pay the postage.

Web site ... A recently discovered web site, <http://www.bibliotheque-numerique-cinema.fr/catalogue>, has downloadable pdfs for a few important books on optics and instruments by William Molyneux, Joannes Zahn, Robert Smith, and David Brewster.

A Rare, Unrecorded Dollond Broadside

A single printed sheet, 415 mm x 335 mm, titled "Description of the Three Foot and Half Achromatic Telescope, Made by P. and J. Dollond, ..." recently appeared in the catalog of a UK bookseller. The broadside shows an engraving of the instrument, below which is parallel text in English and French. Priced at £895, the item was sold before an order query from the editor reached the vendor.

George Adams Trade Label

Ronald K. Smeltzer

Not previously illustrated or noted elsewhere is this rare example (p. 4) of a George Adams, Sr. trade label. The label, about 185 mm x 250 mm in its damaged state, is headed "GEORGE ADAMS / Mathematical Instrument-Maker to his Majesty / At Tycho Brahe's Head, No. 60 Fleet Street, London." The author of the publication(1) about the Adams family of instrument makers reported(2) five different known examples of Adams trade labels and dated the example illustrated here to between 1766 and 1772, thus being that of the senior George Adams. The former date arises because Fleet Street was numbered in 1766. The label lists telescopes under two headings: "The New Acromatic Telescope, ... , " presumably referring to Dollond's patent, and "Reflecting Telescopes, of the latest improvement."

The trade label is attached to the inside of the lid of the oak box for a 4-inch, table-stand reflector with two eyepieces signed:

G. Adams Mathematical
Instrument Maker to his
MAJESTY
Fleet Street London

The telescope, with its original finish somewhat spotted, a shiny primary mirror, and a tarnished secondary mirror, was acquired by the author in 1976. Not surprising, it forms poor images. A catalog(3) of Adams instruments from the period of the telescope lists reflectors on table stands in three sizes: 12 inches, 18 inches, and 24 inches; presumably the one described here is an example of the 24-inch, which could also be purchased "on a rack stand." The outside surface of the lid of the oak box has many labels with very interesting provenance information, possibly the subject of another note after further research.

- 1) John R. Millburn. *Adams of Fleet Street, Instrument Makers to King George III*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.
 - 2) John R. Millburn, letter to author, April 8, 1998.
 - 3) "A Catalogue of Mathematical, Philosophical, and Optical Instruments, Made under the Inspection and Direction of George Adams, Mathematical Instrument Maker to his Majesty George the III^d." P. 8 of the separately paginated catalog usually found bound-in at the end of Adams' *Micrographia Illustrata*:..., 4th edition. London: Printed for the Author, 1771.
- N.B., original spellings on the label are retained in this note.

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Curious BAROMETERS, Diagonal, Wheel, Standard, or Portable, with or without Thermometers. Also the so much famed QUICKSILVER THERMOMETERS, made after the late FLORENCE.

THEODOLITES, of the latest Construction WATER-LEVELS, which may be adjusted at one Station; MEASURING WHEELS; Pocket and Coach WAY WIZERS, for measuring the Way, &c.

SPECTACLES ground on Brass Tools, in the Manner approved of by the Royal Society, set in Variety of convenient Frames: Also READING GLASSES of all Sorts, set in Silver or other Metal, to turn into Cases of various Kinds.

PRISMS, for demonstrating the Theory of Light and Colours.

The CAMERA OBSCURA for drawing in Perspective, in which all external Objects are represented in their proper Colours and exact Proportions.

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N. B. Gentlemen may have any Model or Instrument made in Metal or Wood, with Expedition and Accuracy, and carefully packed up to be sent to any Part of the World.



From Ken Spenser ...

Group picture at Fan Mountain Observatory, September 13, 2010 during the 2010
ATS Convention, Charlottesville, VA.