



DAVID DUNLAP DOINGS

VOL. 6, NO. 8

AUGUST 28, 1973.

Haldon. Aug 20/65

*My dear Lady Bell
We all condole with
you very heartily on the sad
loss of your niece & long
in your excellent & valued
friend from whom being your
kindness so much comforted us*

Opening lines of a letter written by Sir John Herschel to Lady Bell, offering condolence on the death of her niece. This letter was presented to the Observatory by Mrs. J. N. Tomes, great-great-granddaughter of Sir John.

See J. D. F.'s "Final Item" on Herschel, p. 5

EDITORIAL

The Prince and the Coppers

I think I detected in the press coverage of the recent visits to Canada of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip a certain disappointment on the part of the reporters at the obvious mellowing of His Highness. He seems to have given over the acerbic remarks for which he was once famous. Reporters had to be content with recalling such remarks as the "Oh no, not another!" when he was presented with a Calgary white hat a few years ago.

One anecdote, or rather a trilogy of anecdotes, about Prince Philip was told to me by the late Moffatt Woodside, former Dean of Arts, Principal of University College and Acting President between Sidney Smith and Claude Bissell.

It happened on the occasion of the Prince's visit to the Campus in 1962 to preside at the Duke of Edinburgh Second Commonwealth Study Conference in Hart House Theatre. The Prince had been most anxious to have fuss avoided on this occasion and was visibly upset at the obvious presence of many uniformed and plain-clothed security men on the Campus. Almost the first thing he said when President Bissell greeted him at the door of Simcoe Hall was, "My God, man, what have you got here, a police state?"

The President, unnerved by the Prince's bad humour, attempted to distract him as they mounted the stairs to his office. Waving casually towards a newly-placed portrait of the former President, he said, "My illustrious predecessor-in-office, Sidney Smith." Standing under the portrait was a burly policeman disguised in plain clothes whose jaw sagged as the Prince grabbed his hand, gave it one strong tug and growled, "How'd do, Mr. Smith."

A short time later the party moved across the front campus to Hart House, and the Prince again ran a gauntlet of police, to his re-awakened displeasure. At the door they were held up by some sort of commotion in the crowd and the Prince asked the President what all this was about. The President sent an emissary to elbow his way to the source of commotion, who soon returned with a whispered word to the President. Dr. Bissell turned with relief to the Prince, saying, "It's nothing, really, Sir. It's just that one of the security men fainted."

The Prince's frowning visage relaxed. "Goo-ood!" he said.

J. F. H.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

IAU Travellers

Dr. van den Bergh left on Aug. 9 for Australia where he has attended Symposium No. 58 at Canberra, giving an invited talk on "Differences between Galaxies". At the IAU General Assembly in Sydney he is presenting an invited paper on "Remnants of Supernovae" at the Joint Discussion on Novae and Supernovae.

Dr. and Mrs. MacRae left for Australia on Aug. 10 intending to stop for a day or two at Samoa, Fiji, New Zealand and Norfolk Island before the General Assembly, and then will be in Maroochydore, Queensland, where Dr. MacRae will attend the Symposium on Galactic Radio Astronomy. They will return about Sept. 9.

Dr. Garrison left Santiago Aug. 11 to spend a few days in Tahiti or New Zealand before going to Sydney for the General Assembly. He will return on Sept. 3 after a three-day stop-over in Hawaii.

Dr. Clement left about Aug. 7 and will attend Symposium No. 59 on Stellar Stability and Evolution at Canberra and the General Assembly at Sydney.

Dr. Walborn left Aug. 16 to attend the General Assembly and will then, after a few days here early in September, go to take up his new position as Assistant Astronomer at Cerro-Tololo.

Dr. Kronberg left on Aug. 24 to spend a week at Leiden reducing observations with the Westerbork radio telescope before going to Poland for the Extraordinary General Assembly in Warsaw and Symposium No. 63 in Cracow on "The Confrontation of Cosmological Theories with Observational Data".

Dr. Roeder will go to Poland about Sept. 2 to attend the Extraordinary Assembly and Symposium No. 64 on "Gravitational Radiation and Collapse" in Warsaw and No. 63 in Cracow.

Dr. and Mrs. Heard will go to Poland on Sept. 1 for the Assembly in Warsaw, Symposium No. 65 on "Exploration of the Planetary System" in Torun and will spend a few days in Cracow and London before returning about Sept. 19.

Dr. Hogg will leave on Sept. 2 for Poland for the Warsaw Assembly and the Symposium on "The Astronomy of Copernicus and its Background" in Torun and spend a few days in Geneva before returning.

Other Travels

Joan Topley returned Aug. 19 from a four-week holiday in Norway with her son, Ken.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank McDonald left Aug. 21 for a three-week holiday in their native Scotland.

Sq at NRAO

Dr. Seaquist is at Green Bank again, observing with the interferometer on his galaxies program and R Aqr.

Re at U. of M.

Dr. Racine is working in the Department of Physics, University of Montreal, Aug. 13 - 31.

SEMINARS

AUGUST

None

SEPTEMBER

None planned

PAPERS SUBMITTED IN AUGUST

S. van den Bergh	"Differences between Galaxies" "Differences between Old Stellar Populations"
N. Walborn	"The Space Distribution of the O Stars in the Solar Neighborhood" "Some Morphological Properties of WN Spectra"
J. F. Heard and R. Hurkens	"The Orbit of the Am Spectroscopic Binary HD 82191"
J. Winzer	"UBV Photometry of 4 Magnetic Stars"

P O T P O U R R I

Promotions

Drs. Clement and Kronberg have been promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with tenure.

September DDD

Dr. Fernie is hereby requested to prepare copy for the September number. Will all please submit items to him, deadline Monday, September 17.

Last Call for Painless Lecture Preparations

Esther and Elizabeth now have more time available for typing notes, forms, etc. and for running stencils than they will after Sept. 12. Please act accordingly.

Marie Litchinsky Bereaved

Early this month the Observatory expressed our sympathy to Mrs. Sam Litchinsky of Calgary on the death of her husband on July 31. Mrs. Litchinsky is remembered by most of us as Marie Fidler, longtime Executive Secretary of the RASC.

FINAL ITEM

The Real John Herschel

Since I have written so much in recent columns of the nonsense perpetrated in John Herschel's name, it seems only fair that we take a look at what the man was really like. He was, after all, one of the most interesting and outstanding astronomers of his age, although the twentieth century has hardly accorded him the place in history that he deserves.

If John never quite emerged from the long shadow cast by his father, it was perhaps because of a fundamental difference in their natures. William, once started on astronomy, pursued it with a total single-minded devotion that allowed no intrusion, while John, born to wealth, brilliant, superbly educated, always remained something of adilletante.

Born in 1792 John seems to have had a lonely and introspective childhood. Without brothers or sisters, he grew up in a household in which silence and good behaviour were stressed in order that his comparatively elderly father could sleep through the daylight hours. His early education was by a private tutor, with some years spent at Eton and a private school run by a friend of the family. Loneliness was mitigated by a warm relationship with his Aunt Caroline, with whom he spent many delightful hours, and who ruefully reported on the little boy's keen interest in chemistry experiments with whatever household goods came to hand.

The quiet, unprecocious boy gave way to a brilliant young man on John's entering Cambridge at the age of 17. Here he became close friends with such contemporaries as Charles Babbage, inventor of the first calculating machine, George Peacock, and William Whewell, all destined to make their mark on the nineteenth century. Together they formed the Analytical Society, dedicated to revitalizing British mathematics, and so important were Herschel's own contrib-

utions that at the time he turned 21 and received his bachelor's degree he was elected to the Royal Society, and a few years later received that Society's highest award, the Copley Medal, for his continuing work in mathematics.

Unexpectedly, Herschel now turned his back on science. Declining his father's wish that he enter the Church, he decided to become a lawyer, and moved to London to read for the bar at Lincoln's Inn. This lasted less than two years, however, before he was drawn back into science, and in 1815 we find him applying for the Chair of Chemistry at Cambridge. He lost by only one vote, which is some measure of the regard in which he was held as a chemist.

In 1817 he became his father's assistant, continuing the elder Herschel's work on nebulae and double stars. It is clear from his own writings, however, that he entered observational astronomy as a filial duty, and there are occasional later entries in his diary such as "Sick of star-gazing - mean to break the telescope and melt the mirrors." Nevertheless, so important were his contributions to the subject, both observational and theoretical, that by his early thirties he had won gold medals and major prizes from the Royal Astronomical Society, the French Academy, and again from the Royal Society, beating out such candidates as Struve, Bessel, and Pond for them.

In between this he travelled widely in Europe, meeting all the scientific great (with many of whom he kept up a voluminous correspondence in several languages), and carrying out geological surveys, studies in mineralogy, meteorology, and even paleontology. He wrote a book-length article on the philosophy of the scientific method which concerns philosophers of science to this day, wrote numerous fundamental papers on physical and geometrical optics, and did some experimental work in electromagnetism which led to an engineering application in later years. Declining the Chair of Mathematics at London University, he continued his work in chemistry, suggesting for example that the lines in the solar spectrum could be used for a chemical analysis of the sun. Chemistry led him into photography, where he was the first to discover the use of hypo, invented the terms 'positive' and 'negative', discovered the 'Herschel effect', and took the first photographs on glass plates.

On the long voyages to and from South Africa, while most passengers were prostrated by sea-sickness, Herschel was happily engaged in no small amount of physical and biological oceanography, dissecting the eye of a shark, keeping sea temperature and wind records, and so forth. While in South Africa his work on the botany of the Cape Peninsula was important enough to earn his name a place on the list of species, he assisted in the first geodetic surveys, and devised a scheme of education for the colony that lasted into the twentieth century.

Returning to England at the age of 46, his observing career over, Herschel went on to ever increasing fame as a statesman of science, sitting on endless committees and commissions, writing articles and books (his *Outlines of Astronomy* went through twelve editions in his own lifetime, and was still being published thirty years after his death), and eventually, like Newton before him, becoming Master of the Mint. As such he attempted to introduce a system of decimal coinage into Britain, a scheme negated by a later Royal Commission.

Perhaps in contrast to his own childhood, Herschel's twelve children enjoyed a warm and satisfying relationship with their parents. Some of the children themselves became well-known; one daughter was appointed to the court

of Queen Victoria, a son became a minor figure in physics and astronomy, another son initiated the use of fingerprints for identification purposes.

Herschel himself never gave up; if he wasn't studying the metrology of the Great Pyramid he was involved in terrestrial magnetism or amusing himself by translating Schiller's works, Dante's *Inferno*, and Homer's *Iliad* into English hexameters. His renown is now difficult to realize. It has been claimed that his name was to the mid-nineteenth century man-in-the-street what Einstein's is to the twentieth century. Be that as it may, it is certain that an entire nation mourned his passing in 1871 at the age of 79, and as a measure of their esteem he was buried not merely in Westminster Abbey but alongside Newton at that.

So much for the real John Herschel, a man of extraordinary intellect and breadth of talent, the last of the universalists. Yet as such he paid an inevitable price, for the tide of history has washed over him with hardly a ripple.

(There is only one biography of John Herschel: Gunther Buttman's *The Shadow of the Telescope*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1970.)

J. D. F.