STARDUST

Monthly Newsletter
of the Edmonton Centre of the
ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

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STARDUST now enters upon its sixth year. It is proud to be among the original three newsletters which are now being distributed to all other centres throughout the country. We hope it will not be long before all centres in the Dominion find it possible to join in this interchange.

VISIT FROM DR. HELEN HOGG

Those members of the Centre who were in town on June 6 were favored indeed in being able to hear Dr. Helen Hogg describe her trip to the Soviet Union. This gracious lady not only gave us a new insight into life in the USSR but also charmed all present by her personality. We hope she will soon visit us again.

One result of her visit to the western provinces has been an investigation by the National Council into the feasibility of setting up a nation-wide observing system within the centres of the RASC. A committee appointed for this purpose consists of Miss I.K. Williamson of Montreal, Mr. Vern Ramsay of Toronto, and Earl Milton of Edmonton.

NEW OBSERVATORY SITE

Some miles south of Winterburn, not far from the area selected for the new Botanical Gardens of the University, will be the new location of our Observatory. Plans for the building have already been submitted to University officials by Professor Keeping and Dr. Grayson-Smith. Why not visit the Gardens some afternoon, take your supper with you, and visit the Observatory in the evening? This would make a delightful Saturday outing (at least so long as the snow holds off).

A new observatory and a planetarium in one year! -- that gives a pretty good boost to Edmonton astronomers, especially when interest in the heavens is getting such excellent publicity through Sputniks, Luniks, and other space vehicles. Concerning the planetarium, by the way, we noticed on our last visit to the site that the foundations and perhaps the floor had now been completed. We understand that our committee has decided upon a Spitz instrument.

GARDEN PARTY

We do not know who was responsible, but the Editor and Mrs. Page would like to express their appreciation of the honor conferred upon them in representing the Centre at the garden party held in the Provincial Government Grounds to give some 1800 Albertans the privilege of greeting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. As you all know, the day was ideal, high white clouds floating across a sky of pure Canadian blue, the lawns were never greener or the flowers more colorful. Marquees of various hues were set in a large oval around the grounds, and to these we went for our cold plate, which we then ate at tables in the open under great umbrellas, returning to the marquee later for coffee and dessert. Up on the terrace the band of the Royal Canadian Air Force provided a musical background of well-known themes beautifully played. Lunch over, Her Majesty and the Prince walked around the grounds, near enough for us to touch them. Thanks once again.

REPORTS FROM OBSERVERS

FRANKLIN LOEHDE, whom we are glad to welcome back from Victoria, reports that Victoria's part in the new observational programme already mentioned will be in the field of recording meteors for Dr. P.M. Millman of the N.R.C. Through the press and the Victoria Centre's excellent summer series some 25 interested persons volunteered to observe. Four groups were organized, which promise to be a genuine success. Franklin reports that a telescope group too also exists in the Vancouver Centre.

ROBERT ALLIN, Variable star observer, reports that 3 observers have been active from September, 1958 to August 1959. Of over 100 stars observed, SS cygni was one of the most interesting, 5 maxima being recorded. This star is usually around 12th magnitude but brightens rapidly to 8th in a few days. Totals for the year were:

	Stars	Observations
Robert Allin	80	1140
Donald Rosenfield	12	54
Christine Rosenfield	20	43

Telescopes from a 2" refractor to a 12½" reflector were used.

EARL MILTON reports that two meteor showers were observed during the summer vaction period. The Delta Aquarids Shower, part of the regular IGC World Night programme, was covered by four observers who worked with clear skies and late twilight conditions, hampered in addition by police flashlights. During the hour 13 meteors were recorded by the four observers, Robert Allin, Brian Miles, Earl Milton, and Don Rosenfield.

An all-out effort was made on the Perseid Shower. Clouded out on August 10-11, the group met again the next evening, and after a short briefing at the observatory at 8 p.m. migrated to Winterburn, where from 10:30 on they spent an hour observing from the new Observatory site. Six of the observers remained for yet another hour. Altogether, in 2 hours and 10 minutes, 134 Perseids and 49 non-Perseids were recorded, as well as 7 unidentified meteors. Those participating were Robert Allin, Dr. Crosby, Kim Crosby, Toni Gelene, Jim Harrington, Ian McLellan, Garry Marliss, Brian Miles, Earl Milton, Chris Rosenfield, and Don Rosenfield.

The magnitude distribution of the meteors observed was as follows:

	Total	-1	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5
Perseids	134	3	4	2	13	5	25	14	37	14	15	4	3	0
Non-Perseids	49	0	0	0	0	1	2	5	10	8	8	7	5	1
Unidentified	7													
TOTAL--190														

On August 12-13 no regular observations were carried out. Robert Allin, however, did a count by himself and in 1 hour and 20 minutes counted 23 Perseids and 1 Sporadic meteor.

The World Night Periods for the Edmonton group for the duration of the IGC are as follows:

Oct. 9-10	Giacobinid Shower	Meet	Observatory	7:00
Nov. 27-28		"	"	"
Dec. 13-14	Geminid Shower	"	"	"

AURORA BOREALIS: Earl Milton

After a cloudy summer, we are again at the auroral maximum. During the summer three observers worked regularly in Edmonton. They were Robert Allin, Brian Miles and Earl Milton. Cloudy skies kept the total low; however, the totals recorded show an increase over the corresponding months last year. The month of September has produced several large displays but nothing as spectacular as the big displays of 1957 for this same month. We would like to add one or two new observers to our winter list to help fill the holes left by our three stalwarts. If you are interested see David Marven, the auroral chairman.

The Edmonton Auroral Division is currently designing a new aurora report form to go into national usage after the end of the IGC observations. If you have any suggestions as to its format, please make them known to any members of the group.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

In future, copies of STARDUST, containing the notice of the next meeting, will be mailed to members a week ahead of that meeting. Hence all contributions to STARDUST should be in the Editor's hands two weeks ahead of the meeting. Mail them to S. F. Page, 8444 - 117 Street, Edmonton, Alberta.