was one of the first to obtain a spectrum of the suspected nova. Another observer, Olivier Thizy obtained a higher resolution spectrum which showed the key fingerprints of the atoms H_I, He_I and Fe_{II}. Within the first 24 hours amateurs had obtained over 50 spectra.

Robin showed a number of lightcurves and a recent spectrum showed the star to be in a nebula phase – the dust and gas from the nova now having a similar density to that of a planetary nebula. He pointed out that one of the new features to emerge was the discovery of Raman scattering of O_{IV} atoms. It was also clear that a database for spectroscopic observations was needed rather urgently!

The next speaker was Dr David Boyd, with a talk on the asynchronicity of polar V1432 Aquilae and its path back to synchronism. Although sounding rather technical, the talk was centred around the fact that in polar systems, the spin of the white dwarf star is synchronised with the orbital period of the binary system. However there were four systems where it was found that this was not the case – indeed V1432 Aql had a spin slower than the orbital period of the system.

After discussing the dynamics and geometry of this binary star system, David presented a number of observations which allowed him to measure the orbital period. By fitting different curves to the data he was able to establish the rotational period of the white dwarf in the system and work out when the white dwarf will become synchronised once more. David suggested that a previous nova outburst in the system may have knocked the white dwarf out of kilter, but it would be restored to normal sometime in early 2100.

The ultimate end point of this study is to help provide a better physical model of the accretion disks which form in such systems.

After tea, the final slot was given to three short presentations by VSS members. Stan Waterman started off giving his seven highlights from his Cygnus project – an ambitious attempt to discover extrasolar planets using his 5" telescope. He had amassed a lot of photometric data and in ploughing through it he found he had discovered 2 flare stars, a possible planet and a triple eclipsing binary system!

Jeremy Shears presented a campaign to observe a possible ER UMa dwarf nova star with the catchy name CSS121005:212625+201948. ER UMa stars are stars which can undergo frequent powerful outbursts known as supercycles. The star varies between mag 20.5 and 15.5, and observations were badly needed to catch as many of these supercycles as possible to help establish if this object is indeed an ER UMa star or something else entirely. Details of the project can be found on the VSS website.

The final talk of the day was split between John Toone and Dr David Boyd and was concerned with the visual photometry and spectroscopy of R Scuti in 2013. This bright variable star showed some dramatic variability last year whereby it underwent two deep minima lasting around 60 days in both cases. John presented a number of lightcurves and inferred that there might be a period of about 27 years between each deep minimum. David presented the spectroscopic results he had been able to obtain which seemed to imply clouds of titanium oxide were present around the surface of R Scuti. More recent spectra showed the star had changed once more as hydrogen Balmer lines were present and currently it looked rather complex.

Gary then handed back to the Director who closed the session by thanking the speakers, and York Astronomical Society for hosting the event. Quite recently, at Gary's gentle persuasion, I have taken on a number of variable stars, however by the time we arrived back in Leicester it was raining heavily! Clearly my contribution to the VSS database would not be made on Solstice night.

Paul G. Abel

Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw, 1912–2014

Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw, mathematician, BAA member and former Lord Mayor of Manchester, died on 2014 August 10 at the age of 101.

Dame Kathleen joined the Association in 1990 and was very active within the Manchester Astronomical Society. She was a remarkable woman who became interested in astronomy in her 60s after the death of her husband. A great friend of Patrick Moore, she travelled on total solar eclipse trips around the world, and established a small observatory at her Lake District cottage near Keswick.

Her public life was very full and her list of honours and achievements long and impressive. She was awarded DBE in 1971 for her services to education and was elected Lord Mayor of Manchester in 1975. In 1984 she was made an Honorary Freeman of the City of Manchester (Sir Bernard Lovell was the only other living Freeman). In 1979 she became the first female president of the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications. She served as Pro-Chancellor of the University of Lancaster between 1986 and 1992, where 12 years ago an observatory was built and named in her honour.

She played a central rôle in the creation of the Royal Northern College of Music, of which she was the Chair of the governing body for over 18 years (1973–'86). She was the first chair (1967–'71) of Manchester Polytechnic (now Manchester Metropolitan University) and for three years (1983–'86) was Vice-President of the Manchester University of Science and Technology (now merged with the Victoria University of Manchester). From 1973–'87 she was also chair of the Greater Manchester County St John Ambulance.

All of these achievements, and many, many more, were made despite her suffering almost total deafness since the age of eight and relying mainly on lip reading. She was a remarkable woman who lived a very full life. The BAA has lost one of its most accomplished and colourful characters.

An autobiography was published in 2004 by Manchester University Press entitled *To talk of many things*, with a forward by Sir Patrick Moore. A full obituary may be found at **http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/aug/12/dame-kathleen-ollerenshaw**

Denis Buczynski

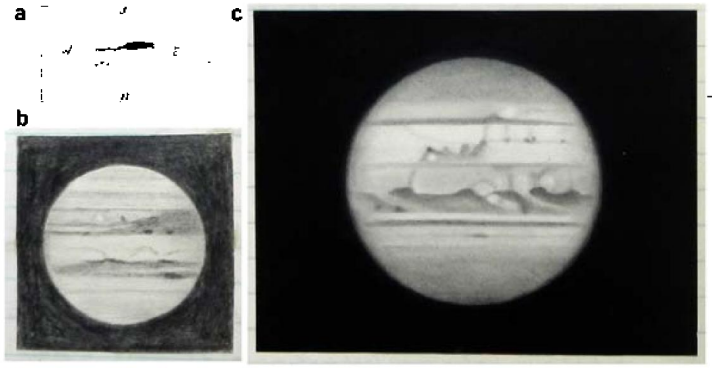
With Prof. Hermann Bondi and members of Manchester AS in 2003. ***(Photo courtesy Kevin Kilburn)***

A plaque in honour of B. M. Peek

Bertrand Meigh Peek was one of the most well-known Directors of the BAA Jupiter Section (from 1934 to 1949) and one of the most respected early authorities on Jupiter. Professionally he was a schoolteacher and spent most of his career at Solihull Grammar School. However, in 1947 he moved to the Simon Langton Boys' School at Canterbury, where he taught mathematics, and also founded the school's astronomy club. The school now has a flourishing Star Centre, and this year the school decided to mount a plaque in honour of Peek in the observatory at the school.

The plaque and its unveiling on 2014 July 15 were organised by Richard Bailey, who had been one of Peek's pupils; Chris Boucher, former teacher; Pauline Walters, former teacher and now a governor of the school; and Becky

Dr John Rogers unveils the plaque in the school's observatory.



Drawings of Jupiter from Bertrand Peek's notebooks. (a) 1906 Dec 27 (Peek's first drawing of Jupiter, on his fifteenth birthday); (b) 1922 April 28; (c) 1928 Aug 30. *(BAA Jupiter Section archives).*

Visitors, staff and students attended the ceremony at the observatory.

B. M. Peek *(centre)* at SLGS in 1949. *(Richard Bailey).*

Parker, teacher, and director of the Langton Star Centre.

The event was attended on behalf of the BAA by Dr John Rogers, present Director of the Jupiter Section, who was invited to unveil the plaque. The event was attended by about 24 people from the school, including some current students who talked about their astronomical activities, and four 'old boys' who had been taught by Peek. To show the company the extent of Peek's work on the giant planet, John Rogers brought a selection of Peek's notebooks, drawings and charts, and the Jupiter Section's copy of his famous book *The Planet Jupiter* given by Peek himself.

Richard Bailey and local historian David Lewis had uncovered much about Peek's non-astronomical life. Born in 1891 in Boscombe, Bournemouth, he excelled in mathematics at Cambridge, and was an enthusiast for chess and sailing as well as for astronomy. After the First World War (where he served in India, attaining the rank of Major), he entered the teaching profession, eventually becoming headmaster of the Junior Section of Solihull Grammar School.

It is not known why he moved from Solihull to Canterbury, but he may have wished to reduce his responsibilities and to return to the south coast, as he was to give up the Directorship of the Jupiter Section in 1949 due to declining health. He lived in Herne Bay where he was a keen member of the local Sailing Club. He retired from the school in 1955. In 1965, he went to Australia to visit his son, who was a Major in the Australian army. He died during that visit, aged 73; according to David Lewis, a meeting of the Melbourne Astronomical Society was held around Peek's hospital bed shortly before he died.

Those whom he had taught at Simon Langton School remembered him as a classic gentleman and a calm, kind and straightforward teacher, although one who could easily be distracted from his maths lessons to talk instead about navigating his yacht. 'Old boys' remembered that like most teachers in those days he habitually smoked a pipe, and wore a memorably aged gown, a visible reminder of wartime shortages and of its occasional use to clear chalk from the blackboard. Peek founded the school's astronomy club in 1948, although at the time they had no telescope, and just observed the (then-dark) sky with the naked eye and binoculars.

The school's observatory is now equipped with a 368mm Meade telescope and is soon to be enabled for remote operation and imaging. The students are also reconstructing a surplus 3-metre radio telescope, and had designed and built a novel cosmic ray detector called LUCID which was launched into orbit by a *Soyuz* rocket a few days earlier aboard TechDemoSat-1, a shared technology demonstration satellite of the UK Space Agency. So Peek's old school is still keeping up with modern methods of astronomical observation.

More about Peek's life can be found in his obituary in the *Journal*, vol.**76**(4), p.295 (1966).

John Rogers

