

Observing at the George Abell Observatory with the Alan Cooper Telescope

The **Observatory Support Group** (OSG) currently consists of:

Pete Chambers; Alan Cooper; Peter Hudson;
Andy Norton; John Walters; Tim Walker

These people are also the **key holders** for the Observatory and are each authorised to use the Observatory and operate the equipment therein. It is proposed that a few more regularly-attending club members be 'trained up' in the operation of the observatory (see below) and could also become members of the OSG in future. Current and future members of the OSG should expect to contribute to the rota discussed below.

In order to widen access to, and increase the use of, the George Abell Observatory and Alan Cooper Telescope, the following strategy will be adopted, on a trial basis.

Club Observing Nights

Once a month, generally on the **3rd Wednesday of the month** (in order to separate them from the Club Meeting Nights) there will be a Club Observing Night at the George Abell Observatory. Initially these will be run over the winter months to gauge their effectiveness. The following rules will apply:

- Each Club Observing Night will be run by one member of the OSG, on a rota basis (see below), who will be known as the **Astronomer on Duty**.
- During each Club Observing Night, the Astronomer on duty will be **assisted by a potential OSG member** in order to (i) train up new members of the OSG and (ii) keep to the rule of always having two people working in the observatory at any time.
- Volunteers are welcome to put themselves forward for the 'assistant' role on a given night, by contacting the appropriate Astronomer on Duty. If no volunteers are forthcoming, the Astronomer on Duty should seek to persuade someone!
- All **members** of the club are entitled to attend Club Observing Nights. Non-members may attend as guests, but will be encouraged thereafter to join the club. No-one should attend more than two Club Observing Nights as a guest in any one year without subsequently joining as a member.
- If people wish to attend a given Club Observing Night they should **telephone or e-mail** the Astronomer on Duty before 7pm on the night in question. If no-one has rung in by that time, the Astronomer on Duty and the person assisting are not obliged to turn up, or may go home if they're already at the Observatory!
- If people are expected, then on a given Club Observing Night, the Astronomer on Duty is responsible for **opening up** the Observatory at **sunset or 7.30pm** (whichever is later), unless skies are essentially hidden due to cloud, rain, snow, fog, etc. with little prospect of clearing.

- The Club Observing Night will generally finish at **midnight**. A later finish may occur at the discretion of the Astronomer on Duty, or earlier if weather intervenes, or if the Astronomer on Duty needs it to be so.
- The ‘programme’ for a given night will be at the choice of the Astronomer on Duty, informed by requests submitted in advance by people who wish to attend.
- The Astronomer on Duty should forward the ‘programme’ for a given Club Observing Night to the Club Secretary, in order for it to be e-mailed around the members of the club a few days in advance of the observing night.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Astronomer on Duty</i>	<i>Assisted by</i>
20 th October 2004	Pete Chambers	John Walters
17 th November 2004	Alan Cooper	t.b.a.
15 th December 2004	Peter Hudson	t.b.a.
19 th January 2005	Andy Norton	t.b.a.
16 th February 2005	Tim Walker	t.b.a.
16 th March 2005	John Walters	t.b.a.

Telephone numbers & e-mail of OSG members

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Alan Cooper	01908 666824 (h) wa.cooper@virgin.net
Peter Hudson	01234 870240 (h) peterv.hudson@btopenworld.com
Andy Norton	01908 654121 (w) / 01234 713192 (h) A.J.Norton@open.ac.uk
Tim Walker	01908 293453 (w) / 01908 643838 (h) tim.s.walker@btinternet.com
John Walters	01908 653830 (w) J.H.H.Walters@open.ac.uk

Andy Norton 14th October 2004
Astronomy Club Chair & Observatory Director