

Book Reviews

Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage

J. L. Perdrix (Editor)

Astral Press, Perth, Volume 1, Annual subscription (two issues) AU\$30, ISSN 1440-2807

Reviewed by L. R. Allen

For more than thirteen years and thirty issues the *Australian Journal of Astronomy*, under the guidance of John Perdrix, has provided a valuable avenue for the publication of original astronomical research, reviews and reports from observatories and astronomical societies. It has also been a useful source of information on the development of technology for users of moderately sized telescopes. Contributions were accepted from both professional astronomers and those observers (sometimes referred to inadequately as Amateurs) whose income is not associated with their astronomical work and the Journal became a much needed link between the two communities. Of particular and permanent value were the many articles of historical interest which appeared at regular intervals. These contributions described the life and work of early Australian astronomers and quite often gave very detailed information on the instruments that they used.

It was therefore unfortunate that publication had to end with the thirtieth issue, perhaps because some of the original aims are now better served by the more immediate dissemination of information through the electronic media. But, as the Editor notes, 'all is not lost', as, just before the demise of the *Australian Journal of Astronomy*, a new publication was announced devoted specifically to the topic of the history of astronomy and astronomers, but this time on a much broader stage.

The *Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage* has been launched following extensive discussions at the General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union as an outlet for those authors who previously were able to publish in the *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society* or in *Vistas in Astronomy*. The new Journal has an impressive list of international astronomers as its Editorial Board and has as its 'Managing Editor', John Perdrix, and as the 'Papers Editor', Dr Wayne Orchiston from New Zealand.

The guidelines for the submission of papers make interesting reading for the wide range of topics that will be considered for publication. I can do no better than quote the Editor: 'Papers on all aspects of astronomical history are considered, including studies which place the evolution of astronomy in political, economic and cultural contexts. Papers on astronomical heritage may deal with historic telescopes and observatories, conservation projects (including the conversion of historic observatories into museums of astronomy), and historical or industrial archaeological investigations of astronomical sites and buildings.'

Certainly the first issue lives up to these expectations. There is an article on a thousand years of observation of the Leonid Meteors, and two biographical contributions, one on William Scott the first Director of Sydney Observatory, the other about Mary Evershed, solar physicist and Dante scholar. The historical bibliography, under the heading 'Recent publications relating to the history of astronomy', is all of ten pages long and the issue ends with an Essay review and a book review.

With this choice I would think the Journal is bound to attract both authors and readers in the future and my first reaction to the announcement of the new Journal (which was 'Oh Dear, not another journal to try to keep up with') is now totally withdrawn.

L. R. Allen
Physics Department
Macquarie University
Sydney, NSW

Applications of Time Series Analysis in Astronomy and Meteorology

T. Subba Rao, M. B. Priestly and O. Lessi (Eds)
Chapman and Hall, 1997

Reviewed by C. J. Durrant

This book collects a series of papers delivered at a conference held at the University of Padua in 1993. The aim of the meeting was to bring together statisticians, astronomers and meteorologists in response to what one of the contributors describes 'a surprising disregard [by astronomers] for statistical methods developed for other applications'.