

Notable Dates

Mid-February 1970: Inaugural Meeting of what was then called Mansfield & District Astronomical Society. Held on the premises of SA Monks – employer of society founder David Collins.

11th Feb 1972: The parcel of land that Obs is sat on, purchased from Central Notts Water Board for the sum of £50 – which was raised by a 14 mile sponsored walk.

Around Autumn 1972: Plans for the Observatory were submitted to the Council, and after a few queries regarding the dome, which was answered with help from Nottm University (they used the planned Observatory as a chance for Architectural Students to work on a live project instead of the usual theoretical ones) planning was subsequently granted.

End of 1972: Digging foundations began. Construction started on the building – using mostly donated materials ie the bricks are a mixture from Pleasley Colliery Pit Canteen, and Westgate in Mansfield (the site that is now Four Seasons Shopping Centre)

1973: Ground Floor level complete and flat roof laid.

1974 – 1975: Completion of internal fit-out and electrics.

Early 1976: Dome Construction completed (details shown separately)

1975 - 1976: Telescope Polar Fork Mount and Truss Tube constructed (details shown separately)

1979: Glass ordered for the creation of Primary and Secondary Mirrors (details shown separately)

1983: First proper viewing of an astronomical object (M42 Orion Nebula) AKA “First Light”

Summer 1986: Official Opening of Obs by Astronomer Royal Professor Sir Francis Graham Smith.

2004: Extension built – housing workshop, optics store, disabled WC and access ramp.

October 2013: First attempt at replacing the control system with a system developed by Chris Dakin – implementing stepper motors and a corded handset control.

2014: Land next door to Obs became available to purchase – site of the reservoir and home of new SDC

July 22nd 2015: First movement of the telescope after upgrading the 2013 control system to wireless handpad and computer control.

Feb-March 2024: New Primary and Secondary mirrors installed. First light 3rd March M42 Orion Nebula.

Sherwood Observatory Timeline Reference Guide for Event Speakers

2024 Version 1.2

Author: Tony Booth. With thanks and reference to Mr D Collins.

Copyright © 2024 Mansfield and Sutton Astronomical Society.

Permission granted to reproduce for personal and educational use only. Commercial copying, hiring, lending is prohibited.