

# “UNIVERSE” TURNS FIFTY

by Andrew James

This month's Universe is a very special one. It commemorates the 50th anniversary of the first appearance of the title “Universe” for the Journal of the Sydney Amateur Astronomers (SAA), which later became the ASNSW. Before the Committee meeting in April 1964, the Journal was known simply as “The Bulletin”. That title had survived for just under ten years since the Society's formation in October 1954. The decision to change the title coincided with the move of the AGM to early in the financial year, rather than early in the calendar year. The first issue appearing with the new title came out in June, 1964.

## ORIGINS OF “UNIVERSE”

The now late Keith Selby, who joined the Society in January 1955, commented in Universe October 1979, p10, that:

*“The first ‘journal’ was simply a typed copy consisting of two sheets, but the second and subsequent issues were printed with a ‘Gestetner’ machine. On the cover there appeared for the first time the emblem that eventually became the Society’s badge – of course this was worded ‘Sydney Amateur Astronomers’ but, later, when the name changed, so did the wording on the badge (by persons unknown to me) although the design of the badge remained unaltered. When it was decided to have a Society badge, a competition was arranged among the members, but the response was so poor and my entry was accepted as it appeared on the cover of the Journal.”*

John Flavin says in “Our Belfield Years” (p48): “The cover for the June '64 issue of our journal, Universe, ... was the third new cover to be adopted.” The first cover of “The Bulletin” was an image of the keyhole of the Eta Carina nebula. The second was a close-up photograph of a lunar

crater. The latter was appropriate at a time when the first space probes were exploring the Moon.

Oddly, the British Astronomical Association (BAA), NSW Branch, also referred to their Journal as “The Bulletin”. Some of the first members of our Society were originally associated with the BAA. These individuals mainly split away from the BAA because of the distance they had to travel by train to meetings at Sydney Observatory from their locations in the Canterbury district. For some reason, they stuck to the old Journal name, feeling that there was no need to change it. Some remained members of both groups but, starting in December 1961, the bonds between the groups slowly split, and they ended up evolving on their own separate paths. In May 1961, the Journal became a registered publication, meaning a significant reduction in postage costs. The last few months of 1961 saw much bigger Journal changes. September saw, for the first time, the Junior SAA Bulletin placed at the end of the Journal. Simpler articles and meeting notifications appeared within these pages, and proved popular with newer members. Universe was no longer printed with only one page per sheet, with October 1961 being the first issue that was printed on both sides. Better still, the Society purchased a new Gestetner machine in November for \$150, the cost of which was the majority of the available funds on hand - a big gamble on the Society's future success!

However, the truly biggest change to the Society overall was the open suggestion by George Knox to rename us the Astronomical Society of New South Wales. This change of name did not become official until February 1964.

According to our unofficial history, as written by William Proudfoot and Terry Clarke, and as it appeared in the journal of the day, a new name for the Journal was proposed by Mr G. Bros, whose choice was announced at the 1964 April General Meeting. It seems that at an earlier Committee meeting, there was some really heated debate on the issue and, although not stated, it required the then President, William ‘Bill’ Proudfoot, to use his casting vote – a rare circumstance in most formal meetings. It appears that the name change was made to make the Journal more popular for wider audiences and to encourage new members to join, yet some considered the new name to be slightly ostentatious because the name “Universe” implies, literally, everything – all existing matter and space considered as a whole; the entire cosmos – being made even more notorious by its capital ‘U’! It also has the more subtle meaning of “... a particular sphere of activity, interest, or experience.” We do not know the mindset of Mr Bros, so we have no way of really confirming the whys or wherefores of the selection but, either way, its scope is extremely wide.

## CREATING THE JOURNAL

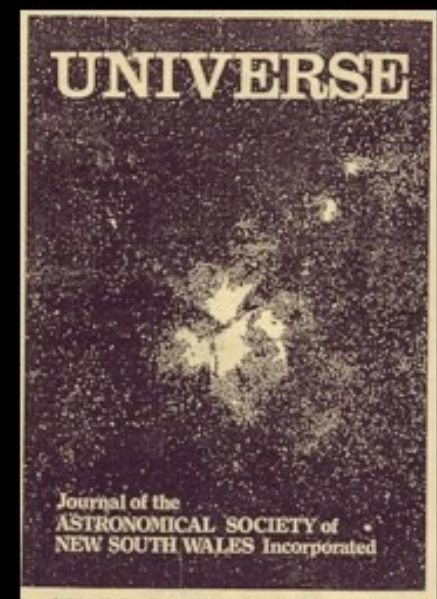
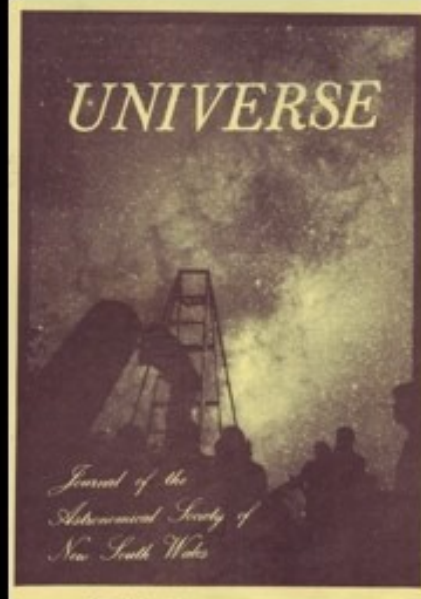
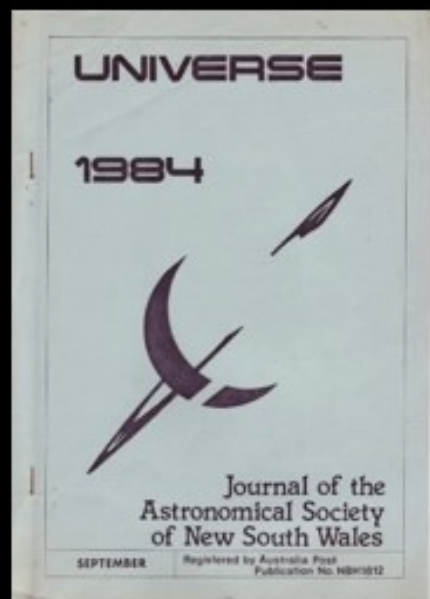
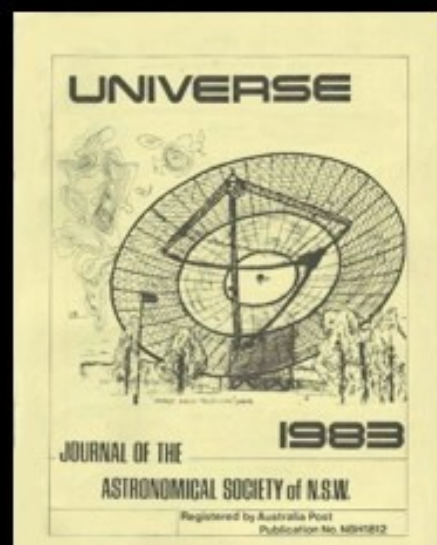
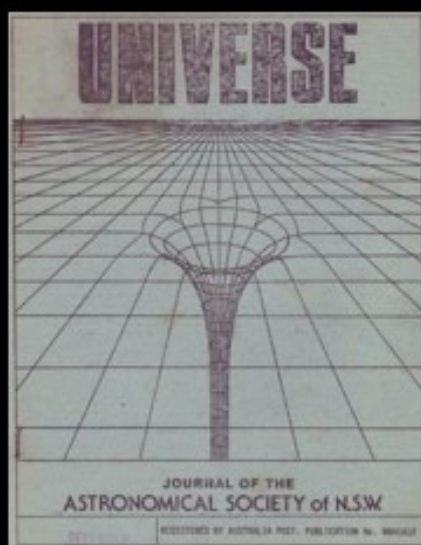
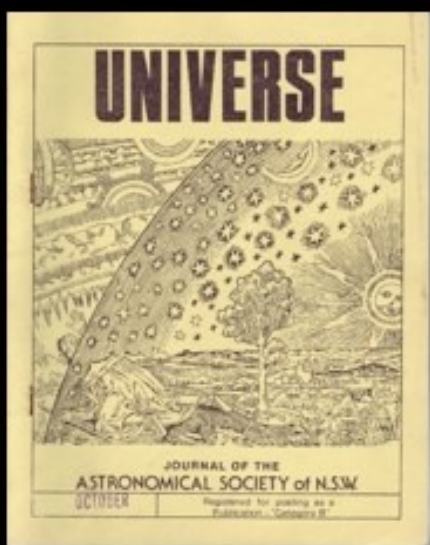
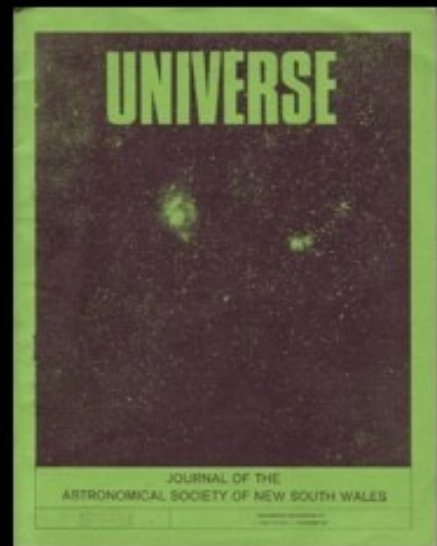
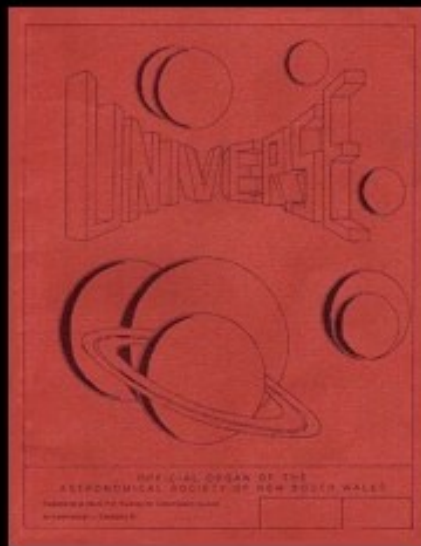
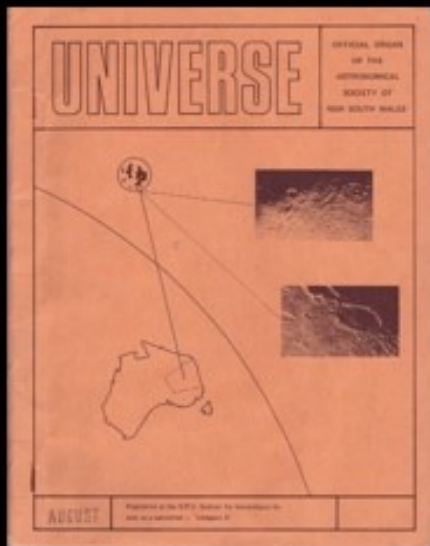
In the early days, the Journal was manually typed out on



Emblem and Badge

**Left:** The emblem that appeared on cover of the early editions, as described in the text by Keith Selby. This emblem was also used for the Society badge.

**Right:** The same emblem after the Society changed its name in 1964. Note that the emblem does not appear on the “New” June 1964 cover (reproduced as the cover of this issue).



**Universe Covers**

In usual reading order (left to right, top to bottom): 1973-75, 1975-77, 1978-80, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1987



Gestetner stencils. These were then taken to the printers, collected, collated by members walking around a table, and then stapled together. Finally, the journals were placed into envelopes and address labels added. This involved going to the post office with several boxes, all sorted by postcode, to have them posted out. Nice graphics was especially problematic to produce and were used minimally to reduce the costs.

When I finally joined in 1978, then Editor, Daniel 'Danny' Gooden, quite necessarily relied on others of the committee and members for support. Sometimes he typed the journal onto one of these specialised stencils, or a paid typist to do this from handwritten article submissions. The stencils were carbonised wax-backed sheets that each joined to a punched-out heavy cardboard header. They had to be handled carefully, as they could be easily damaged or torn. These would be attached to the specialised printer. During typing, each typewriter letter strike removed some of the wax, so that when the ink was spread on a roller, it would be forced through the stencil and onto the printed sheet. This printing process was repeated each time for the average sixteen to twenty pages of the journal, for several hundred passes per stencil, totalling some 4800 to 6000 individual pages per month.

Some of us volunteered to take documents and stencils to the hired typist (including, at one time or another, Judy Cauchi). When done, another trip was required to pick them up. They were then taken to the printers, or when we purchased one of our own duplicator machines, to our own printer. As I recall, the recently-late Cyril Brown did the printing. Again, usually on a weeknight, one of us would go to his place in Dural and deliver all the completed stencils. He was usually dressed in a traditional white one-piece work uniform. The printing was done in his small workshop in the backyard. Sometimes we waited there, or sometimes we returned another day. A collating day was organised at somebody's home shortly thereafter or, rarely, even at meetings, and then the job was completed.

This sounds like a lot of hard work and utter drudgery, but it was often very good fun. Discussion centred on astronomy, and it built camaraderie and friendship between the volunteers. No doubt, the Editor would have no excuse but to feel proud of the final document.

This progressed in the 1980s to simple photocopying, which was much easier. Gone were the delicate stencils and, at last, it became easier to add more graphics and photographs, which were placed on each page as a montage of text and images. At first, we took the pages to a printer, but when the membership rose to 400 to 500 members in the mid-1980s, we bought our own commercial-sized photocopier and computers to reduce the overall costs. At that time, the journal was being



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produced at the garage of Ken Wallace in Seven Hills. He would edit, print and then collate it. This would often take many hours. An image from this time, (below left) shows Ken Wallace, c.1982, in his garage celebrating his birthday with the old crew of Universe collators. The bench used to print the journal is behind the people standing up. This was sometimes a 'sweatshop', where Ken would be regularly previewing the quality of the photocopies and overseeing the making of Universe from typing to posting.

When I hold an old Universe from these times, I often think about the tremendous work to produce it. I also think others have forgotten or are unaware of these considerable efforts. Now, in the computer age, we only have to press one or two computer keys and we see Universe directly in front of us. We're spoilt. Perhaps our values have changed too, as we now skim over PDF journals rather than poring over handheld paper copies.

At one point, Universe production was simply outsourced, and all the good times of getting together were lost. After this, the Editor became further isolated from the process, which allowed for concentration on the outline and contents, rather than physically creating it. I don't mean to diminish the role of Editors, as here I only want to point out the vast differences in the production regime. By 2006, the number of electronic recipients of Universe exceeded the number sent out by mail. As then President, Margaret Streamer explained:

*"Thank you to those members who responded to my plea to take Universe via email rather than as a hard copy sent in the mail. But we really need a few more people to change over to email to avoid an increase in membership fees. A mailed copy of Universe currently costs the Society about \$41 per year as opposed to no cost when members receive Universe via email. An emailed Universe therefore saves the Society considerable cost and also means the member receives it before the mailed issue and in fabulous full colour.*

*"I appreciate that regional members may not have access to high speed internet connections and therefore the time for downloading the large file associated with the Universe is prohibitive. The Society is willing to bear this extra cost for these members.*

*"Members taking emailed Universe are subsidising the mail-out of paper copies. If we can't reduce the number of paper copies of Universe being sent out, the committee will have to consider raising membership fees as the current fee structure is not sufficient to cover our basic running cost."*

Today our Journal is created with computers using electronic word processing, layout and formatting software. Members can now present next-day images, observations and complex graphics. Anyone with a computer can now produce high quality documentation that, fifty years ago, could not be readily achieved even with the glossiest magazines of the day. The promised digital revolution has arrived with desktop publishing and the Internet. Recently we see even more changes, where articles can appear online and, instead of being static pieces of text, can be constantly updated and revised. Collectively, we can be much stronger than we are individually – a laudable goal or aspiration that is not often immediately appreciated. As Sir Francis Bacon said all those years ago in 1597, "Knowledge is power", which in the computer age has been paraphrased into "Information is power."

Our Journal costs have traditionally been covered by membership fees and, in the past, used up more than

80% of the subscription fees. The remaining portion of fees was to cover general costs like public liability insurance and Society correspondence and promotion. Before the Society was incorporated in 1982, there was no real governance of societies. Committees were mostly free from the consequences of their actions. Changes were introduced and legal ramifications were imposed to protect a society's finances from either fraud or mismanagement. In New South Wales, this is now controlled and overseen by the NSW Department of Fair Trading, where we have legal obligations in how our Society conducts and reports its financial business on behalf of the membership. This process has added to the total costs of managing the ASNSW but, proportionally to other Society costs, Journal costs continue to drop compared with costs in the early days of its production. Producing and distributing Universe electronically is a major factor, with only a handful of members still receiving a physical copy of the Journal. It ultimately means we can manage our costs more effectively, freeing up funds for other services and equipment.

### TRANSFORMATION of UNIVERSE

Universe over the years has had many changes in both appearance and size. At first, the Journal was stapled pages. This was improved by adding dedicated 80 gsm cardboard covers. Alan Yates was the one who introduced this in the early 1970s, where the covers were made by a dedicated external printer. This higher gsm cover had to disappear when the costs of postage significantly rose. Then the Journal was folded into three and the back cover contained the mailing address.

During 2001-02, the then new Editor, Janet Saw, introduced a few changes. Janet changed the main layout from single/double into three columns, maximising the amount of content that fitted on each page. This was also when Journal production was cut from twelve issues per year to eleven issues, with the December and January editions combined into a larger Christmas edition, giving the editor a chance to rest over the festive season.

Most importantly, Janet was involved in bringing Universe into the digital age. It was then that Universe first became available via email or through the ASNSW website. Through wise decision-making, the information for members was more easily distributed. Janet and Webmaster, Lachlan McDonald, were able to better promote the Society on a broader scale. Online for members are all the current and back issues of Universe from December 2002 onwards.

Though few took to the digital copies at first, the numbers slowly increased until, today, the majority of members now receive the electronic version. As well as reducing costs, electronic versions have the great advantage of replacing the usual drab black and white images with colour, giving Universe some new vibrancy. Strong interest in astrophotography and CCD imaging is reflected in the digital publication of these images in full colour. There have been some issues with file size and, occasionally, image quality is compromised to maintain the final file size below 4Mb. Nevertheless, each South Pacific Star Party has become a regular annular colourful montage of attractive images and written articles. Our first full page cover image was introduced by Don Whiteman in October 2006, with a different image appearing each month. Today we all seemingly just take this for granted, but it was a major change, and showed what possibilities could be achieved.

Electronic Universe has not always been smooth sailing.

Don Whiteman, in March 2008, wrote:

*"When you are about half way through setting a journal and you have a motherboard die, all hell breaks loose. This happened to me on 18th February. Our lives have become so dependent on the box on our desks. Computers are such a pain when things go horribly wrong. I lost everything since my last back up, about 3 weeks' worth, including the March Journal."*

Despite the crash, in my opinion, this issue has one of the best ever Universe covers, featuring a brilliant image taken by Greg Priestley showing a dramatic lightning strike at Wiruna (p11, bottom left). It also has a nice article: "Wiruna Report - February 2008" by Joe Cauchi with some lovely images.

### THE EDITORS

Then, as now, the Editor's position was centrally important. The Editor's job each month was to ultimately drum-up member's submissions, then join them into some cohesive and readable document and finally complete the Journal distribution to the membership. It's a tough and very responsible job, its rewards being very satisfying. Often the work can be taxing on time, mostly without a real break. Editors are usually of a specific ilk, with good organisational skills and a strong interest in writing. Editors often need good people skills when negotiating which contributions are suitable for publication. Looking through past Journals down the years, it is clear to see their individual personalities in how the publication looks and is structured.

Our first editor, R. Johnston (1955), contributed only six editions with a total of only twenty-three pages, but the next two Editors, J.T. Davies (1956 to 1961) and G.E. Patston (1962-1964), produced seventy-two (760 pages) and 75 (1283 pages) editions, respectively. Patston took a sabbatical from August 1966 to February 1967, so F. Pearson took up the Editorship for seven months, adding a further 137 pages. Although there was a serious crisis during 1969 to 1970, Universe remained unaffected and continued to be produced.

Between December 1968 and March 1971, L.P. Kelly produced twenty-eight journals and 373 pages. Next it was Alan Yates' turn between April 1971 and August 1977, producing seventy-six journals with an amazing total of 1978 pages and averaging 24.7 pages per issue. (He also produced the 6th NACAA contributors book in 1976.)

Our next editor was Danny Gooden, starting August 1977 and ending in August 1980. Breaking greatly from the past, he expanded the Journal format, which included many more drawings and members' visual observations. Journal size expanded from an average of 25 pages to 31 pages, with the largest edition being 40 pages in October 1979. He introduced a new printed hardcover with a picture of the Eta Carinae Nebula which, in 1978 was blue, in 1979 was green (image p7, top right), and in 1980 was yellow.

In the October 1979 Journal, he recommended that a professionally-printed colour photograph of the **Carina Nebula and Surrounds** (background image, p13) appear as a frontispiece in a special edition of Universe celebrating the ASNSW's 25th Anniversary. This original picture was taken by Vice President, Zac Herenda, and it was he who offered to submit 180 photographic copies sized 25cm×20cm at his own cost. This astrophoto was made at Wiseman's Creek in mid-western NSW on the ANZAC holiday (24th April, 1977), using Zac's 135mm f/1.8 lens camera piggy-backed atop a Celestron 8. Film

was 100 ASA colour print film and was exposed, if I recall properly, for some forty-five minutes. The guide star was 4th magnitude W Carinae. In 1980 appeared another.

In February 1978, he said:

*"As you know, over the past six months I have introduced several new features which I feel make the Universe more enjoyable to the average amateur. The beauty of some of these features is the fact that you, the readers, are able to 'involve yourselves' with the Journal. I realize SOLAR SCENE is limited (but valuable) but I would like you to support CRUMPS CORNER and LUNALOOK.*

*"Who knows we might even start a PLANETARY PAGE (it's the only thing left).*

*"Please note I said WE, even though I am Editor the Journal represents (or should) ALL members of the club."*

He further said:

*"I believe the greatest value of our Journal is that a member can write any article that would not be published in most publications but is placed in the Journal, I admit my THOUSAND DAYS would not be accepted anywhere but where it is. It must be remembered that the first three parts were placed in our Journal before I became Editor. Our club has the ability to produce a 30 page journal each month and MEMBERS should take advantage of this. It saddens me when a member comes up to me and tells me where I can 'obtain' a story, I would much prefer that members write one themselves."*

Following this stint, Grant Searle became Editor between 1980 and 1981. Grant added a more literary style to Universe with more lunar and planetary content. At the September 1980 Committee meeting, discussion was about buying a new printer at the cost of about \$1400. I remember this meeting well because, at the Technical Meeting the week before, Joe Cauchi gave his fabulous and informative "Globular Star Cluster" talk, reporting on his great 'project' of observing all the galactic globulars visible in the sky. At the following General Meeting on the 19th September, a secret ballot was held, and the issue to buy the printer was decided by 16 votes to 10. In the November editorial, Grant very positively said:

*"The journal, of course, is in a very healthy state and, wishing not to change a winning team, I have decided to leave most of the contributions intact. I am also indeed fortunate taking over at a time when the Society has just made one of its important decisions in its history, by purchasing a versatile offset printer to improve the quality of publications whilst at the same time serving as a cost-effective asset against inflation.*

*"I would like to implore all members to make a contribution to the journal, whether it be in the form of an article, observation or whatever, as without your help this journal would cease to be worthy of the considerable effort that is expended each month. Finally I am always open to suggestions and criticism so please do not hesitate to approach me, or if distance intervenes, write."*

Nick Loveday took over the editorship from 1982 to 1984, and took the Journal to a higher technical level. Also, after August 1983, the Journal changed from its UK-based Long Post Quarto (205mm×260mm / 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>×10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch) to the larger ISO standard of A4. In this Journal, Nick Loveday in his editorial comments stated:

*"At last – our first A4 edition. We ran out of quarto paper and covers (most of the copies had white back pages.) Back to normal this month. I have had to resort to employing a typist again and, to ensure efficient*

*production of each issue, I am asking authors to assist by ensuring their material is legible, especially if technical terms and non-English words are used. It would also make my task easier if you follow the format of this journal - if you don't, I often have to copy the article again to fix that. Please bear in mind that the typist (a) is not an astronomer, (b) she might not be able to spell as well as you do, and (c) remind yourself of the limited set of characters available on a typewriter. Metric units should be used rather than imperial, and decimals should be used rather than fractions. Scratchy little scribbles on scraps of paper just won't do any more for items longer than one page.*

*"New covers are again requested for next year's journal and Ephemeris, so all artists should get cracking. The judging will be done in December, and the Christmas Party will be the last date you can submit an entry. Perhaps a sketch of Mt. Bowen, or for those photographers, how about a solarized black and white print?"*

Mark Suchting, when he was elected, nicely commented on the Journal in September 1984, imploring the membership towards observations and astrophotography. He wrote:

#### **"EDITORIAL**

*"Firstly I would like to thank our new President and former Editor, Nick Loveday for the producing the last issue of UNIVERSE, which had such an interesting balance of theoretical, practical and observational articles. I have received some compliments which I have duly passed on to Nick; I am hoping that, with support from the A.S.N.S.W. membership, such standards can be maintained and even improved upon.*

*"Having followed the progress of the journal since 1972, I can honestly say that it has never before reached the high standard of presentation and material that we can appreciate today.*

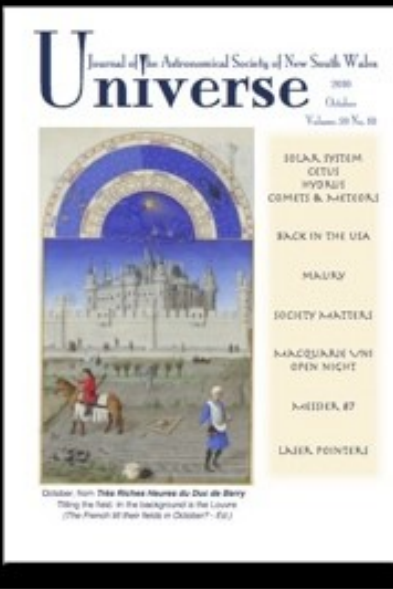
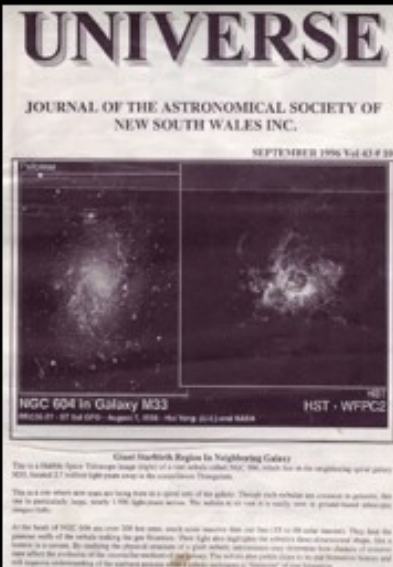
*"The next two years of the Society will be ones of massive growth in many ways. Public interest generated by the arrival of Halley's Comet will result in an influx of many new members. The completion of our observatory, providing shelter from the elements and a large "eye" on the sky, will dramatically increase membership interest in active observational Astronomy.*

*"These changes in the Society will be naturally reflected in our journal. Access to a quality large-aperture telescope will allow dedicated observers to compile meaningful observations both visual and photoelectric. The resultant data will appear in the journal as a benchmark of the Society's growth. At the same time, the needs of the beginning astronomer will have to be taken care of, as with every large membership they will be great in number.*

*"On a more immediate note, I am hoping to increase the number of basic observational drawings and data appearing in the Journal. One problem, I think, is that members are not quite sure how to present their telescopic observations and may feel that they lack the necessary artistic skills for drawing their observations; and in draughting [sic] to present their work.*

*"To relieve this problem, I hope to collaborate with the appropriate Section Leaders in producing simple and attractive observation forms that will leave a minimum amount of work, apart from the "field" sketches, on the part of the contributor. Ideally, we could have Lunar and Planetary, Solar and Deep Sky observational drawings in every issue as the rule and not the exception. Interest in*





**Universe Covers**

In usual reading order (left to right, top to bottom): 1991, 1996, 1997-98, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2008, 2010, 2012

*the various Sections should increase ... In our Society we have many astrophotographers whose work is of the highest standard. I will be making efforts to put members' astrophotographs in every issue. Some of these fine astrophotographic efforts deserve a more permanent 'exposure' than a quick glance as they are passed around the room at the General Meeting.*

*"In future Editorials I will be reminding readers of the kinds of articles they can submit by reference to material that has graced these pages in the past.*

*"To the regular contributors; keep up the good work! To all of the others, I hope I can induce you to write for the journal and share your interest in Astronomy with others. Remember, the health of this Journal and the Society in general depends on consistent contributions in any way possible by you, The Membership."*

Then came Ken Wallace, whose contributions to the Society are notable. He served as Treasurer between 1978 and 1988, but also did the Editorship to "help-out" in 1984-1985. Doing typing, editing, printing and posting during this time was simply extraordinary. It was a pleasure for me to present a just reward for his great efforts in August 1989, when we presented him with a life membership.

The next series of Editors saw many changes and formats. David Reidy was the Editor for 1985-1986. Here, the Journal became multi-columned, mostly to increase the readability and squeeze in more information. David, in 1982, had worked to create the draft for the Society's Incorporation.

Between August 1987 and May 1990, Peter Northfield produced the Journal. The number of pages stayed the same but, with the smaller font size, these issues were among those that bore the largest number of words and articles per issue. He resigned the Editorship due to work commitments.

After the second Society crisis and turbulence that occurred between 1987 and 1989 over Bowen Mountain and Wiruna, Peter was succeeded by Glenn Dawes for the June and July 1990 issues, then Mark Suchting took over again for 1990-1991.

Next was Chris Mylnarik 1991-1992, then Greg Bryant 1992-1995. Between May 1995 and January 1998, Serge Wadwha became Editor, but he resigned for personal reasons - the birth of his daughter. (Probably the best excuse of all the unforeseen resignations over the years!)

Serge was followed by Janet Saw, who had the next stint as Editor (1998 to 2006.) Janet was a very dedicated Editor, whose absolute commitment to Journal accuracy and quality was inspiring. She brought much more stability to the Society's Journal mostly due to her dedication and longevity on the job. Later, for this, Janet was nominated for Life Membership, which was unanimously agreed. To quote Don Whiteman on her contribution:

*"... I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Janet Saw for her many years of service to the society in her capacity as editor. It has been an honour to have served on the committee with her over much of this period. She has been an endless worker for the society and I would like to congratulate her on her nomination for life membership ... Over the coming months I hope to be able to continue the level of quality of Universe. In saying this I have already learnt the editor's bane."*

Don Whiteman, our current President, had taken over as Editor from September 2006 to August 2010. In his last

issue, he said:

*"As has been the case of late, I have been inundated with work in my employment and as such have not had the chance to get this edition out on time.*

*"However, this will be my last edition as editor and I thank you for your patience. As always we are short of articles for future editions. Because of this shortage I believe that the journal will go to bi-monthly before much longer. That in itself will make the job of editor a lot easier.*

*"I am quite happy with the changes that have occurred whilst I was editor. With the majority of members taking the journal as a pdf file, we have saved the society much money in printing and postage costs and also we have been able to go to full colour and include supplementary attachments at times. This is the best way to get the journal. I also had fun including some poetry each month, I had a great time looking up astronomical poems to include.*

*"Thanks for the opportunity to have been editor, in the most it has been enjoyable."*

Don concluded by summing up the importance of our Journal, which still applies after fifty years:

*"This edition is full of great articles. Please enjoy it. Thanks to all who contributed to this issue.*

*"We hope that you enjoy this month's issue and would like to hear your comments. You can email them in to us at [Editor@answ.com](mailto:Editor@answ.com)."*

John Sims' editorship was short, between August 2010 and September 2011. He said in an interesting initial statement on the "modern Journal":

*"Contributions to the Journal are most welcome. As you can probably tell, this edition is the first with myself as editor and I'm sure the prudent thing to do would be to take advantage of my current enthusiasm for the role.*