The IoA Library was pleased to accept from Richard McKim of the British Astronomical Association (BAA) a copy of a very rare book, which describes aurorae seen over Cambridge in 1846 and 1847.

One of the book's authors, John Holdsworth Morgan (1825-1908) was a Junior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory over the period 1844-47 where he mainly worked on transit observations. With John T. Barber, a student of Trinity College, he published "An account of the aurora borealis, seen near Cambridge, October the 24th, 1847. Together with those of September 21, 1846 and March 19, 1847, seen at the Cambridge Observatory", the book was published in Cambridge, probably in 1847. Copies were distributed to a small number of subscribers.

Morgan went on to a career in the church but obviously retained some astronomical interests as he belonged to the RAS from 1879 to 1906. Sadly he died in 1908 in London’s infamous mental hospital ‘Bedlam’ (Bethlem Hospital).

The short book contains 12 colour plates depicting the aurora as seen from Cambridge and particularly the Cambridge Observatory, along with meteorological observations and accounts by other observers. It is interesting to note that ‘Cambridge mean time’ is used, based on the Observatory clock.

We are really pleased to have (at last) a copy of this rare book in the IoA Library. We hope to scan the plates to make them available on DSpace, the book will also be used for library displays and shown to visitors.
Social Media
On 5th April our number of followers on the IoA’s Twitter account (used mainly for public outreach and astronomy news) hit the 1000 mark. We still have a long way to reach Brian Cox and his 1,086,845 followers! But you can help, if you have an event at the IoA, a news story, or are giving a talk somewhere, please let us know, and we can give it some publicity, the IoA is also on Facebook.

IoA Open Afternoon (23 March)
This year we had to contend with snow, which reduced the number of visitors, however, we still had over one hundred visitors to our library display on the life of Sir Robert Ball. The purpose of the display was to commemorate 100 years since the death of this former Director of the Cambridge Observatory 1913-2013. Included in the display was the stereographoscope, which was quite a hit with the visitors.

NEW BOOKS: MAY 2013
New books on display in the Hoyle building library area through the month of May.


Diary Date
15 June (Sat) Webb AGM at IoA.

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