

Sydney Midwinter 2005

The Sydney 2005 Midwinter was held at the Rowers' Retreat, top level of the UTS Haberfield Rowing Club, Dobroyd Pde, Haberfield.

David Ellyard, as MC Extraordinaire, proposed the toast to ANARE. The toast was responded to by John Lavett, as one of our distinguished '47-ers present. John spoke passionately about the ANARE spirit and about current changes. David then proposed the toast to the Expeditioners, and this was responded to by Peter Earnshaw, our most recent expeditioner, having recently returned from a summer at Casey Station Peter agreed that things had changed but said, once down in Antarctica, the ANARE spirit prevailed, even though they weren't allowed to call it that!

Our guest speaker, Dr Michael Burton, showed he has plenty of the ANARE spirit by battling on valiantly against the almost-insurmountable odds of competing tables of non-ANARE diners (we thought we were bad enough!) Unfortunately, an unexpected dearth of numbers meant the NSW Branch had to share our MWD space, at the last minute, with the general public, and we were not allowed the use of a microphone. This called for great attentiveness on the part of our members and their guests, and a certain resilience on the part of our guest speaker.

Dr Burton (BA (Hons), MA (Cambridge), PhD (Edinburgh), FASA) is amongst many other things, a Fellow of the Astronomical Society of Australia, Chair of the Australian Working Group for Antarctic Astronomy, Co-chair of the Joint Australian Centre for Astrophysical Research in Antarctica, Councillor of the Astronomical Society of Australia, Member of the IAU Commission 34 (Interstellar Matter), Member of the Advisory Committee Instrumentation of the Anglo Australian Telescope and (possibly most importantly) Treasurer of Science-in-the-Pub. He spoke to the meeting on the developing role of Astronomy from the Antarctic Plateau. The subject was a fascinating one - the following is an excerpt from Dr Burtons website www.phys.unsw.edu.au/~mgb/mgb.html

The extremely dry, cold and tenuous air above the high Antarctic plateau provides the pre-eminent location on Earth for the observation of the particle and photo fluxes incident on our planet from space, across much of their energy spectrum. This is particularly so in the IR and millimetre regimes, where the cold vastly diminishes the IR thermal background and the dry and stable air significantly improves the atmospheric transmission over mid-latitude sites such as Mana Kea. Of course there is a tremendous technological and logistical challenge to be overcome in order to build an observatory in this, the most remote and inhospitable region of our planet, at least from a human perspective. Michael is participating in the site testing campaign at the South Pole and is actively involved in the international promotion and development of Antarctic astronomy, including the Automated Astrophysical site Testing Observatory (AASTO) and the SPIREX/Abu near-IR camera.

After an evening of fine dining and wining, the raffle (held for the benefit of the Antarctic seal program at Taronga Zoo) was held.

The evening concluded with the Call of the Year. David Ellyard called them by decades, which helped bring some order to the chaos of the surrounding throng of the Great Unwashed Public. Expeditioners were invited to call their station and year as they stood. This year we

were lucky to have representatives from the most current season (2004/05) to the early exploratory voyages of the LST3501 from 1947. A fine achievement indeed!