



## The BAA Winchester Weekend

The Winchester Weekend has been one of the highlights of the BAA's annual calendar for the past 46 years. Five years ago we moved from our original home at King Alfred's College in Winchester to our new venue at Sparsholt College, an agricultural training college about four miles northwest of Winchester in the rolling Hampshire countryside.

This has proved to be an excellent choice with high quality en-suite accommodation, spacious meeting facilities and a dining room which, as it is accustomed to feeding hungry farming students, provides substantial and tasty meals. With relatively few lights on campus, the dark night sky affords good opportunities for observing if the weather cooperates.

The main event of the weekend is the Alfred Curtis Memorial Lecture, named in honour and remembrance of the founder of the weekend. Alfred Curtis was a long-standing BAA member who recognised the need to raise the level of practical observing in the BAA. The announcement in the *BAA Journal* for the first Residential Weekend Course in Observational Astronomy in

1967 said it was being 'arranged for those needing guidance in the observational side of Astronomy'.

This tradition has been maintained through the years and amateur astronomers looking for advice and inspiration still see Winchester as a high point in their own annual calendar. Some things do change, however. For the first course 'the inclusive charge for Board Residence and for Tuition' was £4 4s. Those young enough not to know what the 's' stands for are fortunate in having a long observing career ahead of them.

Over the years we have been privileged to hear talks by many well-known speakers from the worlds of amateur and professional astronomy. This year's event is no exception, so book soon to avoid disappointment – for many years now the course has been fully subscribed. Full details of this year's weekend are on the back cover of this *Journal*.

**Ann Davies**



**Alfred Curtis at Winchester in 1975. Courtesy Dr Richard McKim.**



*Photos of Winchester 2012 by Hazel McGee*

