

It is with great sadness that we have to record the death of Angus McKenzie MBE at the age of 71 after an illness lasting for several months.

Angus was a well respected and long standing member of the Hampstead Scientific Society, having joined at the age of 14 in 1947. He was interested in all aspects of science, in particular, chemistry, radio and above all else, astronomy. As a youthful enthusiast, he was greatly encouraged during the 1950's by our late astronomy secretary, Henry Wildey.

Angus was born in September 1933 and was educated at St.Paul's School Hammersmith. He went on to study for City and Guilds in electronic engineering and acoustics, but failing eyesight caused him to abandon the course at the end of the second year. It was typical of Angus, that even the total loss of his eyesight in 1959, did not prevent him from remaining passionately interested in astronomy for the rest of his life.

Having joined the British Astronomical Association in his teens, he remained a member until his death and would frequently attend meetings accompanied by his faithful guide dogs Simon and latterly, Ward.

It is often said that the loss of a sense, such as eyesight, leads to the development of other senses to compensate. In Angus' case this was clearly demonstrated. He built a career in audio and radio, at first running a recording studio and later becoming an audio and radio consultant. He engineered and produced numerous recordings of classical music and carried out much research into stereo, binaural and quadraphonic sound. He has written many technical papers and given many lectures on topics as diverse as: radio and hi-fi, amateur radio, classical music, astronomy and the London underground railway. He has broadcast on both radio and television and was the author of many books on the subjects of hi-fi and amateur radio.

His great passion for the London Underground, on which he travelled frequently, led him to produce an auditory guide to the system in 1994 which was available free of charge to blind persons. This innovative guide, a kind of 'sound map', led the user from station to station providing clues as to their location from the pitch of track noises and the different sounds emitted by tube train brakes. I well remember the lecture he gave to the Society in which he vocalised the different noises made by different makes of tube train and the sounds which they emitted when accelerating, braking and passing over points.

Angus was also a regular speaker and fund raiser for the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association and



Picture 1: Angus McKenzie and his guide dog Simon.

in recognition for this work he was awarded the MBE in 1997. He was the first blind member of Mensa and was a fellow of the Institute of Electrical Engineers and the Audio Engineers Society.

For many years Angus lived in Finchley in a house crowded with electronic equipment with shelf upon shelf of records and CD's, each labelled meticulously in Braille. I always marvelled that he could find a particular recording instantly. He had a talking computer and the house was equipped with a gigantic rotating radio aerial which could be seen from miles away and used by him to communicate with fellow radio 'hams' throughout the world.

Angus leaves two daughters, a son and two grand daughters and a multitude of friends who will mourn the passing of man who never let a physical disability get the better of him.

Doug Daniels (Astro. Sec.)

