

## Bishop's Observatory, Regents Park

THE OBSERVATORY OF GEORGE BISHOP, ESQ., F.R.S.; F.R.A.S. AND TREASURER;  
ETC., ETC., ETC.

This observatory, though of more recent date than that of Sir James South, has attained in a short space of time an enviable distinction for its proprietor and for his talented coadjutor, Mr. Hind, by the series of brilliant discoveries that have been made, and for the really valuable and laborious, yet less known, works which have been performed at it. A brief account of its erection and a description of the Equatorial chiefly used in it, will properly precede our account of the discoveries.

It was erected in the year 1837, in the grounds to the south-west of Mr. Bishop's residence, South Villa, in the Inner Circle, Regent's Park, near the Royal Botanic Society's Gardens.

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The principal instrument is an equatorial telescope, equipped on the plan known as the English mounting; the polar axis is 13 ft. 8 in. long and 9½ in. broad at the widest part near the centre of its length, tapering off to about 7½ in. at the extremities. The solar focus of the telescope is 10 ft. 10 in., and the clear aperture of the object-glass 7 in. The instrument was wholly constructed by the present G. Dollond, Esq., of St. Paul's Church Yard. The circles are 3 ft. in diameter; the hour-circle reads to single seconds of time by verniers, and the declination-circle to 10" of arc. The instrument is driven by clock-work motion, this part of the machinery in particular being very elaborately worked.

The stone pier supporting the upper end of the polar axis of the equatorial weighs 3½ tons, and that at the lower end 2½ tons. The clock-movement is fixed on a stone pedestal perfectly isolated from the floor, as is also the sidereal clock.

The micrometers consist of—

1. A position-wire micrometer.
2. A double-refracting crystal micrometer.
3. A divided eye-glass micrometer.
4. An annular micrometer.

The telescope is provided with magnifying powers up to 1200. \* Coronæ was separated in June last with a power of 800, which may give an idea of the optical and defining capacity of the instrument.

The dome is of wood, with stout iron braces, and is not exactly hemispherical, but tapers upwards to a point (for the sake of ornament). It revolves on wheels working in a live-curb, and its performance is excellent. It is impelled by a lever, which acts on iron arms placed at equal distances (about 2 ft.) round the inner border. The machinery was finally adjusted by Mr. Penn, of Greenwich. When in good order it may be turned more than half-round at one effort.

The observatory consists of a circular equatorial room surmounted by the dome, and an arm extending westward, which forms the anti-room and contains the altitude and azimuth instrument now used for keeping the time, various micrometers, a sidereal clock, a chronometer, and general furniture. Gas illumination is used in the observatory for the transit-observations.

A mahogany revolving chair is fixed in the equatorial room, which is very convenient for observing objects near the zenith, or for delicate observations in general. This chair gained the medal of the Society of Arts and the money prize in addition.

The longitude of the observatory is 0m. 37s. 1 W.; the latitude, 51° 31' 29" 8 N.

In the year 1839 Mr. Bishop was fortunate in securing the services of the Rev. W. R. Dawes, a gentleman previously well known for his observations of double stars made at an observatory of his own, at Ormskirk.

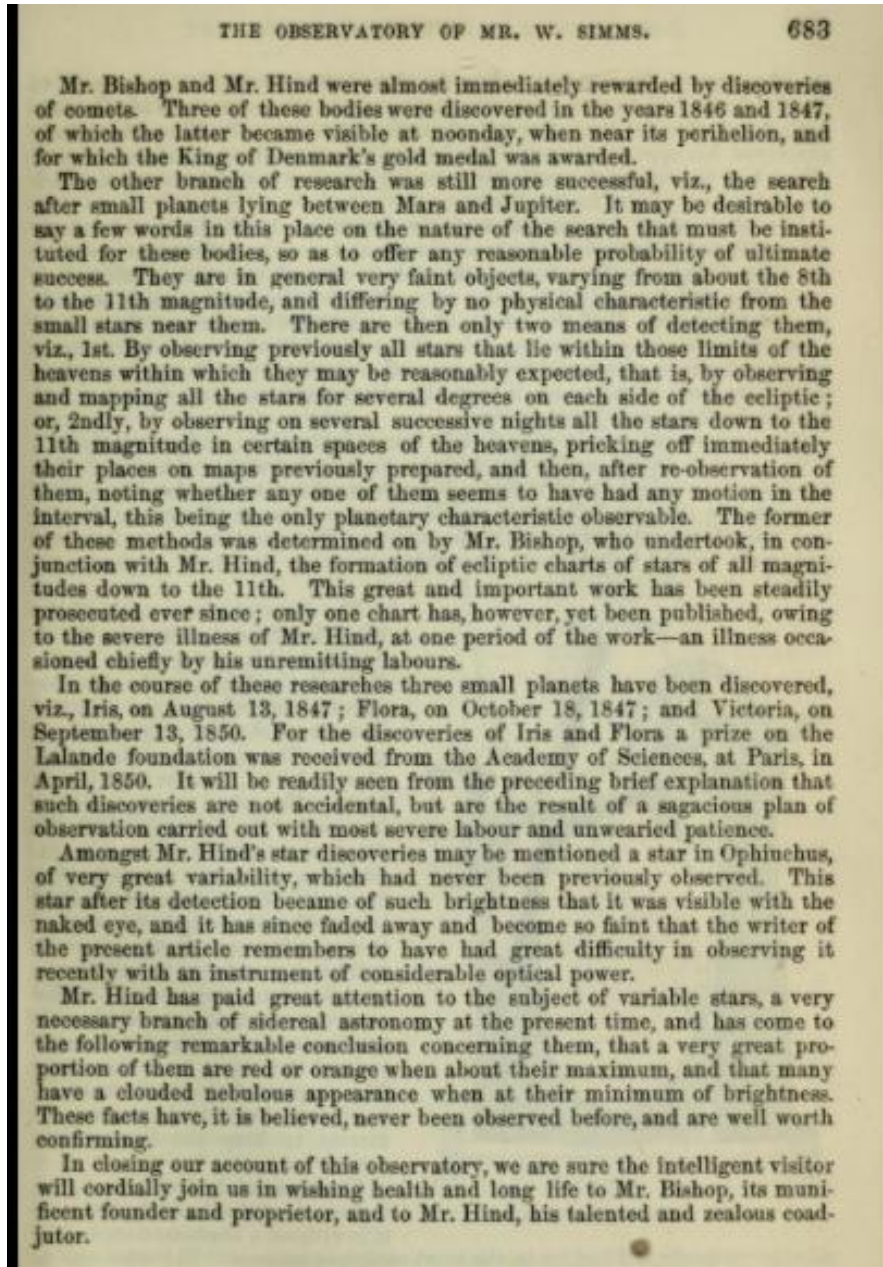
During the attachment of Mr. Dawes to the observatory which continued till the beginning of the year 1844, the observations consisted principally of double-star measurements. The results have not yet been published, but the volume containing them has nearly passed through the press, and its publication may be expected almost immediately.

In the year 1844 Mr. Dawes resigned, and was succeeded by J. R. Hind, Esq., then an assistant in the magnetical department of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, where he had already distinguished himself by the zeal and ability with which, in addition to his ordinary duties, which were severe, he devoted himself to the labour of observing comets and calculating the elements of their orbits.

Almost from the time of Mr. Hind's appointment the observations took that character for which his talents fitted him, viz., the search of the heavens for new comets and planets, and the scrutiny of such stars as seemed to offer any physical peculiarities of colour, variability, &c.



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Source: Weale 1854, 681-3

National Library of Scotland  
London (First Editions c1850s) XXV  
Surveyed: 1870, Published: 1876  
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