The RAS thesis prize-winners

Alan Pickwick, Chair of the RAS Education Committee, announces the winners of the annual thesis prizes.

The RAS Education Committee is pleased to announce the winners of its annual prizes. There were 11 nominations for the Blackwell Prize and 9 nominations for the Penston Prize. The overall standard was very high, which made the awarding of such a prize particularly difficult this year. Congratulations are offered to all involved and particular thanks to the judges, who are members of the RAS Education Committee.

- 2001 Blackwell Prize for the best PhD thesis in astrophysics: Dr Emma J Bunce, University of Leicester.
- 2001 Penston Prize for the best PhD thesis in astrophysics: Dr Mark W Wright, University of Bristol.
- Joint second: Dr Kathryn Hardacre, University of Edinburgh and Dr Claire Newman, University of Oxford.
- 2001 Blackwell Prize for the best PhD thesis in geophysics: Dr Emma J Bunce, University of Leicester. Joint second: Dr Kathryn Hardacre, University of Edinburgh and Dr Claire Newman, University of Oxford.

RAS Fellows have long enjoyed a 20% discount on volumes from the Annual Reviews series, and on books on astronomy, astrophysics and planetary science from Cambridge University Press. These offers have been made on an annual, one-off basis, normally advertised in A&G (for Annual Reviews) or through direct mailing (CUP publications). CUP has also offered special discounts at National Astronomy Meetings.

As part of its service to members, the RAS is pleased to announce further benefits for Fellows (for full details see the Society’s web pages):

- Wiley – 20% discount on books.
- Springer – 20% discount on books. You can search the Springer website at www.springer.de, or contact Mark Robinson (mark@svl.co.uk, 01483 414113) for a free catalogue of areas you are interested in.
- The following new discounts are also available, on presentation of an RAS membership card:
  - National Space Centre, Leicester – RAS Fellows admitted at child rate.
  - Jodrell Bank Science Centre – two people admitted for the price of one.
  - The Herschel Museum, Bath – admission at discount rate of £2.50.
  - The Observatory Science Centre, Herstmonceux – admission at the concessionary rate of £3.60.
  - The Spaceguard Centre, Powys – guided tours at discount rate of £4.00.

I take this opportunity to remind Fellows that they are entitled to:

- 20% discount on British Association membership.
- 25% off both RAS and IoP subscription rates for members of both.
- 25% discount on membership of the European Astronomical Society (payable with RAS contributions).
- Free membership of the British Geophysical Association (normally on payment of RAS dues).

The Herschel Annual Lecture

Francis Ring of the Herschel Society invites you to the annual lecture.

The 22nd Annual Lecture of the William Herschel Society will take place in the Guildhall, Bath, on Friday 28 March at 7.30 p.m. The speaker is the RAS President Prof. Jocelyn Bell Burnell CBE, on “You are made of star stuff!”

This lecture series began at the opening of the William Herschel Museum on 13 March 1981; 200 years after the discovery of Uranus from Bath by Herschel. The first speaker was Sir Patrick Moore, the founding President of the Society. The Society is also pleased to announce that Dr Allan Chapman of Wadham College Oxford has accepted the invitation to become Vice President of the Society.

As a trustee of The Herschel House Trust (the RAS is also a trustee organization), many of the Society’s activities are in support of the William Herschel Museum in Bath. Details of activities of the William Herschel Society can be found on the web at www.williamherschel.org.uk.

New benefits for RAS Members

Ian Howarth summarizes the discounts available to RAS Fellows on books, subscriptions and entrance fees.

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From the RAS Archives

Lockyer at Vadsö, 1896

It is most gratifying when publication of snippets from the RAS Library and Archives bring forth new revelations or material – and this is such a case. After the publication of a watercolour of the 1896 British Astronomical Association eclipse expedition to Norway (Hingley 1999) an original print of a photograph of Sir Norman Lockyer’s expedition to the same eclipse was discovered at, of all places, the Observatoire de Marseilles, France, loose between the pages of one of Lockyer’s books. It was found by Dr Yvon Georgelin and through the good offices of Mme F Launay of the Observatoire de Paris (Section de Meudon) was lent to the RAS for copying and safely returned.

This was the official British government expedition and, in contrast to the amateurs of the youthful BAA, the members were transported to the observing sites in the Vadsö area on board HMS Volage. This was the same Volage as had taken Father Stephen Perry and his observers to Kerguelen Island for the 1874 Transit of Venus; by now she was an old ship and relegated to the Training Squadron.

Several similar photographs are reproduced in Lockyer’s book on the eclipses of 1893, 1896 and 1898 (Lockyer 1897). As always, many of the officers and men of HMS Volage volunteered to assist with the observations, under Captain King Hall. This group includes Lockyer standing, majestically caped, facing the camera; to the right is the chaplain of the Volage, Revd J E Vaughan MA, with a bluejacket ready to assist him with timings, notes etc; to the left a young and enthusiastic lieutenant grasps a small telescope with vigour, and a petty officer stands ready to assist. Despite the Vadsö party being spread to different observing sites, unlike the BAA, they were, similarly, almost entirely clouded out, but fortunately Sir George Baden-Powell had mounted a private expedition to Novaya Zemlaya in his private yacht, the Otaria, and useful results were obtained there. Such has always been eclipse observers’ luck.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Dr Georgelin and Mme Launay for enabling this photograph to be copied for the RAS Archives.

P D Hingley is the Librarian of the RAS at Burlington House.

References

Hingley P 1999 A&G 40 4.7.
Lockyer N 1897 Recent and Coming Eclipses; being Notes on the Total Solar Eclipses of 1890, 1896 and 1898 Macmillan, London.