

Queen awards honours to RAS Fellows



AWARDS The Queen's Birthday Honours list for 2018 recognizes the contribution of two RAS Fellows. James

Hough OBE FRS, associate director of the Institute for Gravitational Research at the University of Glasgow, was awarded a knighthood for services to the detection of gravitational waves.



Hayley Gomez, head of public engagement and deputy head of the Astronomy Group at Cardiff University, was awarded an

OBE for her services to astrophysics and astronomy and, in particular, for inspiring the next generation of physicists and astronomers by communicating her research to a wide audience.

<https://bit.ly/2kZYfE8>

BAS and Argentina sign Antarctic accord

ANTARCTIC SCIENCE The British Antarctic Survey and Argentina's Instituto Antártico Argentino have agreed to work together in the Antarctic for five years. The accord covers activities such as joint projects in the Earth sciences and conservation, as well as training and exchanges of personnel. "This agreement is very much in the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty," said BAS director Jane Francis. "Scientists from the UK and Argentina can collect and interpret important scientific data that shapes policy, protects the environment and ultimately improves people's lives."

<https://www.bas.ac.uk>

Talks bring SKA closer to treaty status

SKA OBSERVATORY The formal negotiations to agree the convention establishing the Square Kilometre Array Observatory are complete. The text is agreed and the founding members of the new international organization have been initialling the text – a crucial step indicating formal agreement. Italy, which led the negotiation process, signed first. Later in the year, ministers from

each of the founding nations will sign the treaty, after which legislatures in each country will need to ratify it – then the SKAO will come into being.

<https://bit.ly/2N2eb5b>

Gruber Cosmology Prize for Planck team

AWARDS The team behind the European Space Agency's Planck observatory has received the 2018 Gruber Cosmology Prize, in recognition of its achievements in measuring the cosmic microwave background radiation to unprecedented precision. Half the \$500 000 award is shared between principal investigators Nazzareno Mandolesi and Jean-Loup Puget, and half among the whole Planck team.

<https://bit.ly/2zplBl0>

Rowan elected Fellow of the Royal Society

AWARDS Congratulations to Sheila Rowan MBE, director of the Institute for Gravitational Research in the University of Glasgow, who has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

<https://bit.ly/2NCdW17>

Whitelock wins SAIP De Beers Gold Medal



AWARDS Congratulations to Prof. Patricia Whitelock, awarded the 2018 South African Institute of Physics De

Beers Gold Medal. Her research focuses on the late stages of stellar evolution and mass-loss of evolved stars, the structure of the Milky Way, and the stellar content of the local group galaxies. She served as deputy director, acting director and director of the South African National Facility for Optical Astronomy, the South African Astronomical Observatory, and was a key driver of the bid by South Africa to host the IAU International Office of Astronomy for Development. She receives the Gold Medal for her outstanding research career and for her distinguished and extensive contributions to leadership, education and human capacity development of the physics and astronomy community in South Africa.

<https://bit.ly/2zrYaTA>

Date announced for NAM 2019

MEETING The 2019 National Astronomy Meeting will be held at the University of Lancaster from Sunday 30 June to Thursday 4 July, with a mix of plenary talks from leading researchers, specialist sessions where new research is presented, poster presentations – and competition – and community discussions. NAM2019 includes UK Solar Physics and Magnetosphere Ionosphere and Solar–Terrestrial meetings.

<http://ras.ac.uk>

Parker Solar Probe is ready for launch

SOLAR OBSERVATORY NASA's coronal observatory, the Parker Solar Probe, is on track to launch in early August. The spacecraft will approach close to the Sun, at around 6 million km in the final planned orbits, which takes it into the outer corona, at temperatures of up to 1100 K. The instruments are protected by a carbon-composite heat shield. The probe will carry four instrument suites designed to image the solar wind and study magnetic fields, plasma and energetic particles.

<https://go.nasa.gov/2xgFvHt>

Your Society needs your opinion

SURVEY Fellows of the RAS can soon expect an invitation to complete a short online survey. The Society needs to understand its Fellows' views and expectations in order to inform future plans, because, above all, the RAS is a membership society. This survey is your chance to ensure that your priorities form part of the strategic development of the Society as we move towards our bicentenary.

<http://www.ras.org.uk>

Australian Space Agency launches

FUNDING From 1 July this year, the Australian Space Agency is open for business, with a budget of \$41m for its first four years. "No other industry can inspire nations quite like space, where human ambition can set its sights on interplanetary missions, colonization beyond Earth and the opportunity of finding new life," said Megan Clark, head of the ASA. "We can dream this big because of the space-based

technologies that have connected the world ... Australia can become a global leader in pushing Earth's links with space even further."

<https://bit.ly/2MZBKej>

Thank you to a stalwart editor



MONTHLY NOTICES 25 years ago this August, John Shakeshaft, the editor-in-chief of *Monthly Notices of the*

RAS, wrote to Michael Feast of the University of Cape Town, inviting him to become an editor. Feast was then in his sixties; he accepted and has remained on the editorial board ever since. He is standing down this August. "Michael has been a stalwart member of the editorial team, whose work over so many years has contributed hugely to the success and the standing of the journal," said the current editor-in-chief, David Flower of the University of Durham. "His astute judgement and pragmatism will be greatly missed."

<https://academic.oup.com/mnras>

RAS journals tweets keep you informed

SOCIAL MEDIA Keep up to date with the latest scholarly publications from the RAS through a new Twitter account, @RAS_Journals, focused on *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* and *Geophysical Journal International*.

<http://ras.ac.uk>

Sample fetch rover design for Stevenage

MARS An ESA contract worth £3.9m has been won by Airbus: to design a rover for Mars sample return. The sample fetch rover will retrieve samples collected and cached by NASA's Mars 2020 rover and transfer them to a spacecraft for launch. "One rover bound for Mars in 2020 is already under construction by Airbus in Stevenage," said UK science minister Sam Gyimah. "The knowledge and expertise honed there will now be applied to designing this new mission, which aims to safely deliver – for the first time – material to Earth from another planet."

<https://bit.ly/2zclRyY>