## THE RICHARD ROBINSON MEDAL AND LECTURE

Armagh Observatory was founded in 1789 by Dr Richard Robinson (1708–1794), Baron Rokeby of Armagh, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland (1765–1794). His family came from Yorkshire, but he was baptized in St. Mary's Parish Church, Merton, and educated at Westminster School and then Christ Church, Oxford. Robinson's legacy includes many buildings in County Armagh, for example the Archbishop's Palace, many churches in the diocese, the Armagh Public Library, the new Royal School or "College", the Infirmary, and finally the Armagh Observatory.

Archbishop Richard Robinson

In establishing the Armagh Public Library and the Observatory, Primate Robinson's intention was to found a university in Armagh and he bequeathed a considerable sum for this purpose. However, there was a condition: the university had to be established within 5 years after Robinson's death. Alas, the university was not set up in the required period and Armagh did not become a university city.

Construction of the Observatory began in 1789, the first Astronomer, the Revd Dr James Archibald Hamilton, taking up office in 1790. A Board of Governors was established with Primate Robinson's wish that it would continue to comprise the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh together with the Dean and Chapter of the Anglican Cathedral, for the time being, as *ex officio* members. Robinson may have been influenced in his decision to found the Observatory through contacts with William Herschel, whom he first met in Bath in 1766, and correspondence with the Revd Dr Hamilton, an active astronomer who owned a private observatory at Cookstown while he was Rector of Kildress. Hamilton had corresponded with the Astronomer Royal, the Revd Nevil Maskelyne on a variety of topics including meteors, longitude determination, and the 1782 transit of Mercury. The Act of Parliament …*settling and preserving a public Observatory and Museum in the City of Armagh, for ever*… was passed in 1791 in the Irish Parliament.

A Robinson Medal and Lecture were proposed by the Board of Governors during the Observatory's bicentenary celebrations in 1990 in memory of Primate Robinson. A silver replica of the original medal struck by the great Irish medallist, Mossop of Dublin, in 1789 to mark the commencement of the construction of the Observatory, would be awarded occasionally to a distinguished scientist. The obverse side depicts Primate Robinson, while the reverse side features the south elevation of the Observatory and the motto: *"The Heavens Declare the Glory of God"*. Along with the medal goes an invitation to deliver a public lecture to a wide community, illustrating recent developments in astronomy and related sciences.

## FORMER ROBINSON MEDALLISTS

| | Robinson Lecturer | Date and Venue | Title |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Prof. A.W. Wolfendale FRS; Astronomer Royal | 1992 October 21<br>Royal School Armagh | New Views of the Heavens |
| 2 | Prof. R.D. Davies FRS | 1994 October 20<br>Royal School Armagh | Whispers from the Big Bang |
| 3 | Dr D. Steel | 1996 November 14 & 15<br>St. Patrick's Trian, Armagh | Project Spaceguard: Will Humankind go the way of the Dinosaurs |
| 4 | Prof. J.C. Brown, FRSE, Astronomer Royal for Scotland | 1998 November 19<br>The Navan Centre | Life in a Stormy Universe |
| | Schools Lecture | 1998 November 20<br>Royal School Armagh | Black Holes and White Rabbits |
| 5 | Dr I.A. Crawford | 2000 November 3<br>The Navan Centre | The Scientific Case for Human Spaceflight |
| 6 | Prof. C.D. Murray | 2002 November 22<br>Armagh Studio Theatre | In Search of Origins: The Cassini / Huygens Mission to Saturn |
| | Schools Lecture | 2002 November 21<br>St. Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar, Belfast | The House that Went to Saturn |
| 7 | Prof. J. Bell Burnell FRS | 2004 November 26<br>Armagh Studio Theatre | Tick, Tick, Tick, Pulsating Star, How We Wonder What You Are! |
| | Schools Lecture | 2004 November 25<br>St. Patrick's Academy, Dungannon | You are Made of Star Stuff |
| 8 | Prof. E. Priest FRS | 2006 November 24<br>The Synod Hall, Armagh | Our Enigmatic Sun |
| | Schools Lecture | 2006 November 23<br>Royal School Armagh | Our Wonderful Sun |
| 9 | Prof. Peter W.J.L. Brand FRSE | 2008 November 20<br>Armagh City Hotel | God and the Universe |
| | Schools Lecture | 2008 November 21<br>Royal School Armagh | Black Holes and the Universe |
| 10 | Prof. C. Impey | 2010 November 18<br>Armagh City Hotel | Astrobiology: Implications of Life Beyond Earth |
| | Schools Lecture | 2010 November 17<br>Royal School Armagh | How it Ends |
| 11 | Prof. D. Southwood | 2012 November 22<br>Armagh City Hotel | To Mars, Titan and the Universe Beyond! |

## 2017 ROBINSON SCHOOLS LECTURE

### Professor Louise Harra

The 2017 Robinson Lecture will be delivered by Professor Louise Harra, University College London, on Wednesday, 22 November 2017 in the Armagh Palace.

Professor Louise Harra is solar physicist at University College London. She was a pupil at Banbridge Academy and studied maths and physics at Queens University. Her research has focused on understanding how flares and coronal mass ejections are triggered in the Sun, and how the solar wind forms and propagates through our Solar System. She has been closely engaged with several spacecraft, involved in their operations, design, build and data analysis. Louise is the principal investigator for the Hinode satellite (launched in 2006) Extreme-UV Imaging Spectrometer (EIS), leading an international team of scientists. She is also co-principal investigator of the Extreme-UV Imager on the ESA Solar Orbiter mission, due to be launched in 2019.

Louise's research work has been acknowledged by the award of a research fellowship, a Philip Leverhulme award, the Arthur C Clarke award for space research, the Royal Astronomical Society Chapman medal, an honorary professorship in China and the Daiwa-Adrian prize for UK-Japan research. She also teaches physics to undergraduate and postgraduate students. In addition, her interdisciplinary approach to science has led to collaborations with clinicians at hospitals in London to understand and predict patient deterioration.

**Space: the Final Frontier**
**Do you want to be a part of it?**

It all started with maths and physics for me, and a trip to the Planetarium in Armagh. I didn't realise that careers in space would be possible, but indeed that is what I've ended up doing! My work involves development of space instrumentation for spacecraft, and the operations and research of the data following spacecraft launch. My area of research is solar physics – researching what causes solar activity, and how it impacts our daily lives. The ultimate goal is heading towards prediction of this activity with a high enough accuracy that affected industries can adjust accordingly. I will describe what careers are available in space, in the UK, and around the world, how you can get involved; and what you can do to improve your chances.

The Robinson Lecture is held in memory of Archbishop Richard Robinson, founder of the Armagh Observatory.

Armagh Observatory and Planetarium, College Hill, Armagh, BT61 9DG, Northern Ireland.
star.arm.ac.uk and www.armaghplanet.com

ARMAGH OBSERVATORY & PLANETARIUM

# ROBINSON SCHOOLS LECTURE

Space: the Final Frontier
*Do you want to be a part of it*?

Professor Louise Harra

This talk will explore all aspects of space science and technology, how it impacts our daily lives, and what careers are available.

Thursday, 23 November, 2017, 2 p.m.
Banbridge Academy
Banbridge