Spring 2022 Welcome Back Conference
BMI Birmingham; Saturday 12th March.

Please note Timetable, Speakers & Presentations subject to change and alteration.

Guest Speakers for the Day

Dr Emily Winterburn FRAS, SHA Vice – President

Dr Emily Winterburn currently lives in Leeds in England, writing books an teacher. Her biography of Caroline Herschel (The Quiet Revolution of Caroline Herschel) will be published in late 2017. Prior to this Emily studied physics at the university of Manchester before turning to History of Science (also at Manchester) as a post-graduate. In 1998 she began work as curator of astronomy at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich where she was responsible for a large collection on material relating to the Herschel family. At Greenwich Emily began her thesis (with Imperial College, London) on education within the Herschel family and was awarded her PhD in 2011. Since leaving Greenwich she has worked at the History of Science museum at the University of Leeds, and written for both academic and popular audiences. Her book, A Stargazer's Guide came out in 2008. She is a semi-regular contributor to Sky at Night magazine and won the Royal Society Essay Prize for a piece on William Herschel in 2014. In 2002 Emily was elected as chairperson to serve on the first Council of the newly established Society for the History of Astronomy.

"Tracking down the lost & forgotten astronomical women of Empire"

My talk will be about a project I'm starting soon in collaboration with a group of academics from all over the world & which I think SHA will be interested in & possibly be able to help with. The project is about seeking out lost women (among others) and helping researchers & educators to find and use the archives and objects needed to tell their stories.

Image: with thanks to Dr E. Winterburn

Dr Daniel Belteki – is an ROG350 Sackler Research Fellow at the Royal Museums Greenwich His current research examines the experiences of the Observatory staff under the directorship of George Airy. Daniel also works as the Digitisation Project Coordinator at the Royal Society, and runs a small project exploring the Solar Eclipse of 1860.

"The winter of raw computers: the history of the lunar and planetary reductions Of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich"

In 1839 the working hours of the computers employed on the Lunar and Planetary Reductions of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich was reduced from 11 hours to 8 hours. Historians writing about the manager of the Reductions, George Biddell Airy, have used the decreased working hours as an example of Airy's benevolent nature. The talk challenges this approach by exploring a previously unused set of archival documents that tell the origins of the decision and depict the poor working conditions within which the computers continued to work. It demonstrates that the computers working on the Reductions were often mistakenly considered by historians as part of the Observatory staff, which fuelled misleading comparisons. Taking a mixture of approaches, the presentation tells the history of the Reductions through the experiences of Airy managing it as well as through the experiences of the computers working on it. The mixture of the two approaches demonstrates the friction between the official accounts and the internal documents relating to the Reductions.

Image: With thanks to Dr D. Belteki

Dr Lee Macdonald FRAS is one of two Sackler Research Fellows working with Royal Museums Greenwich, researching the twentieth-century history of Greenwich Observatory. He has been a member of the SHA since 2006 and is the author of 'Kew Observatory and the Evolution of Victorian Science, 1840-1910', published in 2018 by the University of Pittsburgh Press.

'Proposals to move The Royal Observatory, Greenwich, 1836-1944'.

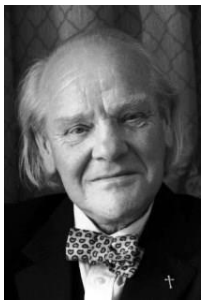
The talk asks why the Royal Observatory was not moved away from London earlier than the 1940s and discusses proposals to move the observatory going back to the nineteenth century.

Image: With thanks to C. Kennett & SHA archives.

Hilary Forbes taught Astronomy GCSE for 13 years in Further Education, and mathematics for 24 years in first secondary schools and then in Further Education. After degrees in Astronomy and Astrophysics (St. Andrews), and then Theology (Edinburgh), she trained and qualified with a PGCE from Warwick University as a mathematics teacher. She was then asked in 2007 if she would also consider teaching Astronomy at the local FE college in North Wales, (Coleg Llandrillo Menai: Abergele Campus) which she did until August 2020. Hilary has become increasingly fascinated with the astronomers of Ancient Greece and Rome which led to recently achieving a Masters in Classical Studies with the Open University, achieving a merit overall. She wrote her MA dissertation about Aristarchus of Samos and his heliocentric proposal, and her research forms the basis for this talk,

'Aristarchus of Samos' Lost Heliocentric Proposal:
A re-evaluating the evidence and its significance'

Image: With thanks to H. Forbes



Our main speaker Dr Allan Chapman FRAS, SHA President

Dr Allan Chapman was born in Swinton, Lancashire, England and grew up in the Pendlebury and Clifton districts of the then Swinton and Pendlebury borough. Having attended the local Cromwell Road Secondary Modern School for Boys, Sefton Road, Pendlebury (1957–1962), he then gained his first degree from the University of Lancaster. Subsequently, he undertook a history of science DPhil at Wadham College, Oxford. He is a historian by training and his special interests are astronomy and scientific biography. Allan has been based at the University of Oxford for most of his career, as a member of the Faculty of History, based at Wadham College. He is an accomplished lecturer and public speaker (including as visiting professor at Gresham College in London). In January 1994, he delivered the Royal Society history of science Wilkins Lecture, on the subject of Edmund Halley.

He is also a television presenter, notably Gods in the Sky,[covering astronomical religion in early civilisations, and Great Scientists, presenting the lives of five of the greatest thinkers. Not averse to other forms of television, he also participated in the TV quiz University Challenge – The Professionals as part of the Royal Astronomical Society team, broadcast in June–July 2006.

Dr Chapman teaches for the study abroad programme of Eurospring for Minnesota State University, Moorhead, Minnesota, USA and Bemidji State University, Bemidji, Minnesota, USA. He has written many articles, pamphlets, and also books including biographies such as *England's Leonardo* on Robert Hooke. However he is noted for his ground breaking 1998 book "*The Victorian Amateur Astronomer*" and with the assistance of the SHA from 2017 is now in its second addition.

Dr Chapman is a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. He is a founder member and president of the Society for the History of Astronomy (SHA). He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Central Lancashire in 2004. Dr Chapman was award the RAS Jackson-Gwilt Medal in 2015 for his contribution to the history of astronomy, following a nomination from the SHA. He is the Honorary President and a member of Salford Astronomical Society for over fifty years, Honorary President of Reading Astronomical Society, Honorary President of the Mexborough & Swinton Astronomical Society,[5] Honorary President of Orwell Astronomical Society (Ipswich) and Vice-President of the Newbury Astronomical Society. President of Preston & District Astronomical Society.

From Herschel's 48 inch to the James Webb space telescope;
How far have we come in 200 years?

Image: with thanks to Helen Fairweather.