

Royal  
Astronomical  
Society

*A guide*  
for Fellows

[www.ras.ac.uk](http://www.ras.ac.uk)

Photo by Mark Basarab on unsplash

# *Welcome to* The Royal Astronomical Society

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Since its foundation in 1820, the RAS has been an important focal point for astronomy in the UK. From the 1920s, geophysics has increasingly been part of the Society's remit as well. Today it is the recognized voice of the UK's astronomical and geophysical communities.

The RAS welcomes as members not only professional researchers, but also students, keen amateurs, people working in outreach, education and the media, and others who share the aims of the Society. Members can take advantage of a range of facilities and privileges, and are involved in shaping the Society's activities. Drawing on a wide cross-section of individuals with a common interest in astronomy or geophysics increases the RAS's effectiveness as a forum for its members and strengthens its role in the scientific life of the UK.

## A summary of your benefits

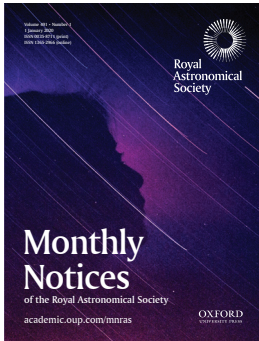
- Discounted rates for print subscriptions to the Society's journals
- Free online access to Society journals
- Free and discounted attendance at meetings
- Support for organising meetings
- Free subscription to our Astronomy & Geophysics magazine
- Free yearly diary, packed with useful astronomical information
- Optional monthly email newsletter
- Discounts on books from leading publishers
- Access to grants
- Use of one of the finest astronomical libraries and archives
- Opportunity to nominate Medal and Award-winners
- Opportunities to serve your community
- Pleasant meeting and work space in Central London
- Discounted fees for members of partner societies: If you are also a member of the Institute of Physics or the Geological Society of London, you receive a 25% reduction on your RAS fees.
- Discounted registration fees at the annual RAS National Astronomy Meeting (NAM)
- Book loans from the RAS Library
- Free meeting room hire (provided the event is related to the aims of the Society)
- Free use of the RAS joblist

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# *Professional support for Fellows*

## **Royal Astronomical Society publications**

The RAS publishes two major international journals, in partnership with Oxford University Press. Fellows have free online access to these journals through the OUP journal webpages. There are no page charges for publication in RAS journals; Green and Gold open access is available.



## Monthly Notices

*Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* is one of the world's leading primary research journals in astronomy and astrophysics, as well as one of the longest established, published since 1827. *Monthly Notices* is at the forefront of astronomical and astrophysical publishing, with embedded three-dimensional and video figures as well as article-level metrics. *MNRAS Letters* publishes short, topical and significant research in all fields of astronomy, for which rapid publication might be expected to have a significant influence on the subsequent development of research in the associated subject area.

<http://mnras.oxfordjournals.org>  
<http://mnras.oxfordjournals.org>



## Geophysical Journal International

*Geophysical Journal International* publishes on all aspects of theoretical, computational, applied and observational geophysics. *Geophysical Journal International* also publishes *Express Letters*, short papers, published quickly, addressing exciting topics or presenting new data on topics of a broad interest.

<http://gji.oxfordjournals.org>



## A&G

All Fellows receive free copies of *A&G*, the bimonthly magazine for Fellows of the Society, bringing news and scientific reviews across all areas of interest among RAS Fellows. *A&G* offers a way to keep up with progress in sciences allied to your own interests, and is a showcase for your own work and interests to other Fellows and a wider audience.

# Society meetings

Meetings have been the backbone of the RAS since its inception in 1820. Today the RAS runs Specialist Discussion Meetings monthly from October to May, bringing together leading names and rising stars. These are organised by Fellows with practical and financial support from the Society, including attendance for key overseas speakers; they focus on topical research and are free to Fellows. The more general Ordinary Meetings are free for all to attend. Meetings sponsored by the RAS generally offer discounted fees to RAS Fellows.

Fellows are entitled to discounted registration to our annual National Astronomy Meeting (NAM), which is held at different locations around the UK, and is one of the largest professional astronomy conferences in Europe. We also support other meetings relating to astronomy and geophysics across the UK via our grants programme for Fellows.

# The Library and Archives

The Royal Astronomical Society Library holds one of the most comprehensive collections of works on astronomy and geophysics, both ancient and modern, as well as a significant archive containing institutional records, and working papers by astronomers like William Herschel. The early printed book collection consists of over 5,000 volumes and includes works by Copernicus, Kepler, Newton and Galileo. We hold over 3,000 journal titles dating from 1665 to the present day, and currently subscribe to over 60 journals. A small selection of these materials is always on show in the library display cases.

Fellows can borrow books from the main library and postal loans are available. Recent additions to the catalogue are advertised on the catalogue home page (see [www.ras.ac.uk/library](http://www.ras.ac.uk/library)) and in A&G. The library is a tranquil study space which Fellows can use from Monday to Friday between 10am and 5pm. Fellows can consult material from the rare book and archive collections by appointment. The librarian can help with research enquiries, and even if the library doesn't contain the exact information you are looking for, the librarian can help you find alternative sources of information. The Library Committee is composed of Fellows who advise on library strategy, planning, and resourcing.

The library welcomes group visits by schools, college/university students and astronomical societies, so please get in touch with the librarian if you would like to arrange a visit for a group you are involved with. For more information on the library's collections and services, please see [www.ras.ac.uk/library](http://www.ras.ac.uk/library). You can contact the library on (+44) (0)207 292 3963 or email [librarian@ras.ac.uk](mailto:librarian@ras.ac.uk)



## Fellows access to Burlington House

RAS Fellows are free to use the Society's meeting rooms for formal and informal meetings as long as the event is related to the aims of the Royal Astronomical Society. Burlington House in central London has good transport links and free wi-fi and power points in the Fellows Room and meeting rooms.

## Awards & Grants

The RAS provides grants for research not otherwise supported by research council funding. Applications are assessed on a competitive basis, and successful proposals receive awards drawn from the Society's Research and Grants Funds.

The RAS celebrates excellence at all stages of a scientific career, with awards for lifetime achievement as well as early career success. The RAS helps early career scientists through awards and prizes for outstanding PhD theses and early post-doctoral work, and provides full three-year scholarships for post-doctoral research. Major contributions to astronomy and geophysics are recognised by the award of medals and prizes. As a Fellow of the RAS you can be part of the selection process.

# Outreach

The RAS works to advance all the sciences within our remit: astronomy, astrophysics, solar-terrestrial and planetary physics and solid earth geophysics. RAS staff promote knowledge and understanding of the work of astronomers and geophysicists among policymakers, the media, education and outreach workers and the wider public.

- The RAS prepares reports and responses to government, with support from our Fellows.
- The RAS offers outreach and engagement grants to Fellows, supporting their hands-on work to engage people in astronomy and geophysics.
- Through RAS200: Sky & Earth, the Society is supporting new forms of outreach in partnership with organisations including The Prince's Trust to bring our sciences to new audiences and develop a lasting legacy.
- The RAS regularly presents astronomy & geophysics as part of wider culture in events in the Burlington House Courtyard and through initiatives such as Open House London.



## Royal Astronomical Society Staff

The work of the RAS is made possible by the small team of staff based in Burlington House, who cover reception, buildings management, organisation, meetings and events, awards, IT, membership, science policy, education and outreach, media relations, and the Library. The Editorial Office, supporting the RAS journals, is also based in Burlington House.



# Organisation and Governance

The RAS is a charity directed and managed by its Fellows through an elected Council. RAS staff, under the Executive Director, run the day-to-day activities of the Society.

- Council members are legal trustees of the Society; they decide on strategic directions for the Society, within the framework of the bye-laws. Council meets six times per year, when Councillors discuss and direct the Society's strategy and organisation.
- Council elections are held each year; members serve for between two and five years. The President is elected by Fellows and normally serves for two years, after one year spent as President-elect. The President is the public face of the Society, commenting on issues of public interest as well as representing the RAS in external meetings. The President chairs Council meetings and Ordinary (A&G) meetings of the Society. The Vice Presidents (usually four) stand in for the President as needed; Vice-Presidents chair the Awards Committee, deciding on the distribution of Society Medals and Awards.
- The RAS Treasurer usually serves a five-year term, overseeing and directing the finances of the Society.
- The RAS has three Secretaries, roles that involve a considerable commitment to supporting the organisation of the Society through ex-officio membership of key Society Committees. Secretaries also select speakers for the general interest Ordinary (A&G) Meetings of the Society, for public lectures, and suggest candidates for RAS obituaries.

## Royal Astronomical Society Committees

Many Fellows, some Councillors, some not, support the running of the Society by serving on RAS committees. These bodies direct the work of the RAS in areas such as Education and Outreach, Diversity, Membership, Awards and Prizes, the Library, Astronomical Heritage and more.

Serving on a committee allows Fellows to be more directly involved in shaping the work of the Society, but they also help individual Fellows develop valuable skills and experience to benefit their careers. Committee service brings new contacts and a broadening of experience, as well as the satisfaction of supporting your science on the national stage.

## **In their own words: Councillors and officers describe aspects of their roles**

“As a Vice-President of the Society, my duties include chairing the Astronomy Awards Committee, which decides who is the best among the many amazing people proposed for the awards. I then have the great pleasure of notifying the winners personally. Being on Council gives me personal connections to a diversity of scientists, bringing insights into the scientific, practical and political problems and pleasures of our sciences.” Don Kurtz, VP

“I stood for Council because I respect the RAS. I held an RAS Research Fellowship some years ago and I want to do my bit. I am proud to represent the interests of the community who elected me, and in particular I seek to represent the interests of early career researchers, on the RAS Fellowships panel and elsewhere.” Caitriona Jackman, Councillor

“I stood for Council when I was doing my PhD, as a mature student. I was seeing first-hand the issues facing students, early career researchers and women wanting a family and a career. I felt I brought a wealth of non-academic experience to complement the academic slant of Council. I am most proud of being in at the beginning of the RAS200 programme. RAS200 is reaching out to parts of the community that may not otherwise have access to our science - and I know we are making a difference.” Mandy Bailey, Secretary ‘A’

“I stood for Council because I was passionate about the same things as the Society: outreach, diversity, equality and

the prospects for early career researchers. I am very proud of being a voice for the younger members of our Society, many of whom are struggling to find a way in academia. It’s allowed my passions to have substance, such as joining the steering group for RAS200 and becoming Diversity Champion for the Society. I am keen to ensure that, as our subjects move forward, we are inclusive and welcoming to everyone.” Stacey Habergham, Councillor

“Until I joined Council, I had no idea how much work the Society actually does, often quietly in the background. All of its activities aim to benefit Astronomy & Geophysics and those who practise the subjects, whether they are at the beginning of their careers or well-established. Why not put yourself forward for one of the Society’s committees or Council, and help us further our aims?” John Zarnecki, President

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### **Royal Astronomical Society equality, diversity and inclusion policy**

The RAS is committed to creating an environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated fairly, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status, age, or nationality. [www.ras.ac.uk/images/stories/ras\\_pdfs/RAS\\_Diversity\\_Equality\\_Inclusion\\_policy\\_2015.pdf](http://www.ras.ac.uk/images/stories/ras_pdfs/RAS_Diversity_Equality_Inclusion_policy_2015.pdf)

### **Royal Astronomical Society code of conduct**

The RAS expects Fellows to behave responsibly and respectfully to all. The Code of Conduct for Fellows is set out in full at: [www.ras.ac.uk/about-the-ras/codes-conduct](http://www.ras.ac.uk/about-the-ras/codes-conduct)

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# FAQS

## **How do I join?**

Please complete an online application form, which can be found on our website ([www.ras.ac.uk/membership/join](http://www.ras.ac.uk/membership/join)). You will need to create an account first.

## **How do I renew?**

Membership runs from January to December. Towards the end of the year, you will be prompted to renew your membership for the following year. You can set up a direct debit payment or pay your fees online at the Fellows' website: [www.fellows.ras.ac.uk](http://www.fellows.ras.ac.uk)

## **How do I update my contact details?**

Login to the Fellows website ([www.fellows.ras.ac.uk](http://www.fellows.ras.ac.uk)) and edit your information. Alternatively, please contact the Membership Officer ([membership@ras.ac.uk](mailto:membership@ras.ac.uk)) who will be able to update your details for you.

## **How do I access the online journals?**

New Fellows will be sent online access details direct from the publisher. If you don't receive anything please contact the Membership Officer.

## **How do I apply for a grant?**

Applications are assessed twice a year. The deadlines for these grants rounds are 15 February and 15 August. See [www.ras.ac.uk/awards-and-grants/grants-for-studies](http://www.ras.ac.uk/awards-and-grants/grants-for-studies)

## **How do I nominate for Council?**

### **How do I vote in Council elections?**

You will be sent details of how to nominate a Fellow at the start of the year. Details of those standing and how to vote will be sent out via email or post in late March/early April.

### **How do I nominate someone for an award or medal?**

See [www.ras.ac.uk/awards-and-grants/awards-for-nomination-forms](http://www.ras.ac.uk/awards-and-grants/awards-for-nomination-forms) and deadlines.

### **How do I book a meeting room at the Royal Astronomical Society?**

Please email [events@ras.ac.uk](mailto:events@ras.ac.uk) to check availability.

### **How do I get on the mailing list for the monthly email newsletter?**

Email [events@ras.ac.uk](mailto:events@ras.ac.uk) to be added to the mailing list.

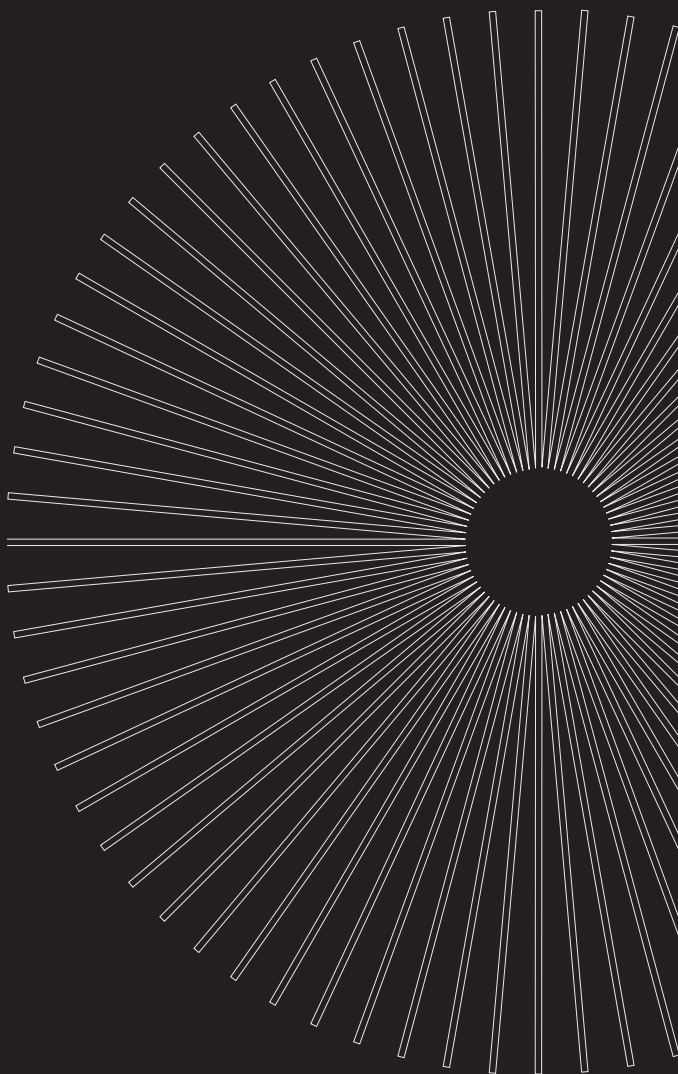
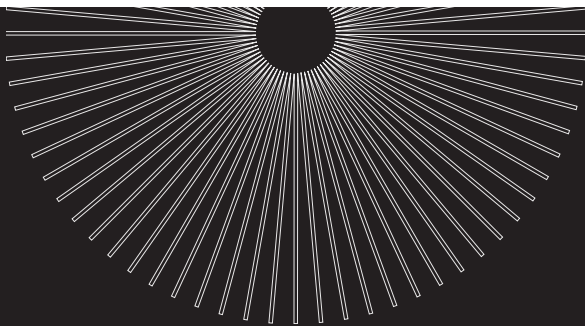
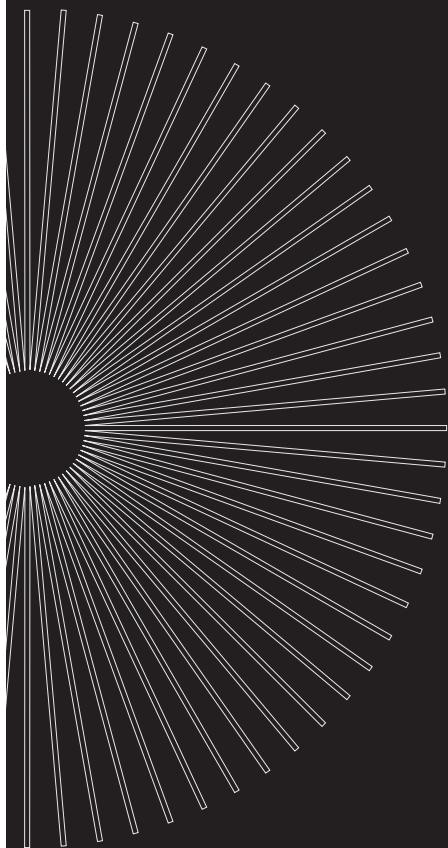
For enquiries about membership, please email [membership@ras.ac.uk](mailto:membership@ras.ac.uk)

For enquiries about awards, medals or grants, please email [awards@ras.ac.uk](mailto:awards@ras.ac.uk)

For enquiries about the Library, please email [librarian@ras.ac.uk](mailto:librarian@ras.ac.uk)

For events please email [events@ras.ac.uk](mailto:events@ras.ac.uk)

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