



Royal
Astronomical
Society

The 2024 Service Award (A) is awarded to Professor Ian Robson

Professor Ian Robson has been an energetic and influential contributor to astronomy for over 50 years, including directing observatories and institutes, facilitating the provision of innovative instruments, and acting as a successful communicator of science.

He was the Director of the James Clerk Maxwell submillimetre telescope in Hawaii from 1992 to 2002 alongside being Director of the Joint Astronomy Centre, which included the operation of the UK Infrared Telescope.

This was an immensely successful decade for both telescopes, with UKIRT leading the world in near-infrared imaging surveys and with the arrival and operation of the revolutionary JCMT SCUBA submillimetre camera.

Between 2002 and 2012 he was Deputy Director and then Director of the UK Astronomy Technology Centre, overseeing numerous important instrumentation projects, including SCUBA-2 for the JCMT and delivering the VISTA telescope to ESO.

For the latter three years he was also Director of STFC's Technology Department before beginning an extremely active retirement including being Vice-President of the RAS.

Professor Robson has devoted considerable effort to public engagement, including leading a new IAU Commission on Communicating Astronomy with the Public, membership of the IAU International Year of Astronomy 2009 organising committee, being President of the Society for Popular Astronomy and the Royal Scottish Society for the Arts as well as delivering innumerable popular talks.

He has devoted enormous energy and talent to astronomy, carrying out his own research, particularly on active galactic nuclei, deftly negotiating the funding challenges and politics involved in managing facilities and delivering major projects, and inspiring the public and young scientists.

For these reasons he is awarded the 2024 Service Award (A) of the RAS.