

Cambridgeshire Astronomers

Airy, Sir George Biddell (1801-1892) Plumian Professor 1828-1836, Director of the Cambridge Observatory 1828-1835, Astronomer Royal 1835-1881 (see [County of London page](#))

Baldrey, Lt. Andrew Doughty (1785-1843) naval officer, first Senior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory from 1829, died at the Observatory 1843.

Ball, Sir Robert Stawell (1840-1913) author of popular books on astronomy, Director of the Cambridge Observatory 1892-1913

Baxandall, Frank E. (1869?-1929) worked with Norman Lockyer on stellar spectra, moved to Cambridge with the Solar Physics Observatory where he was Senior Assistant Observer from 1913-1929

Bell, Miss Julia (1879-1979) Of Girton College, Computer at the Cambridge Observatory 1902-7, went on to a successful career in genetics

Bellamy, H. J. (?) Assistant to Mr Newall 1902-5, left to work at the Royal Naval College, Osborne

Berry, A.G. (?) Senior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory 1843-1846

Blackwell, Donald E. (1921-2010) Graduate of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. Assistant Director of Solar Physics Observatory, Cambridge 1949-1960. Savilian Professor, Oxford 1960-1988. Obit. A&G 52(3) (2011) p.37-38.

Bowd, S.E. (?) Computer at the Cambridge Observatory 1906-10

Bowden, Arthur H.L. (1839-1923) Junior Assistant at Cambridge Observatory 1857-1858, Senior Assistant 1858-1863

Breen, James (1826-1866) Senior Assistant Observer at the Cambridge Observatory 1846-1858

Bruck, Hermann Alexander (1905-2000) John Couch Adams Astronomer 1943-1946

Bell-Burnell, Dame Jocelyn (1943-) discovered first Pulsar (1967)

Butler, Charles Pritchard (1871-1952) Career in Solar Physics Observatory, London & Cambridge as Senior Assistant Observer 1889-1937, also a Director of BAA Solar Section

Butler, Hugh Ernest (1916-1978) Emmanuel College, Senior Assistant Solar Physics Observatory/Combined Observatories 1946-8, main career at Edinburgh

Campbell, A.D. (?) Computer at the Cambridge Observatory 1905-11

Carroll, Sir John Anthony [K.B.E.] (1899-1974) Assistant Director of the Solar Physics Observatory 1925-1930, later career as an Admiralty scientist, Gresham Professor of Astronomy (1964)

Catton, Thomas (bapt. 1758-died 1838) operated an observatory at St. Johns College (1791-1832) see [ODNB](#).

Challis, Rev. James (1803-1882) responsible for the British hunt for Neptune, Plumian Professor: 1836-1882 and Cambridge Observatory Director 1836-1861

Christy, T.(?) Junior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory 1858-60

Cookson, Bryan (1874-1909) grandson of R.S. Newall, Assistant in Astrophysics at the Cambridge Observatory 1906-9

Cotes, Roger (1682-1716) Plumian Professor: 1707-1716, helped Newton with the second edition of Principia.

Adams, John Couch (1819-1892) predicted existence of planet Neptune independently of Le Verrier. Director of the Cambridge Observatory (1861-92) – see [Cornwall](#); [ODNB](#)

Criswick, George Stickland (1836-1916) most of career at Greenwich, but was Junior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory 1854-55

Cross, Charles Arthur (1922-1980) Cambridge graduate, amateur astronomer, mapped Moon and Mars, Cross Crater on Mars is named after him

Darwin, Sir George Howard (1845-1912) Plumian Professor: 1883-1912, author on the tides

Dobbie, J.C. (??) Senior Assistant Observer at the Solar Physics Observatory 1937-45

Dunthorne, Richard (1711-1775) established observatory at St. Johns College in 1765, expert on Moon motions

Eddington, Sir Arthur (1882-1944), born at Kendal, brought up at Weston-super-Mare in Somerset, educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, senior wrangler 1904. Senior Assistant at the ROG, 1906, the Plumian Professor: 1913-1944, provided evidence for Relativity in 1919 eclipse expedition, popularizer of Relativity. Director of the Cambridge Observatory 1914-1944 ([ODNB](#)).

Ellis, Richard Salisbury (1950-), Plumian Professor (1995-1999)

Entwistle, Frederick (1896?-1917) Junior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory 1914-17. Killed in action as a Second Lieutenant in the 1st Bn. Norfolk Regiment 9 October 1917, he is buried at the Hooze Crater Cemetery, Belgium

Fallows, Fearon (1788-1831), born in Cockermouth (see [Cumberland](#) for more details)

Freeman, Alexander (1838-1897) born in Blackheath (Wonersch), Surrey. A brilliant teacher of mathematics in Cambridge. Astronomy was the love of his life, and in 1893 at the age of 55 he applied for the Savilian chair at Oxford. But in 1871 he had attacked the Royal Observatory Greenwich as “an odious Stuart relic ... a blot”, and swiping at George Airy, “a Garrison of Absolutism, on its haughty eminence”. 1871

had not been forgotten; his referees were damningly brief, and the RAS ensured that H.H. Turner, Chief Assistant at Greenwich, was appointed. In 1891 he became rural dean of Sittingbourne, Kent, and built an observatory there (see [ODNB](#), [Freeman's Observatory, Sittingbourne, Kent](#)).

Gibb, Miss (??) Computer at the Cambridge Observatory 1902-3

Glaisher, James (1809-1903) Junior Assistant Observer at the Cambridge Observatory 1833-1835, later meteorologist at Greenwich, FRS and pioneer balloonist

Glaisher, John (1819-1846) Junior Assistant Observer at the Cambridge Observatory 1836-1844

Goatcher, A. W. (active ? 1892-1910) Assistant to Mr Newall at the Cambridge Observatory 1892-1902, Established Computer at the Royal Observatory the Cape 1902-7, member 'GOK' of the BAA VSS

Graham, Andrew (1815-1908) Senior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory 1864-1903

Green, Henry Ernest (1889-1944) Junior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory 1918-44

Hardy, Miss (?) Computer at Cambridge Observatory 1876-79/80

Hartley, William Ernest (1877-1917), Junior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory 1903-1913, Senior Assistant 1913-1917. Died on H.M.S. Vanguard when the vessel exploded at anchor 9 July 1917, he was serving as a Naval Instructor, he is recorded on the Chatham Naval Memorial (['Obituary Notices: Fellows:- Hartley, William Ernest', MNRAS, 17\(1918\), p.248](#)).

Hawking, Stephen (1942-2018), theoretical physicist and popular writer.

Hewish, Anthony (1924-) developed aperture synthesis at the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory (1974 Nobel Prize winner).

Hinks, Arthur Robert (1873-1945) Junior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory (1896-1903), Senior Assistant (1903-1913) (['Obituary Notices :- Hinks, Arthur Robert', MNRAS, 106 \(1945\), p.30-1](#)).

Hoyle, Sir Fred (1915-2001), born Gilstead, West Yorkshire. Cambridge Plumian Professor (1958-1972), developed nucleosynthesis theory in astrophysics, opposed big-bang theory in cosmology, wrote science fiction, founder of the Institute of Theoretical Astronomy, Cambridge ([Yorkshire: West Riding; ODNB](#)).

Jeffreys, Sir Harold (1891-1989) Plumian Professor (1946-1958), geophysicist (see [ODNB](#)).

Kennicutt, Robert C., Jr. (1951-) Plumian Professor (2005-).

Kluber, Harald von (1901-1978), Assistant Observer, Solar Physics Observatory (1949-60), Assistant Director Solar Physics Observatory (1960-68) – continued to work at Malta outstation until 1971 (see [Obituary: Harald von Klüber..., QJRAS, 20 \(1979\), 472-5](#)).

Lax, William (1761–1836), astronomer, in 1795 he succeeded Dr Smith as Lowndes's professor of astronomy and geometry in the University of Cambridge (see [ODNB](#); [Buckinghamshire](#) & [Hertfordshire](#)].

Long, Roger (1680-1770), first Lowdean Professor of astronomy, created a planetarium sphere 'the Uranium' at Pembroke which existed from 1758-1871 (see [ODNB](#)).

Ludlam, William, [Rev.] (1717-1788), mathematician, astronomer, clergyman. Made observations from St. John's College, Cambridge in 1767 and 1768 ([Mobberley, M., The Rev. William Ludlam \(1716-1788\) and the Cockfield Tower Observatory', JBAA, 16 \[3\]\(2006\), 119; ODNB](#)).

Lynden-Bell, Donald (1935-), born Dover, best known for his theories that galaxies contain massive black holes at their centre, while working at the University of Cambridge.

Lynn, William Thynne (1835-1911), most of career at Greenwich but, Junior Assistant at Cambridge Observatory (1855-56) ([Obituary Notices : Fellows', MNRAS, 72 \(1912\), 247-9](#)).

Lyttleton, Raymond Arthur [Prof.] (1911–1995), born Warley Woods, near Birmingham, graduating at St John's College, Cambridge. Mathematician and theoretical astronomer he worked at Cambridge University (see [Worcestershire; ODNB](#)).

Malden, Anne Douglas, [Miss] (1881-1961), of Newnham College, Computer at the Cambridge Observatory (1903-4).

Manning, William Henry (1883-1952) Assistant to Mr Newall 1905-13, Assistant at Solar Physics Observatory 1913-46. Joint author with Stratton of 'Atlas of Spectra of Nova Herculis 1934' (Cambridge 1939). He was married to the Labour M.P. and teachers union leader, Dame Leah Manning (who lived 1886-1977). They lived in the S.P.O. house from when it was new in 1913 (see Manning, L 'A Life for Education' (London, 1970); [ODNB](#)).

Marsden, Brian Geoffrey (1937-2010), born in Cambridge, educated in Oxford and Yale, career in USA, Director (1968-2000) of IAU Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams (CBAT), discovered group of comets the 'Marsden Group'. Director (1978-2006) of IAU Minor Planet Center (MPC).

Michell, John, Revd. (1724/5-1793) Fellow, Queens' College 1749-64, Rector St. Botolph's Cambridge (1762-3), Woodwardian Professor of Geology 1762-67, also telescope maker, observer, binary star and black hole theorist, pioneer geophysicist etc (see [Nottinghamshire; Yorkshire; West Riding; ODNB](#)).

Milne, Edward Arthur, [MBE] (1896-1950) Assistant Director of the Solar Physics Observatory 1920-1924, he went on to become a major figure in relativity and cosmology. Gold Medal of the R.A.S. 1935 (see [Yorkshire: East Riding](#); [Oxfordshire](#); [ODNB](#)).

Morgan, John Holdsworth (1825-1908) Junior Assistant, Cambridge Observatory (1844-47), FRAS (1879-1906). Career in Church of England. Died in Bethlem Hospital.

Morris, P. (?) Junior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory (1893-96).

Moss, Walter (1878-1958) joined Solar Physics Observatory in 1902, served as Senior Assistant Observer (1929-45) ([‘Obituary Notices...’, MNRAS, 119 \(1959\), 249-50](#)).

Newall, Hugh Frank (1857-1944) Newall Observer (1891-1904), Assistant Director of Cambridge Observatory 1904-1913, Director of Solar Physics Observatory (1913-1928), a son of R.S. Newall, he lived at Madingley Rise and operated the Newall Telescope (see [ODNB](#)).

Newton, Sir Isaac (1642-1727) developed laws of motion and gravity, author of Principia (1687) (see [Lincolnshire](#))

Ostriker, Jeremiah (1937-) Plumian Professor (2001-2004, astrophysicist.

Parker, D. (?) Assistant to Mr Newall (1891-92).

Pierce, E T. (?) Junior Assistant S.P.O./Combined Observatories (1945-6).

Plummer, John Isaac (1845-1925) Computer at the Cambridge Observatory (1859?-December 1863) ([Appleton 2012](#)).

Redman, Roderick Oliver (1905-1975), Assistant Director Solar Physics Observatory (1931-37), later Director of the Combined Observatories 1947-1972, FRS (1946) President of the RAS (1959-61) (see [ODNB](#)).

Rees, Martin, Lord Martin of Ludlow O.M. (1942-) Plumian Professor (1973-1991), Astronomer Royal (1995-) (see [Shropshire](#))

Roberts, E. (?), computer at the Cambridge Observatory (1879-80).

Rolston, William Edward (1876-1921), Computer at S.P.O. (901-1913), First Junior Observer (1913-21), although period (1915-21) on military service ([‘Obituary Notices: Fellows:..’, MNRAS, 82 \(1922\), p.253](#)).

Ryle, Sir Martin (1918-1984) Astronomer Royal (1972-82), Nobel Prize winner -1974 (see [ODNB](#)).

Selwyn, Canon William (1806-1875), Canon of Ely Cathedral, took with John Titterton, photographs of the solar disc 1863-74 (see [ODNB](#)).

Sheepshanks, Richard, [Rev.] (1794-1855), fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, Secretary of the RAS, FRS (1830) benefactor to astronomy. His elder sister, Anne Sheepshanks (1789-1876) was a generous donor to the Cambridge, and many other observatories (see [Yorkshire: West Riding](#); [ODNB](#)).

Shepherd, Anthony (1721-1796) Plumian Professor (1760-1796), published astronomical tables, a friend of Captain Cook (see [ODNB](#)).

Slater, Noel Bryan (1912-1973) Junior Assistant Observer, S.P.O. 1939-46. Later Professor of Applied Mathematics at Hull, worked on Eddington's theories. (See *QJRAS*, **17** (1974) 65).

Snow, Robert (1805-1854), amateur astronomer educated at St. Johns, Cambridge, FRAS 1831, recorded as an observer with the Northumberland Telescope in 1839 (see [Report of the Council...](#), *MNRAS*, **15** (1855), p.101).

Smart, William Marshall (1889-1975) Senior Assistant, Cambridge Observatory (1919-1937), John Couch Adams Astronomer (1921-1937), author of 'Spherical Astronomy' (1931), later Regius Professor of Astronomy at Glasgow (1937-1959) ([Ovenden, M. W., 'William Marshall Smart', QJRAS, 18 \(1977\), 140-6](#)).

Smith, John (b.1711-1795) second Lowndean Professor, set up a transit telescope at Gonville and Caius (1764) (see [ODNB](#)).

Smith, Robert (1689-1768) Plumian Professor (1716-1760), established an observatory at Trinity College Gateway (see [ODNB](#)).

Stanley, Leonard John (1888-?), assistant to Mr Newall 1906-13, Assistant Solar Physics Observatory (1913-46), Assistant Combined Observatories (1946-53).

Stratton, Frederick John Marrian D.S.O. (1881-1960) Assistant in Astrophysics 1909-13, Assistant Director of SPO 1913-19, Director of SPO 1919-46, Director of the combined Observatories 1946-7. Author of 'The History of the Cambridge Observatories' (1949) ([Frederick John Marrian Stratton, \(obituary\)', QJRAS, \(1961\), 44-9](#)).

Swan, John (b.1605-1671) clergyman, author of 'Speculum mundi' (1635) (see [ODNB](#)).

Taylor, Henry (?) Junior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory (1856-57).

Thackeray, Andrew David (1910-1978), educated at Eton and Kings College Cambridge, Assistant Director of Solar Physics Observatory 1937-1948, worked at Radcliffe Observatory, Pretoria (1948-74) ([Andrew David Thackeray...](#), *QJRAS*, **20** (1979), 216-20).

Titterton, John (1830?-1914) Photographer of Ely, took with Canon William Selwyn, photographs of the solar disc 1863-74.

Todd, Sir Charles (1826-1910) as Junior Assistant at the Cambridge Observatory 1847-54 he used the Northumberland Telescope to take a daguerreotype photograph of the Moon. He was later responsible for setting up the telegraph network in Australia ([Obituary...](#), *MNRAS*, **71** (1911), p.272).

Todd, Henry David (1836-1900) Computer at the Cambridge Observatory 1859-60 and then Junior Assistant 1860-90, brother of Charles Todd.

Vince, Samuel (1749-1821), Plumian Professor: 1796-1821, published 'A Complete System of Astronomy' (1808) (see [ODNB](#)) – see [Suffolk page](#).

Walker, Anne, Miss (1864-?) Computer at the Cambridge Observatory 1879-1903, she carried out the duties of an Observer (see [ODNB](#) article for Andrew Graham) – see [Suffolk page](#).

Williams, Evan Gwyn (1905-1940), graduate of Trinity College, Junior Assistant Observer at S.P.O. (1936-7) ('[Obituary Notices: Fellows...](#)', *MRAS*, **101** (1941), p.141).

Wilson, Charles Thomson Rees (1869-1959), was an Observer in Meteorological Physics at the Solar Physics Observatory 1913-26, awarded Nobel Prize for Physics 1927 for invention of the cloud chamber (see [ODNB](#)).

Woodhouse, Robert (1773-1827) Plumian Professor (1822-7), first Director of the Cambridge Observatory (1824-7 (see [ODNB](#)).

Woolley, Sir Richard van der Riet 1906-1986), Senior Assistant and JCA Astronomer at Cambridge Observatory (1937-39), later Astronomer Royal (1956-71) (see [ODNB](#); [Dorset](#); [County of London](#); [Sussex](#)).

Wormell, Thomas Wilson (1903-1985), observer in Meteorological Physics at Solar Physics Observatory (1926-46) ('[Obituary – Wormell, Thomas-Wilson](#)', *QJRAS*, **27** (1986), 131-2).

Wright, T. (?), Computer at the Cambridge Observatory 1875-81.

Yates, G. G. (?), Senior Assistant Observer, Solar Physics/Combined Observatories (1946-56).