

University of Mississippi Women in Physics

# UMMWIP

“Science is a quest for understanding” - Jocelyn Bell Burnell

## Weekly meetings

September 14 - Meeting and board games

September 21 - Social night

September 28 - Coffee and Conversation

## Upcoming events

September 18 - Oxford Science Café talk by Dr. Jennifer Meyer

September 19 - PGSA - WiP NCPA Lab Tours

September 26 - Professional Development Workshop: Grant Writing

September 26 - PGSA - WiP Lewis Hall Lab Tours

October 9 - Ada Lovelace Day

October 11 - Women in STEM Dinner

November 6 - Biophysics colloquium by Andrea Welsh, founder of WiP at Georgia Tech

November TBA - Mental Health Workshop

November TBA - STEM Demos at Oxford Boys and Girls Club



## Jocelyn Bell Burnell wins 2018 Breakthrough Prize

by **Sumeet Kulkarni**

In 1967, Jocelyn Bell, a young PhD student at the University of Cambridge, spotted a curious scratchy signal which repeated periodically in the papers recording data from the Mullard Radio observatory. Initially dubbed 'LGM1' for 'Little Green Men' due to its unknown origin, it turned out to be the discovery of



## Ada Lovelace Day -October 9, 2018-

Ada Lovelace Day is a celebration of the achievements that women have made in STEM. This international event takes place on the second Tuesday of October every year since 2009. It was originally founded by Suw Charman-Anderson, a journalist and public speaker. She recognizes the need for more female role models in STEM. On the importance of Ada Lovelace Day she states, "Outstanding women can function as inspirational examples of success, illustrating the kinds of achievements that are possible for women around them. They demonstrate that it is possible to overcome traditional gender barriers, indicating to other women that high levels of success are indeed attainable." Hence, she hopes that this celebration will address this problem "by shining a light on the women in STEM."

For more information go to [www.findingada.com](http://www.findingada.com)

pulsars: pulsating neutron stars rotating at incredibly high speeds.

The 1974 Nobel prize was awarded for this discovery of pulsars to Jocelyn's advisor, Antony Hewish and their collaborator Martin Ryle. It shockingly excluded Jocelyn as a co-recipient, and to this date, there have only been 2 women (Marie Curie and Maria Goeppert Mayer) to have been awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in its 117 year history.

Jocelyn Bell herself has been humble about this incident all her life. She quotes, "I believe it would demean Nobel Prizes if they were awarded to research students, except in very exceptional cases, and I do not believe this is one of them."

If it does indeed warrant redemption, it has arrived today with the announcement of her single-handedly winning the 2018 Special Breakthrough Prize. Formed in 2012 and funded in part by entrepreneurs, including Google co-founder Sergey Brin and Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg, it is awarded for extraordinary achievements in fundamental physics, life sciences and mathematics. Worth \$3 million dollars, it is the most valuable award in the sciences. It is thoroughly well-deserved, and what more, she has decided to invest her reward money 'to fund women, under-represented ethnic minority and refugee students to become physics researchers.' We congratulate Jocelyn Bell Burnell on her achievement!

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-45425872>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-06210-w>

**Photo description:** Jocelyn Bell Burnell with the radio telescope array she helped build at Cambridge.

**Photo credits:** Guardian News and Media Limited