

News Release

Contacts:

Jerry Stone

spaceflight_uk@yahoo.co.uk

www.clarkeawards.org

+44 (0)1438 712000 / +44 (0)7939 204457 (Mobile)

Dave Wright

dave.wright@spaceconference.org.uk

www.spaceconference.org.uk

+44 (0)151 281 1134 / +44 (0)7813 651559 (Mobile)

For immediate release

Who will win an Arthur?

The nominations for the 2008 Sir Arthur Clarke Awards include Stephen Hawking, Heather Couper and Piers Sellers.

The Oscars® have recently been awarded for the best achievements in the film industry, and soon the 2008 Sir Arthur Clarke awards - the space equivalent of the Oscars® - will be presented at a gala dinner at this year's UK Space Conference, which will also raise funds for charity work in Sir Arthur's adopted home of Sri Lanka.

The UK Space Conference will run from March 27-29, at the prestigious Charterhouse School in Surrey, attracting over 300 participants from around the world to hear about the past, present and future of the UK's involvement in space research and exploration. The award ceremony will be the climax of a selection process from categories which cover activities by individuals, teams and organisations in Space Science and the Space industry. As well as categories for corporate and individual achievement, there are also awards for educators and journalists, and for outreach and inspiration - promoting space and providing encouragement for the next generation.

One major difference from the Hollywood awards is that nominations for the "Arthurs" come from the public. If people were "**impressed, intrigued or inspired**" by some aspect of space research, they were encouraged to submit their nominations, and a panel of judges representing the UK space community drew up the following short-list from the submissions.

Best Corporate / Team Achievement

- The Mars Express team
- The Space Exploration Working Group
- The Venus Express team

Best Individual Achievement

- Sir Richard Branson
- Carl Murray
- Ian Taylor MP
- Steven Young

Best Student Achievement

- Samuel George
- Alison Gibbings
- Sasi Prabhakaren

Best Presentation: Film

- "In The Shadow of the Moon"
- "Planetary Defense"

The Sir Arthur Clarke Awards

Best Presentation: TV / Radio

- The Jodcasts
- Martin Redfern & Heather Couper
- Quentin Cooper

Best Presentation: Written

- David Baker, for “Jane’s Spaceflight Directory”
- David Harland, for “Exploring the Moon”
- Giles Sparrow, for “Spaceflight”

Best Space Reporting

- Adrian Berry
- Rob Coppinger
- Spaceflight magazine
- Paul Sutherland

Achievement in Education

- Phil Charlesworth
- The Faulkes Telescope Project
- Rex Hall

Outreach Award for the Public Promotion of Space

- Maggie Aderin
- The National Schools Observatory
- Tracey Parker
- Ken Pounds

Inspiration Award

- Stephen Hawking
- Anu Ohja
- Piers Sellers

Space Entrepreneur

- Alan Bond
- Sir Richard Branson
- Sir Martin Sweeting

In addition to these categories, there will be a **Lifetime Achievement** award, chosen by the directors of the UK Space Conference.

The names of the winners will only become known at the awards event, so only then will everyone find out who will take home one of this year’s glass monoliths.

If you would like to attend the awards, please contact Jerry Stone as soon as possible.

Previous winners have included Michael Foale, Sir Patrick Moore, the National Space Centre, Colin Pillinger, Reginald Turnill and John Zarnecki.

The awards organiser, Jerry Stone, is a freelance presenter on astronomy and space exploration, and has promoted space for over 35 years. He said

“The UK is a world leader in many aspects of space research, and our many of the nominees should be regarded as heroes in their field. Their names may not all be widely known by the public, but they richly deserve an honour such as this. The UK should be very proud of its achievements in space research and exploration, which we hope will provide jobs and research and also, very importantly, inspiration for the next generation.”

- - - End of main release. Additional information follows - - -

The Sir Arthur Clarke Awards

The UK Space Conference and the Space Oscars

The UK's space activities are rarely given mainstream coverage in the media, to the extent that many members of the public are surprised to learn that the UK's space programme pre-dates Beagle 2. It is more of a surprise to some to discover that not only have we built a large number of satellites but that we launched one using our own rocket.

However, as the people involved in the British rocketry programmes of the 1950s and 1960s retired or passed away, there was concern that a priceless heritage was in danger of being lost with the passage of time. As a result, the British Rocketry Oral History Programme was set up, with the intention of recording the experiences of those who were involved with this aspect of British technology. In 1998 it was decided to take this further and to allow more to share in this venture by organising a conference at the prestigious Charterhouse School in Godalming, where talks and papers on these topics could be presented.

For the last nine years, the Charterhouse conferences have grown in size and esteem, and they run for three days, attracting over 300 participants from around the world. The subject matter has also grown and the programme covers current and future projects and includes a major educational element. The theme of this year's conference is "Space Connects". It will run from 27-29 March and will feature a wealth of presentations on various aspects of space exploration. Additional information on the conference is available from the main UKSC website at www.spaceconference.org.uk

The Sir Arthur Clarke Awards

In 2005 there was an additional aspect to the proceedings, with the introduction of special awards, which are regarded as the space equivalent of Hollywood's Oscars. The awards are intended to provide recognition and tribute to those who have worked for the advancement of space exploration. Although there may be some international involvement, the aim is to concentrate on British achievement. It was obvious that the awards should be named after Sir Arthur Clarke, who is known around the world for his far-sighted writings on space exploration, and it was a delight to receive Sir Arthur's agreement to his name being used in this way.

Sir Arthur's most famous work of non-fiction was produced just over 60 years ago, with an article in the October 1945 issue of *Wireless World* entitled "Extraterrestrial Relays". In this paper, he calculated that a satellite at an altitude of 22,300 miles would take 24 hours to circle the Earth. As the Earth itself rotates in this time, such a satellite placed in orbit over the equator would appear to stay in the same point in the sky - it would be a geostationary satellite. He showed that three such satellites, spaced 120° apart, would be able to provide world-wide communications coverage without the need to be tracked across the sky. This was around 20 years before the first such satellite was launched; today there are hundreds, each occupying a place in what is now called the Clarke Orbit. The diagram of three satellites in this orbit, which was included in the original article, is etched on the front of the awards.

His most famous work of fiction is "2001: a space odyssey", which deals with the discovery of the first evidence of extra-terrestrial intelligence, in the form of a monolith buried on the Moon which had previously helped the evolution of intelligence in early ape-men in Africa.

The award takes the form of a solid glass block in the proportions of the 2001 monolith. Etched on the front is the diagram of three satellites in orbit which was included in the original 1945 article on satellite communications. For further details on the awards, go to www.clarkeawards.org

Sir Arthur, who was 90 last year, resides in Sri Lanka. His diving school was swept away in the 2004 tsunami which devastated areas of the island, and the awards dinner also acts as a fund-raising event for Sarvodaya, the largest development charity in Sri Lanka, which has been reaching out and helping the poorest of the poor for over 45 years.

The Sir Arthur Clarke Awards

The Judging Panel

An invited panel from the UK space community drew up the shortlist of categories and nominees. Some members are winners of previous year's awards.

Jerry Stone	Director, the Sir Arthur Clarke Awards. Chair of the Space Education Council
Lesley Wright	Co-organiser of the UK Space Conference. Chair of the judging panel
John Auburn	Chairman of UK Space
John Harlow	President of the British Interplanetary Society
Peter Marshall	The Arthur C Clarke Foundation.
Bo Maxwell	Managing Director of the Mars Society UK
Pat Norris	Chairman of the Royal Aeronautical Society Space Group
Colin Pillinger	Professor of Planetary Sciences at PSSRI
Victoria Reid	Chair of UK Students for the Exploration & Development of Space
Chris Riley	Science writer, broadcaster and film-maker
George Scoon	European Space Agency (Retired)
Alistair Scott	Communications and Public Relations, EADS Astrium
Michael Simpson	President of the International Space University
David Southwood	Director of Space Science for the European Space Agency
David Williams	Director General of the British National Space Centre
John Zarnecki	Director, Centre for Earth, Planetary, Space and Astronomical Research

“Oscar” is a registered trademark of the US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Additional details are available on the nominees.

For further information :

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Contact Jerry Stone

Phone +44 (0)1438 712000
Mobile +44 (0)7939 204457
E-mail spaceflight_uk@yahoo.co.uk
Website www.clarkeawards.org

The UK Space Conference

Contact Dave Wright

Phone +44 (0)151 281 1134
Mobile +44 (0)7813 651559
E-mail dave.wright@spaceconference.org.uk
Website www.spaceconference.org.uk

Prime conference sponsor

EADS Astrium

Contact Alistair Scott: Advisor, Communications & Public Relations
Phone +44 (0)438 773698
E-mail alistair.scott@astrium.eads.net
Website www.space.eads.net

The Arthur C Clarke Foundation

Contact Peter Marshall
Phone +44 (0)1823 432671
E-mail info@clarkefoundation.org
Website www.clarkefoundation.org