

CAROLINE HERSCHEL PRIZE LECTURESHIP 2020 WINNER CITATION



Dr REBECCA (BECKY) SMETHURST

Dr Smethurst is a Junior Research Fellow at Christ Church, University of Oxford. Her research accomplishments include applying state-of-the-art statistical tools to dissect the evolutionary paths of galaxies in the Universe, using large datasets such as Galaxy Zoo and the Sloan Digital Sky Survey. She has demonstrated that so-called 'green valley' galaxies, rather than being a homogeneous family, hide a variety of evolutionary paths and reveal how and when galaxies stop forming stars. She is an effective and enthusiastic science communicator, receiving recognition such as the Henrick de Waard Foundation lecturer in Groningen. Her weekly videos about physics and astronomy on her YouTube channel 'Dr Becky' have collected more than a hundred thousand subscribers. In those videos she conveys the nuts and bolts of cutting-edge research in a unique, modern, style, to great effect. Her appetite for communicating science is boundless.

Her Caroline Herschel Prize Lecture will incorporate some of her more recent research and is entitled "Supermassive Black Holes: The Ultimate Galaxy Killers?"