

WHAT THE HERSCHEL SOCIETY DOES

This note seeks to give a reasonably complete picture of what the Society does now, and some of our current aspirations for the future. Members will know some of this, but perhaps not all. The framework below is from the front page of our website. The comments *in italics* add context and detail.

Our aim is to spread knowledge of the life, work, and times of Herschel and his family, and to encourage greater understanding today of the subjects he studied. We do this in several ways:

- We support the [Herschel Museum of Astronomy](#) in Bath in the house where he made many of his discoveries. *In practice we collaborate on a wide range of issues big and small, including our involvement in the Museum's recent updating of its interpretation strategy; our mainly complementary Herschel 200 activities; visits and enquiries; and a host of day-to-day things.*
- We award the annual [Caroline Herschel Prize Lectureship](#). *This is run almost entirely by the Chairman with support from the RAS, the professional community and our Vice President, and is now a well-established part of the effort to support women astronomers in the UK develop their careers.*
- We encourage research into the [Herschel family's](#) lives and publications. *In practice much of our effort has been focused on identifying resources and activities elsewhere (eg at the RAS and RS, but also overseas) and developing our website into a Herschel knowledge base. Herschel 200 has given a fillip to this.*
- We arrange [Astronomy Lectures](#) in Bath in collaboration with the BRLSI, the University of Bath, and others. *Most of these are on modern astronomy, but we also open to talks on the history of astronomy where it relates to the Herschels, and other science topics related to members of the family's other work.*
- We are members of the Bath and Surrounds [Bath and Surrounds Starlit Skies Alliance](#) tackling local light pollution issues. *The Alliance is currently inactive as it needs a new chairperson.*
- We support observing through our partner organisation [Bath Astronomers](#). *Since it became a separate organisation BA has become very active in public outreach and observing at schools and community groups, as well as at the Herschel Museum. Most of the support is through mutual membership for those interested, and information sharing.*
- We support the performance and recording of William [Herschel's music](#). *Our music member has been putting together a database of William's music, acts as a source of advice and expertise on what is available, and writes articles about it. He organised our highly successful Herschel 200 concert, and actively seeks other opportunities to promote Herschel's music.*
- We issue our 6-monthly Journal to all Members. *Our Twitter feed has recently become much more active under new management. We also have a growing presence on YouTube.*
- *We are also always on the lookout for new ways to promote the Herschels' stories and engage new audiences with them, such as the Lina dance performance some years' ago, and the Bath Spa Students' virtual 20ft telescope virtual model in 2022.*