



RAYMOND JAMES COHEN (1948-2006)

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Jim Cohen, one of Britain's leading radio astronomers, devoted his career to the understanding of the physics behind the evolution and formation of stars, and to finding ways of protecting optical astronomy from light pollution and radio astronomy from interference. This is what the Daily Telegraph reported last Monday.

To us Jim Cohen was a colleague, a teacher, a collaborator and a friend.

In the course of his astronomical career he made significant contributions to the study of neutral hydrogen in high-velocity clouds, molecular emissions in our Galaxy, and masers in our Galaxy and in other galaxies. There have been some 190 of his papers in a variety of professional and popular journals and publications.

Most recently he had been working on methanol masers. He initiated the building of a new multi-beam receiver to start a very ambitious methanol survey of the southern skies using the Parkes telescope in Australia with a large consortium of researchers from Britain and Australia. This is the project he was going to report on during this conference. You will find his abstract in the book.

Jim was a much appreciated colleague at Jodrell Bank. He was a walking encyclopedia on star-formation and many other astronomical subjects. In his quiet and peaceful manner he played a large role in the success of Jodrell Bank. He was not only a man full of ideas but also someone who actually acted on them. Jim leaves a tremendous void at Jodrell and also in radio astronomy.

Another area where Jim will be remembered is in the international spectrum management community, where he fought to reduce man-made radio interference for radio astronomy. He actively participated in the decision-making processes in the United Kingdom, in Europe, and at the International Telecommunications Union in Geneva, which is the UN decision making body on spectrum issues.

With his open attitude, his sense of humour, and his quiet and stable demeanour, Jim was a very effective participant, whose substantial input over a long period of time made him a leader in this area. We worked together on preparing the legislation for the allocation of the radio spectrum from 60 to 275 GHz at the ITU in 2003 and to negotiate the agreement between the radio astronomers and the Russian military generals about the GLONASS satellite system in 1993.

The colleagues from IUCAF and CRAF will miss not only his solid and consistent stance but also his warm friendship.

Jim has been a lecturer at University of Manchester and has supervised over 30 MSc and PhD students. As a person and as a teacher Jim was very gentle and approachable and was very popular among the students. Jim played a prominent role in every aspect of every project in which he was involved and made it a learning experience. He had the gift of teaching and ably communicated his understanding to less experienced members of the group. His students will remember his clarity of mind, his patience and his good humour.

In all this he was driven by his appreciation of love and life and his deep devotion as a Christian. In fact the Biblical scripture that describes Jim's character best is the command from Ephesians "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another". Those who worked with him and know him are witness to this.

His quiet sense of humour and positive outlook would relieve the pressure when there were setbacks in projects or when telecommunication lawyers were waging war or national delegations were taking opposing

positions.

Let me mention just one anecdote related to this picture taken during his visit last year to the site of the new radio telescope in Sardinia during a meeting of the CRAF committee. He took the initiative to continue the tradition of placing something personal or valuable under the foundation of the new structure. So Jim buried his business card. This photo was made right after that act.

There is a side of Jim that most of us do not know. Jim was an accomplished musician on the recorder, the whistle and the flute. He owned a collection of some 60 whistles and flutes, some as long as a yard. He had his own ceilidh band called Hardigan's Fancy and another called MERLIN, named after the radio telescope at Jodrell Bank.

And behind it all, a kind and gentle man of unfailing integrity and trust.

Upon closing I would like to refer to Psalm 90:12, where we read:

Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.