

# THE OBSERVATORY

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## EDITORIAL

In the 2023 December issue, an editorial outlined the predicament in which this *Magazine* found itself, mainly as a result of a dramatic increase in the cost of postage. The action that the Editors took then was to raise the price of subscriptions substantially for 2024. That action has resulted in a marked decline in the number of subscribers, particularly among Fellows of the RAS; it is surmised that the same fall-off in the number of libraries taking *The Observatory* did not occur due to some inertia among institutions that have been subscribing for a much longer period.

Whatever the case, the Editors have agreed that a new approach is required. So from the start of Volume 145 in 2025, the *Magazine* will be provided *without charge* in the form of a PDF file that can be found on our web site:

<http://www.obsmag.org/>

That PDF can be downloaded and, for users wishing to avoid reading material from a screen (as is the case with most of the Editors!), it can be easily printed. Indeed, especially with the aid of a printer capable of double-sided printing, and using the 'Actual size' facility, a copy of the *Magazine* can be produced which merely needs to be trimmed to the familiar size to resemble a traditional issue. The cover pages can also be made available, so that anyone with a supply of light-blue paper can complete the process in full.

We hope that this offer of a free, open-access journal will continue to be of interest to both individuals and institutions who, we trust, will appreciate the financial and environmental benefits. And to help expedite this process, the present Editors will be pleased to welcome Phillip Helbig to their number; his enthusiasm for *The Observatory* is perhaps the main reason that we are not 'calling it a day'.

In addition to having the latest PDFs available on-line, it is intended that PDFs of recent issues will be available in the same way. Furthermore, it is also planned to enable the Astrophysics Data System to connect to each issue on-line as soon as it becomes available, so there will be no delay as there is at present. Indices for the last 20 years or so, again in PDF form, will appear on our website too.