Curiosity and Scientific Exploration [B2]

Situato nel cuore di Londra, il Royal Observatory Greenwich offre una fusione di scienza, storia e divulgazione. Scopri il suo ruolo fondamentale nella comunicazione scientifica e come continua a collegare il passato e il futuro dell'astronomia.

The Royal Observatory in the London borough of Greenwich is celebrating its 350th anniversary this year. More than a museum, it is a fascinating place where science can be lived and breathed by all the family. From school visits that allow pupils to learn about stars, space and time, to teacher training activities, the observatory offers a varied and **engaging** programme including podcasts, a blog, learning resources and l**ectures** given by scientists. Members of the public can attend events to **unpack** complex ideas and gain a better understanding of phenomena such as gravitational waves, the formation of planets, and the role of **dust** in the universe. Those looking for a career in science can also apply for work experience at the observatory, where they can learn more about what a career in astronomy and science communication would involve. To find out more, we contacted Dr. Devoy, the observatory's senior curator. We began by asking her about her own **background** with the institution. **Dr. Louise Devoy:** I started at the Royal Observatory Greenwich eleven years ago. My **background** was in astrophysics originally, but after my studies, I switched to history of science. I've worked at the Science Museum and the British Museum here in London, and I've also worked at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, and it's been so interesting. I've **gone full scale** from medieval periods to thinking about simple **sundials** and astrolabes, all the way through to thinking about giant telescopes, so it's nice to have that mix. My job involves doing research on the history of the site, so this can be anything from finding out about the buildings to the instruments, to the people... So I love the diversity of it. What I really enjoy is doing the sort of detective work. I was working in the archives yesterday up in Cambridge, and it's a real privilege to be able to handle the materials that the astronomers royal and their assistants wrote. All these beautiful books full of numbers and letters and **jottings**, little sketches of Mars and Jupiter... And

you really feel like you're looking over their shoulders, almost being there with them back in time to see what they did.

IMPORTANT LEGACY

From handling centuries-old astronomical records to **engaging** with modern audiences, the Royal Observatory **bridges** the past and present. It's a place where history and contemporary science meet, offering a unique **blend** of learning and inspiration. **Dr. Louise Devoy:**I'd say it's absolutely fundamental because right from the very beginning back in 1675, people would literally knock on the front door asking questions about comets or eclipses, or what's happening in the sky, "What does this mean?" And then even going right **up to** the 1800s, astronomers at Greenwich were very much involved in that big trend for popular astronomies. So they were writing books, publishing in magazines, giving l**ectures** with sort of **lantern slides**. And that's a continuation that we do today. We're very proud of that legacy of public engagement, promoting astronomy. I think the other unique thing that we have today as well is that we can offer a **blend** of both contemporary science and history of science. So we can explain the concepts, but we can also talk about the social [and] economic history around some of that astronomy and some of those changes around navigation and timekeeping, as well. So that's a pretty unique **blend** that I think you won't find in too many other places.

HUMAN CONNECTION

To this day, the Royal Observatory remains a vibrant **hub** for education and discovery. It continues to inspire future generations by making astronomy accessible and **engaging**. Dr. Devoy emphasised the importance of human connection in science. **Dr. Louise Devoy:** I think offering access to astronomers as people is really important, if we want to engage with young people and give them a sense that they too can get involved in any way. Then actually just having that human face, being able to come and chat to astronomers. And I think similarly, some of those **core** values about curiosity, creativity, perseverance, problem-solving... that's the same whether you're trying to measure longitude by the Moon in the 1760s, or whether you're

trying to design a space station in the 2050s. Those values [are] still relevant and still sort of **echo** through history. So we can still play a role today, definitely.

Glossary

- **background** = esperienza precedente
- **sundials** = orologi solari
- **core** = fondamentali
- **gone full scale** = coprire l’intero arco
- **jottings** = annotazioni
- **bridges** = unire
- **blend** = fusione
- **lantern slides** = diapositive per lanterna magica
- **engaging** = interessante
- **ectures** = conferenze
- **echo** = risuonare, riemergere
- **unpack** = chiarire
- **dust** = polvere
- **up to** = fino a
- **hub** = centro