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IEEE Evening Lecture with Robyn Arianrhod TUESDAY 13TH JUNE, 2006

Maxwell Year 2006: celebrating the man behind the Maxwell equations

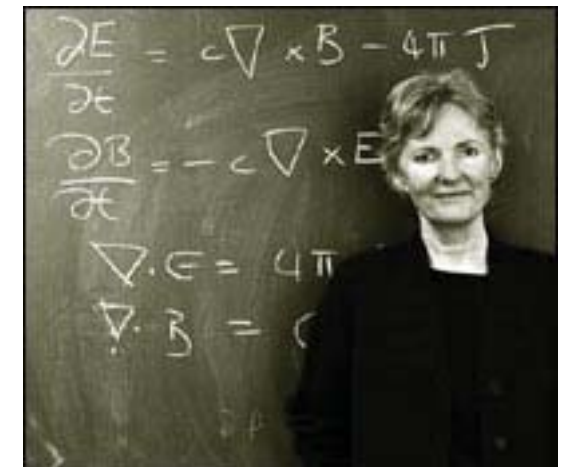
ABSTRACT: Last year was Einstein Year, the centenary of Einstein's extraordinary achievement of four papers that laid the foundations of modern physics. But Einstein's theory of special relativity had been directly inspired by the work of his lesser-known Scottish hero, James Clerk Maxwell. Engineers and scientists know Maxwell's equations of electromagnetism, but how many of us know the man behind those seminal equations? Until very recently, he has remained largely unknown, a mere footnote in history, buried not in Westminster Abbey alongside Newton and many other scientists but lying forgotten in a tiny village kirk.

Perhaps because of the new age of wireless technology, interest in Maxwell the man is growing at last, and for the first time his home country is publicly honouring his memory by declaring 2006 to be Maxwell Year. It is the anniversary of his 175th birthday, and a program of celebrations and public lectures is underway in Scotland and elsewhere.

This talk about Maxwell's life, personality and work will be a chance for Melburnians to join the celebrations! He was a delightful, gentle genius, a poet as well as a physicist; this talk will show why his admirers, past and present, have found him so captivating, as both a human being and as the physicist who brought mathematics to centre stage in theoretical physics and engineering.

SPEAKER: Robyn Arianrhod is a writer and mathematician. She received her doctorate (in applied mathematics) for her work on Einstein's theory of gravity, and has taught for many years in the School of Mathematical Sciences at Monash University, where she is currently an Honorary Research Associate. Her book, Einstein's Heroes: Imagining the World Through the Language of Mathematics - whose narrative is driven by Maxwell - was first published in Australia, where it was shortlisted for the 2004 Age Non-Fiction Book of the Year and the 2004 Victorian Premier's Prize; it has also been published in the UK and the US.

This event is free and open to non-IEEE members as well.



IEEE EVENING LECTURE

Place: Telstra Conference Centre,
Level 1, 242 Exhibition St
Melbourne

Time: 5:45 pm for 6:00-7:00 pm talk

Date: Tuesday, 13th June 2006