



Churchill College  
Storeys Way  
Cambridge  
CB3 0DS

## Are We Alone?

Dr. Robin Catchpole

7.30 p.m., Monday 12th November 2012  
Wolfson Lecture Theatre, Churchill College, Storey's Way, Cambridge

### The Lecture:

We live in a universe uniquely suited to our existence, which is filled with galaxies, stars, planets and the molecular building blocks of life.

On Earth, single-celled life forms exist in rocks, ice and boiling water, suggesting that such life would be impossible to destroy before our Sun becomes a red-giant.

We listen with our radio telescopes and look for pulses of laser light, but have so far heard and seen nothing, suggesting that technologically advanced life elsewhere in the Universe, might be very rare.

In this lecture Dr. Catchpole will take a closer look at our solar system and the emergences of intelligent life and consider why the human population on Earth might be the only self-aware observers of our Universe.



### About the Speaker:

Dr. Catchpole recently retired as Senior Astronomer at the Royal Observatory Greenwich and currently works at the Institute of Astronomy at the University of Cambridge.

Dr. Catchpole joined the Royal Observatory in 1962, and subsequently earned a BSc in Astronomy from University College. In 1966 he was posted to the Royal Observatory at the Cape of Good Hope (now known as the South African Astronomical Observatory) in South Africa, and spent the next 24 years working at the Radcliffe Observatory in Pretoria and the SAAO in Cape Town. He obtained his doctorate in astronomy from the University of Cape Town in 1981.

In 1991 Dr. Catchpole returned to Cambridge with the RGO, where he worked until its closure in 1998. Later that year he moved to the Royal Observatory Greenwich as Senior Astronomer.

Dr. Catchpole has authored and co-authored more than 100 research papers and articles and has used some of the world's foremost telescopes, including the Hubble Space Telescope.

His research interests include the composition of stars, exploding stars, the structure of our Galaxy and galaxies with black holes at their centres.

The lecture is free to students.

**E-mail:** [programme@csar.org.uk](mailto:programme@csar.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.csar.org.uk](http://www.csar.org.uk)

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CSAR lectures are open to all; members are admitted free, and non-members are asked to make a nominal contribution of £3.00.

Coffee and biscuits are available in the Wolfson Foyer from around 7pm.

For further directions see [www.chu.cam.ac.uk/about/visitors/directions.php](http://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/about/visitors/directions.php)