



The Royal Society of Western Australia

RSWA Awards

Student Medallists 2013 (presented 2014)

The Royal Society of Western Australia Student Medal is awarded annually to graduating science students with an outstanding academic record from the universities in Western Australia. The students are nominated by their institutions.

The 2013 RSWA Student Medallists were given their presentations by our Vice Patron Professor Lyn Beazley at the RSWA Centenary Gala Cocktail Party held at the Government House Ballroom on 17 July 2014. The Medallists are:-

Jackson Bailey - Curtin University
Joel Schier - Murdoch University
Renée Lynch - University of Notre Dame
Samuel Lymbery - University of Western Australia
Sarah Wycherley - Edith Cowan University

An account of the evening with distinguished guests, together with a brief profile on the academic record of the Medallists, is contained in the RSWA Newsletter September 2014:-

<http://www.rswa.org.au/publications/proceedings/2014%2009%20Newsletter.pdf>

Extracts from the Newsletter are on the following pages.



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Jackson Bailey - Curtin University

In nominating Jackson for Curtin University's RSWA medal, we were informed that "Jackson's Honours Thesis was a particularly technical piece of work, which only a handful of people would understand". We concurred when we read the abstract. Jackson provided the following information:

I studied a Bachelor of Science in Nanotechnology with honours at Curtin University majoring in Physics and Molecular Biology. I completed my honours with the Institute of Theoretical Physics supervised by Associate Professor Alisher Kadyrov and Professor Igor Bray. My project was titled "Positronium formation in continuum in positron-hydrogen collisions". I am currently doing a PhD also with the same research group and supervisors. My thesis will be on "Stopping power calculations in ion-atom collisions for application in proton therapy". Proton therapy is a relatively new cancer treatment technique, with the first facility in Australia currently under construction. In the future I hope to research and teach at a university.



Professor Lyn Beazley and
RSWA Medallist Jackson Bailey



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Joel Schier - Murdoch University

Joel was unable to attend the Cocktail Party to receive his medal as he is volunteering overseas, but his sister Mara accepted it on his behalf. Joel will attend a meeting to be formally recognised when he returns later this year. He wrote a letter of thanks to RSWA in July (below) and recently sent a short biography:

Growing up in Victoria, Joel moved to Perth, where he studied a Bachelor of Science, with two majors - Biomedical Science, and Physics & Nanotechnology - at Murdoch University from 2010 to (mid-) 2014. He hopes to bring the knowledge gained and skills developed with him to future study and work endeavours.



Dear Royal Society of Western Australia members,

I'm writing to thank you for supporting university graduates such as myself through providing awards such as the RWSA medal. Prizes such as these encourage one to strive for excellence. The amount of time and energy required to achieve well in studies often goes unnoticed. Awards like this mean a lot. Not only is it encouraging to be recognised officially for achievements, it also facilitates encouragement from staff members, student peers and family. I thoroughly enjoy studying the field of physics, and have just completed my double degree in Physics and Nanotechnology, and Biomedical Science.

I wish to send my apologies for not being able to attend the Centenary Cocktail Party personally, as I am currently volunteering overseas. My sister, who attended on my behalf, told me it was a great night. I will endeavour to attend an event to meet some of you once I've returned to Australia.

Thanks once again for supporting this award,

Yours sincerely,

Joel Schier.



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Renée Lynch - University of Notre Dame

Renée completed a Bachelor of Science with a Major in Human Biology. She was the recipient of the Excellence in Upper Year Science Award in 2012. Her final year research project investigated the link between food security and the incidence of Type 2 diabetes and obesity in the Aboriginal populations of remote Australia. After graduating from the University of Notre Dame, Renée commenced a Doctor of Podiatric Medicine at UWA and is also currently employed as an Information Officer for the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (ECU). Her role is to contribute to the translational research of the HealthInfoNet by researching current programs, projects and literature related to specific areas of Indigenous health and then disseminating the research on the HealthInfoNet web resource.



Centenary Cocktail Party at Government House: RSWA Student Medallist for the University of Notre Dame, Renee Lynch, with A/Prof Dylan Korczynskij, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences, Notre Dame and Prof Lyn Beazley, RSWA Vice Patron.



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Samuel Lymbery - University of Western Australia

I completed my Bachelor of Science at UWA, majoring in Zoology and Conservation Biology, in 2013, and am currently nearing the business end of my Honours year. I can't remember exactly when I made the conscious decision to study Zoology, and therefore unfortunately I can't tell you my exact reasons for doing so; I don't think I ever seriously considered any other path. On the other hand, I can say that I have thoroughly enjoyed both my majors, which offer an exceptionally wide diversity of topics and plenty of scope for curiosity.



My Honours research, under the supervision of Steve Hopper, Leigh Simmons and Raphael Didham, is concerned with animal-plant interactions and their importance for the study of ecology, evolutionary biology and conservation biology. In particular, we are looking at the Albany pitcher plant (*Cephalotus follicularis*), and the slightly bizarre relationship it has with the larvae of a flightless fly (*Badisis ambulans*). The larvae live inside the pitchers and feed on the prey items which fall in. While it's possible that the larvae simply rob the plant of potential prey, they may also break down the corpses into more easily digestible forms, and actually help the plant in a nutritional sense.

My research aims to establish whether these larvae are nutritionally parasitic, mutualistic or commensal, and determine what the net effect is on the growth strategies of the plant. While the results are not yet finalised, at this stage the relationship appears to be much more complex than might be initially assumed. There even seems to be a novel twist involving a third participant in the interaction. Once Honours is over, I hope to continue on with a PhD and, with any reasonable sort of luck, a research career. Interactions of the sort I've just described continue to interest me, but in the future I also hope to begin research into different topics, such as the behavioural and evolutionary systems of social insects.



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Sarah Wycherley - Edith Cowan University

Sarah was working on Lord Howe Island when the Cocktail Party was held. She hopes to attend another Centenary event to receive her medal.

Sarah provided the following information:-

I did my degree Bachelor of Science; Environmental Management at Edith Cowan University. I have been employed casually by Cliff's Natural Resources as an Environmental Officer since 2011. The role includes fauna and flora monitoring, rehabilitation and report writing. I have also worked for Astron Environmental Services and Lord Howe Island Board as an Environmental Technician, and I've been involved in volunteer projects with Department of Parks and Wildlife and Australian Wildlife Conservancy. I wish to continue to develop my skills and experience in Environmental Management, and I would like to gain more experience in fauna work, particularly in the southwest of Western Australia.

