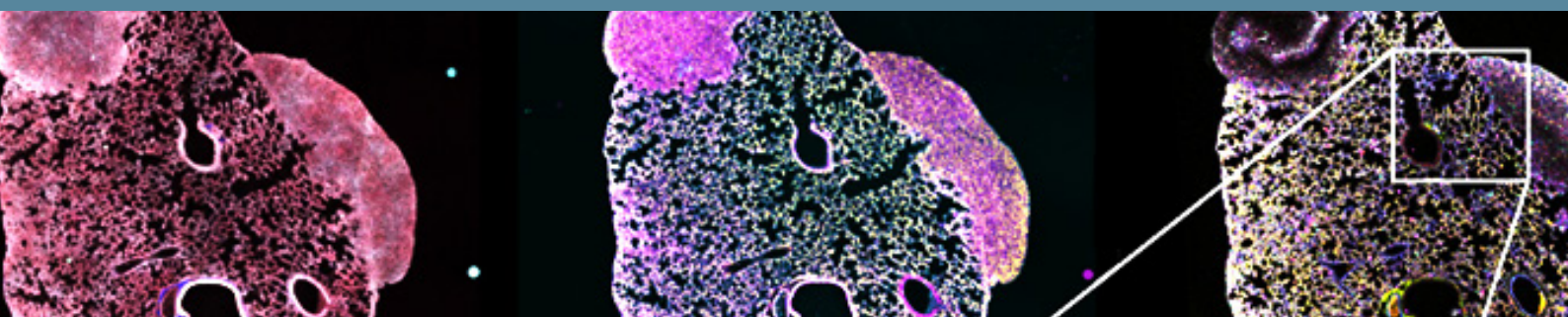


IOA NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE NEW ARRIVALS & LEAVERS | EVENTS DIARY & IOA 50 | NEWS: MARTIN REES • GEORGE EFSTATHIOU • SUPERSHARP GRANT AWARD • FUNDING FOR SPACE | RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS | EDI UPDATES | IT NEWS: DROPBOX • UIS



NEWS: 2024 Murdin Prize



NEWS: funding for SPACE from Cancer Grand Challenges team IMAXT



RESEARCH: Simons Observatory Begins Hunt for Echoes of the Big Bang



RESEARCH: ALMA Detects Hallmark "Wiggle"

NEW ARRIVALS



HOYLE 12

Hugo von Bussmann
Finance Analyst -
Research & Grants



HOYLE

Deryck Thake
IT Helpdesk
Specialist



OBS 24

Jaymie Phillips
Documentation
Software Engineer



OBS

Siresha Chamarthi
Data Validation
Scientist



HOYLE 33

Tuhin Ghosh
Research
Associate



HOYLE 31

Amy Bonsor
Amy moved to her
new role as University
Associate Professor in
Sept 2024



HOYLE 52

Mariona Badenas Agusti
Research Associate
- Sept 2024



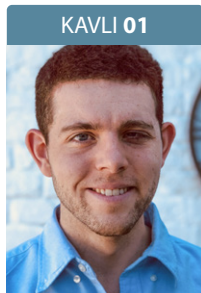
KAVLI 08

Lisa Kelsey
Leverhulme Early
Career Fellowship
- Sept 2024



HOYLE 06

Gilly Kiddy
Re-joined us via TES
to support
Richard McMahon



KAVLI 01

James Alvey
Kavli Institute Senior
Fellow in Gravitational
Waves - Oct 2024



HOYLE 35

Greg Cooke
Moved to his new role as
Research Associate
(Hycean Worlds)
- Oct 2024

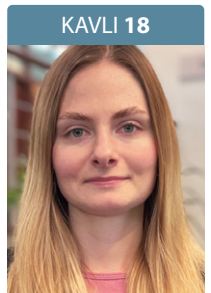


HOYLE 35

James Rogers
Kavli Institute Senior
Fellowship in Exoplanets
- Oct 2024



Gurjeet Jagwani
Machine Learning Re-
search Software Engineer
- Oct 2024



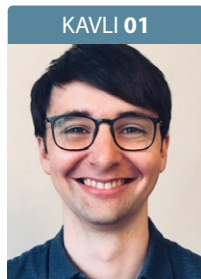
KAVLI 18

Ola Kusiak
Research Assistant
- Oct 2024



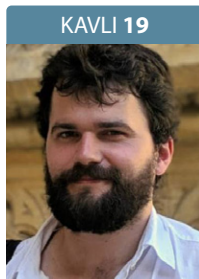
HOYLE 15

Mor Rozner
Junior Research Fellow
with Gonville and Caius
- Oct 2024



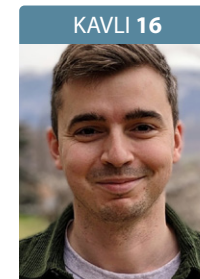
KAVLI 01

Alex Jenkins
Kavli Institute
Fellowship (DAMTP)
- Oct 2024



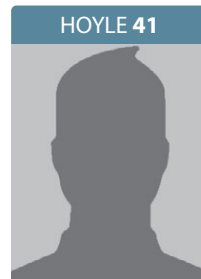
KAVLI 19

Will Handley
Joined the IoA in his
new role of University
Associate Professor
- Oct 2024



KAVLI 16

David Yallup
Joined IoA from DAMTP
- continuing his role as
Research Associate
- Oct 2024



HOYLE 41

George Carter
joined IoA from DAMTP
- continuing his role as
Research Assistant
- Oct 2024

NEW ARRIVALS 2024 Graduate Students

OBS 26



Lucas Tortora

I studied for my Bachelor's at EPFL in Lausanne with an Erasmus at Imperial College London, and graduated from ETH Zurich with a Master's in Physics. Most recently, I worked as a research assistant at the University of Zurich and EPFL for a year prior to coming to Cambridge. I do not have a supervisor yet, and my research area is the study of galaxy formation and evolution using computer simulations!

OBS 18



David Bour

David got his bachelor's in physics and astronomy from the University of Maryland, and then his master's from the IoA. He is working with Chris Tout on stellar evolution simulations, focusing on binary stars and stellar evolution with rotation and magnetic fields.

HOYLE 29



Martin Binet

Hi! I'm Martin, I've studied in Polytechnique (Paris region) and Oxford, and I will be looking at exoplanet atmosphere observations with Nikku Madhusudhan.

OBS 27



Toby Lovick

Toby studied Mathematics and then Astrophysics at the Institute for Astronomy in his undergraduate, and is working with Dr Will Handley in theoretical cosmology and simulation-based inference.

OBS 15



Mika Kontiainen

I completed my MPhys Astrophysics at the University of Edinburgh and am now in Cathie Clarke's group studying how the stellar environment influences the formation and evolution of giant planets.

HOYLE 27

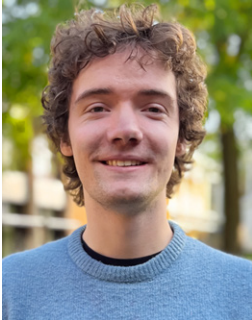


Julia Laguna Miralles

Júlia graduated in 2024 with a bachelor's degree in Physics and a bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). In October, Júlia joined the IoA as a PhD student within the Center for Doctoral Training (CDT) in Data-Intensive Science (DIS) framework. She is supervised by Prof. Vasily Belokurov and Dr. Miles Cranmer, and her research will focus on advancing the understanding of quasar variability using machine learning techniques.

NEW ARRIVALS 2024 Graduate Students

OBS 17



Callum Madeley

My undergrad was at Durham University studying Physics with Astronomy.

Current research interests include exoplanet atmospheres, composition, habitability and questions surrounding the origin of life in the Universe.

KAVLI 14



Giulia Ortame

The university I most recently studied at is Cambridge University. I am working with Debora Sijacki on modelling supermassive black hole binaries from galaxy mergers at high-redshifts and their associated gravitational-wave signals, which are expected to be detected with LISA.

OBS 10



Hadi Soutoudeh

I completed my MPhil in Data Intensive Science at Cambridge and am now part of Dr Miles Cranmer's group within the Polymathic AI initiative. My PhD research focuses on developing foundation models for astronomical data, with applications in studying galaxy formation and its broader impacts on cosmology. From a computer science perspective, I am particularly interested in investigating uncertainty quantification and biases in scientific applications of deep learning.

OBS 14



Ed Stevenson

Ed studied Astrophysics at the Institute of Astronomy for his undergraduate degree and has joined the CDT programme to undertake his PhD. He's currently exploring projects including those in exoplanet atmospheres.

OBS 14



Pavan Tanna

OBS 14



Licong Xu

A few sentences about me: I also did my Bachelor's and Master's at Cambridge. I work with Anthony Challinor on cosmology and CMB.

EVENTS

REMINDERS

IoA Wednesday Seminars happen every Wednesday during term time in the Hoyle lecture theatre, 13h15-14h05. Usually we have two talks, one by a student and one by a postdoc or faculty member. Because these seminars are internal, this is a great opportunity particularly for students to practice presenting their work in front of an audience, but it is also a way for everybody to keep up to date with the research being conducted at the institute.

Institute of Astronomy Colloquia happen every Thursday. The talk starts at 4:00pm. Tea/coffee will be served at 3:30pm and there will be wine/drinks served after the colloquium.

UPCOMING

Monday 25 Nov • Astro Data Science Discussion Group - Martin Ryle Seminar Room, KICC: Sireesha Chamarthi (IoA / CASU) *Data validation through anomaly detection for Gaia DR4*.

Tuesday 26 Nov • Exoplanet Seminars - HCR & online: *Constraining planet populations through debris disc morphology with JWST and astrometric accelerations*.

Friday 29 Nov • Martin Ryle Seminar Rm, KICC: Sill Verberne (Leiden). *How hypervelocity stars constrain the Galactic Centre*.

Thursday 5 Dec • Martin Ryle Seminar Rm, KICC: Various Speakers: *Tackling the CMB component separation problem with new methods (Kavli Science Focus Meeting)*.



Monday 9 Dec • Astro Data Science Discussion Group - Martin Ryle Seminar Room, KICC: Christian Kragh Jespersen (Princeton University) *Everything is connected: galaxy properties couple internally, environmentally, and historically*.

Friday 13 Dec • Galaxies Discussion Group - Martin Ryle Seminar Room, KICC & online: Speaker TBC. *Two-Dimensional Kinematics and Dynamical Modelling of SLACS Lenses: Insights from Deep MUSE Observations*.

Thursday 27 Feb 2025 • Data Intensive Science Seminar Series - East 1/West Hub. Thomas MEIER (LMU München). *Ethics AI - Pt I*.

Friday 28 Feb 2025 • Data Intensive Science Seminar Series - East 1/West Hub. Thomas MEIER (LMU München). *Ethics AI - Pt II*.

2025 CONFERENCES

Monday 31 March - Friday 4 April • DPAC 8

The 8th Gaia DPAC Plenary Meeting will be held in Cambridge, at the Institute of Astronomy and the West Hub.

Monday 8 - Friday 12 September • Massive Black Holes Across Cosmic Time

The week-long conference will take place at the Kavli Institute for Cosmology, Cambridge. Further details to follow.



IOA 50 THANKS

In July, we hosted “IoA50: New Frontiers of Astronomy,” a special celebration marking 50 years of pioneering advancements at the Institute of Astronomy. The week-long international conference featured an exciting blend of scientific discussions and public talks, all centered around the future of astronomy.

The ambitious scientific program covered a wide range of astronomical scales, from Planet Formation to cosmology on the largest scales. We finished the conference with several forward-thinking “Questions for the Future” sessions, covering cosmology, galaxy formation simulations, future European Space Agency missions, the search for exoplanet biosignature gases, and the future of AI in astronomy. All the scientific talks have been recorded and archived on our [YouTube channel](#), and can be watched here.

We also hosted a number of public events: A panel discussion on “Life, the Universe, and Everything: The next 50 years of astronomy” between Vasily Belokurov, Nikku Madhusudhan & Hironya Peiris, facilitated by Matt Bothwell; a historical talk on “Two and a Half Centuries of Astronomy and Astrophysics in Cambridge” by Gerry Gilmore & Gudrun Tausch-Pebody, and a public lecture by Jocelyn Bell Burnell titled “You are made of star stuff”. All three events can be watched on the IoA YouTube channel.

Thank you to everyone who worked hard to make this special event such a success.





2024 Murdin Prize

The Murdin Prize Committee has great pleasure in announcing the joint winners of the 2024 Paul Murdin Prize :

Constantinou, Tereza, for her paper on "A dry Venusian interior constrained by atmospheric chemistry" - Tereza Constantinou, Oliver Shorttle, Paul B. Rimmer.

<https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/items/fa8107f4-f2e8-4fff-991e-71e11c3a9b0a>

Witten, Callum, for his paper on "Deciphering Lyman- α emission deep into the epoch of reionization" - Callum Witten, et al., <https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2024NatAs...8..384W/abstract>

I am sure you will join us in congratulating the winners.

An award ceremony, with presentations from the two winners, will be held in the Lent Term – details of which will be circulated in due course.

Martin Rees is the 2024 Wolf Prize Laureate in Physics

Martin Rees is awarded the Wolf Prize for shaping our deepest understanding of the Universe. His outstanding contributions range from high-energy astrophysics, including mechanisms for gamma-ray bursts, powerful radio jets, and black hole formation in galactic nuclei, to cosmic structure formation and the physics of the earliest stars and galaxies at the end of the "dark age." He was the first to propose polarization measurements as a tool to probe the origin of fluctuations and anisotropy in the cosmic microwave background (CMB), and an initiator of the field of 21cm cosmology.

Lord Martin Rees (born in England in 1942) is one of the most distinguished theoretical physicists of our time, with seminal contributions in a large number of areas, from cosmology and the formation of the first stars and galaxies to high-energy astrophysics, to the formation and evolution of massive black holes in the centers of galaxies, tidal disruption of stars in the vicinity of such black holes, and more. These contributions shaped our deepest understanding of the Universe.

[>> full article](#)

Professor George Efstathiou is awarded the Albert Einstein Medal 2024

We are pleased to announce that Professor George Efstathiou (IoA director 2004-2008) has been awarded the Albert Einstein Medal 2024.

The medal is awarded to deserving individuals for outstanding scientific findings, works, or publications related to Albert Einstein. The award ceremony took place October 9, 2024 during the Physics Colloquium at the University of Bern at which Prof Efstathiou provided a lecture entitled: *Do we have a standard model of cosmology?* [>> full article](#)



Pioneering astrophysics scholars announced as scholarship applications open for 2025

Two exceptional female astrophysicists will take up Master's degree places at Murray Edwards College, Cambridge this month as the first recipients of The Parasol Foundation Scholarship.

This new award is launched by Murray Edwards College in partnership with Cambridge University's Institute of Astronomy to encourage more young women to pursue academic careers in a subject that remains stubbornly male-dominated.

The first two women to be awarded scholarships are Maria Semerkina, 21, a graduate of University College Dublin studying for a MAST in Astrophysics, and Exeter University graduate Almudena Vissler Velez, 22, who will embark on an MPhil in Planetary Science and Life in the Universe.

Both have not only shown outstanding academic achievement to date but also share a commitment to inspire other young women to follow in their footsteps.

The scholarships, which fully fund Master's students at the Institute, are made possible through the generous support of The Parasol Foundation Trust, whose aim is to help women pursue their dreams with a special focus on STEM subjects.

[>> full article](#)



IoA spin-out SuperSharp awarded £5M grant

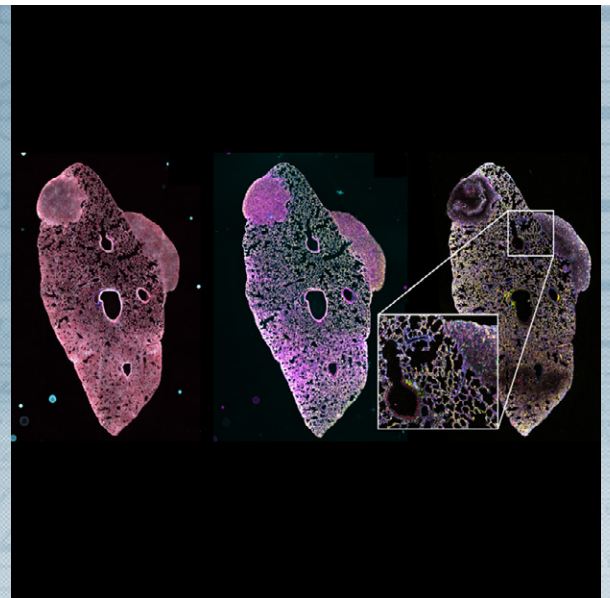
More than 20 national space projects have been announced today by DSIT Secretary of State Peter Kyle, on the opening day of the Farnborough International Airshow

The projects, worth £33 million, come from the UK Space Agency's National Space Innovation Programme – designed to invest in high-potential technologies, drive innovation and unlock growth across the UK.

Eight major projects will receive £24 million of the total amount. This includes backing for Cambridge University spin-out SuperSharp to develop and launch a heat-detecting telescope to gather data that can be used to help tackle the climate crisis. The project will support the launch of an innovative, unfolding, thermal infrared (TIR) telescope into orbit for Earth Observation. The TIR telescope will collect data to drive positive action towards mitigating climate change. Dr Paul Bate, CEO of the UK Space Agency, said:

These new projects will help kickstart growth, create more high-quality jobs, protect our planet and preserve the space environment for future generations. They go to the heart of what we want to achieve as a national space agency that supports cutting-edge innovation, spreads opportunity across the UK and delivers the benefits of space back to citizens on Earth.

[>> full article](#)



Announcing £5.25m funding for SPACE from Cancer Grand Challenges team IMAXT

A team of researchers has today (Friday 13th) been awarded more than £5m to establish the Spatial Profiling and Annotation Centre of Excellence (SPACE) to open up access to their groundbreaking cancer mapping technology and establish collaborations with other scientists to enable them to investigate tumours in 3D.

The technology from Cancer Grand Challenges team IMAXT uses advanced spatial biology techniques to analyse tumours, some of which are based on technology originally developed to map the Milky Way and discover new planets. Now, other scientists will be able to access these technologies to create detailed tumour maps that could one day transform how we diagnose and treat cancer.

Led out of the University of Cambridge by Professor Greg Hannon and Dr Dario Bressan (Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute) and Dr Nicholas Walton (Institute of Astronomy), SPACE will open up IMAXT's cutting-edge spatial biology platform and establish collaborations with other scientists to enable them to investigate tumours in 3D.

The Cancer Research UK funding, through Cancer Grand Challenges, will specifically support the SPACE-Hub laboratory and SPACE analysis platform, which includes and combines most available technologies for spatial molecular profiling of tumours.

The continued collaboration between the cancer and astronomy researchers from the IMAXT team will ensure the maintenance and development of all critical aspects of the platform – from technical and scientific expertise to instrumentation, computing, and data analysis – to allow SPACE to continue to function at the forefront of the spatial omics field. It is hoped that expanding access to the technology to other scientists will accelerate the pace of new discoveries in cancer and lead to the development of new ways to use the technology in a clinical setting. [>> full article](#)



Simons Observatory Begins Hunt for Echoes of the Big Bang in Universe's Oldest Light

From a vantage point high in the Chilean Andes, cosmologists with the Simons Observatory have begun searching for evidence of what happened in the minuscule fraction of a second that followed the Big Bang.

The observatory, which just completed its main construction phase, will make some of the most precise measurements ever taken of the oldest light in the universe. That light, known as the cosmic microwave background (CMB), originated about 380,000 years after the Big Bang and holds secrets of the universe's birth.

A large number of Cambridge researchers have been involved in the planning and preparation for the analysis of data from the Simons Observatory. The team are very excited to be part of the international effort working on these data, and the forthcoming higher-resolution data from the large-aperture telescope, to seek answers to some of the most profound questions about the birth and evolution of our Universe.

[>> full article](#)



Astronomers Use AI to Find Elusive Stars "Gobbling Up" Planets

An international team (including IoA astronomers Laura Rogers and Amy Bonsor) have recently found hundreds of "polluted" white dwarf stars in our home galaxy, the Milky Way. These are white dwarfs caught actively consuming planets in their orbit. They are a valuable resource for studying the interiors of these distant, demolished planets. They are also difficult to find.

Traditionally, astronomers have had to manually review mountains of survey data for signs of these stars. Follow-up observations would then prove or refute their suspicions. By using a novel form of artificial intelligence, called manifold learning, a team led by University of Texas at Austin Graduate Student Malia Kao has accelerated the process, leading to a 99% success rate in identification.

This study highlights the power of big data sets, such as provided by Gaia, and data science techniques as the future means to identify exciting astronomical objects from their spectra. The IoA plays a big part of this revolution, with the IoA making a substantial contribution to data processing for the Gaia space satellite.

Findings were published July 31, 2024, in the *Astrophysical Journal*.

[>> full article](#)



ALMA Detects Hallmark “Wiggle” of Gravitational Instability in Planet-Forming Disk

Traditionally, planet formation has been described as a “bottom-up” process, as dust grains gradually collect into bigger conglomerations over tens of millions of years: from microns, to centimeters, to meters, to kilometers. Alternatively, another theory proposes that planets can form rapidly by a “top-down” process, where circumstellar disk material in spiral arms fragments due to gravitational instability.

In a powerful match-up of technique, instrumentation, and target, an international team of astronomers (including IoA astronomer Cristiano Longarini) observed the well-characterized protoplanetary disk around AB Aurigae and found observational evidence that matches the alternative “top-down” theoretical sequence of planet formation.

“We know that gravitational instability plays a significant role in young protostellar discs, being massive and cold. However, directly observing these discs is challenging due to the extinction caused by the surrounding molecular cloud” said Cristiano Longarini. “In 2020, our team conducted some of the most advanced hydrodynamical simulations to date, aiming to predict the kinematics of these systems, which can be precisely mapped using ALMA. Our findings revealed that gravitationally unstable discs exhibit distinctive ‘wiggles’ in the velocity field, a feature not present in stable discs. In 2021, I analytically characterised these wiggles and developed self-consistent kinematical models for gravitationally unstable discs. These models provided testable predictions, and the ideal candidate for observation was AB Aur—a massive and large disc known for its prominent spiral arms. When we compared our predictions to the observational data, the agreement was astonishing!” >> [full article](#)

Generalized cold-atom simulators for vacuum decay

A paper on quantum simulators of early universe physics, led by newly arrived Gavin Boyle Fellow Alex Jenkins and co-authored by Professor of Astrophysics (1909) Hiranya Peiris was featured on the front page of Phys Rev A Letters.

PHYSICAL REVIEW A 110, L031301 (2024)

Letter

Generalized cold-atom simulators for vacuum decay

Alexander C. Jenkins,^{1,2} Ian G. Main³, Thomas P. Billson⁴, Zoran Hadzibabic,⁵ Hiranya V. Peiris,⁶ and Andrew Pouton⁷

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²School of Mathematics, Statistics and Physics, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU, United Kingdom
³John G. Dunnington (JGD) Durham University, School of Mathematics, Science and Physics, Leazes Road, Durham, Durham DH1 1TA, United Kingdom
⁴Cambridge Laboratory, University of Cambridge, 2, J. J. Thomson Avenue, Cambridge CB3 0HJ, United Kingdom
⁵Institute of Astronomy and Kavli Institute for Cosmology, University of Cambridge, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0HJ, United Kingdom
⁶The Oliver Royce Centre for Cosmological Physics, Department of Physics, Stockholm University, Stockholm SE-106 91, Sweden
⁷School for Computational Cosmology, Department of Physics, Durham University, South Road, Durham DH1 1TA, United Kingdom

(Received 17 November 2023; revised 19 March 2024; accepted 5 September 2024; published 24 September 2024)

Cold-atom analog experiments are a promising new tool for studying relativistic vacuum decay, enabling one to experimentally probe early Universe fluctuations in the laboratory. However, existing proposals place stringent requirements on the systems containing lengths that are challenging to realize experimentally. Here we discuss these constraints and show that our cold-atom system bypasses one such constraint, allowing us to study the full statistical ensemble. This greatly expands the landscape of accessible simulations, and will expedite efforts to study vacuum decay with cold atoms.

DOI: 10.1103/PhysRevA.110.L031301

Introduction. Quantum fields can escape metastable “false vacuum” states by nucleating “true vacuum” bubbles [1–3]. This process of vacuum decay plays a pivotal role in many aspects of cosmology, from the Universe’s inflationary beginning [4–10] to the present day (transientability of the Higgs field [11–13]). The standard treatment of this problem relies on Euclidean (imaginary time) calculations, leaving many key questions unanswered. In particular, how does vacuum decay proceed in real time? And what happens in situations where the symmetries of the Euclidean solutions are broken, e.g., nucleation of multiple bubbles [14]?

There has been a recent surge of interest in tackling these questions using quantum analog experiments that simulate metastable relativistic fields [15–20]. In this Letter, we present the first such proposal that is both viable with current experiments and rigorously, quantitatively analogous to relativistic vacuum decay. Our proposal uses ultracold atomic condensates to enable controlled real-time tests of early-Universe theories on a laboratory. Similar technologies have been successfully used to study discontinuous transitions in nonrelativistic quantum fields [21–23], including nonrelativistic thermal vacuum decay [15].

As we demonstrate below, our proposed analog system satisfies four requirements that are essential for delivering new cosmological insights:

- (1) The system possesses a degree of freedom with the same equations of motion as a relativistic field.
- (2) The system *fluctuates* naturally in this degree of freedom much like the same relativistic field.
- (3) The system can be made homogeneous in one or more dimensions, replicating the transient instability of a relativistic theory.
- (4) The effective relativistic field can be put into a metastable state, leading to bubble nucleation.

In situations between two atomic hyperfine states, this level of analogy has previously only been established under “rigorous” conditions, with equal theory and a well-understood length in each state, and zero scattering between atoms in different states [15–20, 22, 23]. These conditions are challenging to realize in practice. While the scattering can be tuned to negligible transmissivity in an applied magnetic field [24], there is insufficient freedom to simultaneously satisfy all the system’s conditions. As a result, previous studies have found only two discrete points in parameter space where these conditions hold (both in ^4K [16, 17, 20]), leaving no flexibility to accommodate other experimental requirements.

Here we eliminate these restrictions, and show that any stable mixture between two states of a bosonic isotope can be used to simulate relativistic vacuum decay by tuning their number densities. While Ref. [17] first studied such

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EDI UPDATES



Wellbeing Update: The IoA Climbing Club is looking for new members!

To help promote wellbeing, we have some travel costs assistance available! Sign up using the QR code/link:



<https://forms.office.com/e/qwzAMWyt4Y>

Initially starting with indoor trips (1), but aiming to get some outdoor climbing (2) as weather allows!

Example (1) venues - [Big Rock @ Milton Keynes](#) and [The Lock @ Harlow](#).

Example (2) locations - Peak District, Southern Sands.

Whether you've never got off the ground before, have only scaled Mount Cambridge, or have climbed every crag in the peaks, all are welcome!



EDI ANNUAL SEMINAR - ALL WELCOME!

Upcoming EDI Committee meetings:

Wednesday, 27th Nov 2024 • 11:30 – 12:30
Wednesday, 26th Feb 2025 • 11:30 – 12:30

EDI Focus Groups

- Work-Life Balance FG
- Inclusion & Fairness FG
- Bullying & Harassment FG
- Admissions & Recruitment FG
- LGBTQ+
- Women's Network

Please contact Co-Chairs - Amy Bonsor and Simon Hodgkin or edi@ast.cam.ac.uk if you would like to join the Committee and the Focus Groups.

Any member of the Department is welcome to join the Committee.





IoA Diwali celebrations • photo by Stephen Lawson

Happy Diwali!

We hope you all enjoyed a wonderful Diwali and were able to partake in the celebrations hosted by the EDI Inclusion & Fairness Group at coffee time on the 1st November.

The nights are long, the oil-lamps are crackling, and the distant sound of fireworks echo through the halls of the IoA. Diwali — the *Festival of Lights* — is popularly observed by the Hindu, Sikh and Jain community as a celebration of good over evil, and of light over darkness. The festival lasts 5 days and marks the end of the summer harvest and beginning of winter. The central day of Diwali, Sunday 12th of November this year, coincides with new moon and is deemed the darkest night of the Hindu lunisolar calendar.

Celebrations are often marked with decorations of floors with rangoli designs (multi-coloured traditional Indian art form), diyas (oil clay lamps) and jhalars (long, coloured tassels), bursting of fireworks and lighting of floating lanterns. It is a time for feasting and sharing sweet treats with your friends and family.

IoA Women’s Network International Women’s Day 2025

Our first International Women’s Day Committee meeting happened on November 5th. After the success of last year’s events, we’re excited to start planning another great series of activities. If you would like to learn more about our work or are interested in getting involved, we would love for you to [join us!](#)



LGBTQ+ Coffee Mornings – please come along and join our informal coffee sessions. All welcome. If anyone is interested in helping to organise these coffees, please get in touch edi@ast.cam.ac.uk.



IoA Women’s Network International Women’s Day 2025

Our first International Women’s Day Committee meeting is happening on November 5th at 11:30 am, following the Women’s Coffee Morning. The meeting will be held in the HCR and is open to students, postdocs, academic staff, and PSS. After the success of last year’s events, we’re excited to start planning another great series of activities. If you would like to learn more about our work or are interested in getting involved, we would love for you to join us!

LGBTQ+ In Stem Day 18th November

Thanks to everyone who joined us to celebrate!

Updates from Focus Groups:

Admissions & Recruitment Focus Group have been busy assembling an EDI check-list for all involved in recruitment – please look out for this.

Work-life balance Focus Group have been busy organising regular PhD-post-doc interactions, including coffee mornings and the Buddy scheme.

AV equipment

The IoA has several rooms equipped for hybrid meetings, which can be booked using Booker (see <https://intranet.ast.private.cam.ac.uk/administration/meeting-rooms> for links to the Booker login and the UIS guide on how to use Booker). Please leave all the AV equipment in a usable state. Recently people have arrived to use the equipment and found various components unplugged, moved, or wrongly connected.

UIS Acceptable Use Policy

The UIS's new [Acceptable Use Policy](#) was introduced on 1st April 2024 and will require full compliance from 1st April 2025. Please take time to read the [policy](#) in full and raise any queries about its implementation via your representatives on the Computer Users Committee (Chair: Prof Vasily Belokurov) or the Computing Oversight Committee (Chair: Prof Nikku Madhusudhan).

University of Cambridge Dropbox Agreement expires on 07 June 2025

UIS have decided not to renew the University of Cambridge's Dropbox Agreement, which will now expire on 7 June 2025. Last year, [Dropbox announced changes to its storage and pricing model](#) and moved to a metered storage policy, having previously offered unlimited storage. University accounts were moved to the Dropbox 'Enterprise' plan, which brought a significant price increase. The cost per user next year would be more expensive than going direct for most users, so there is no financial value in keeping the central agreement. When the licence ends, user accounts will revert to a free Dropbox Basic account with 2GB of storage.

UIS have contacted University Dropbox account holders to advise them of the [alternative storage services](#) UIS offers for their different needs and data classifications. Users will need to review their stored data, delete any unwanted data and move data that exceeds the 2GB limit to an alternative service before the licence expires on 7 June 2025. If a user's account then exceeds the free storage limit, [Dropbox will take action by deleting the most recent data first](#). Users will receive email notifications from Dropbox providing options to prevent the deletion of their files.

To contact UIS about this, please email dropbox.feedback@uis.cam.ac.uk

UIS reducing the data retention time for cancelled Office365 accounts (affects leavers)

UIS are reducing the amount of time that they hold cancelled University Microsoft Office 365 accounts before permanently deleting them. From 2 December 2024 UIS will delete all cancelled Office 365 accounts after 30 days. Once UIS has deleted the account, the data is not recoverable.

The current policy is to hold a cancelled Office 365 account for 90 days before permanently deleting it. From 2 December UIS will reduce this to 30 days, for data protection reasons. The information on <https://help.uis.cam.ac.uk/service/accounts-passwords/leaving> has been updated accordingly.

Please note that this change relates to Office 365 accounts accessed via University single sign-on. It does not relate to cancelling CRSids, which is a separate process.

Computing at the IoA

The Institute supports the Linux platforms for scientific computing.

64-bit Redhat Enterprise Linux (RHEL) on predominantly Intel hardware
Microsoft Windows is supported for departmental administration.

Further details of services can be found on the departmental Intranet.

The IoA network, computer systems and software are managed by the Computing Group:

Graham Bell
Sue Cowell
Rafikul Islam
Neil Millar
Cormac O'Connell
Deryck Thake

For information on computing services provided by UIS, such as Exchange Online email, see www.uis.cam.ac.uk. To find out if there is a known issue with a UIS-provided service, see the 'traffic lights' at status.uis.cam.ac.uk and check for notifications on the [UIS Twitter feed](#).