

# P R E F A C E

The present volume of the Highlights of Astronomy records the proceedings of most of the scientific events at the XXIVth IAU General Assembly, which took place in Manchester, UK, on 7–18 August 2000 and gathered nearly 1800 astronomers and students of astronomy from 75 countries. The science programme featured five Symposia, one Special Scientific Session, 14 Joint Discussions and three Invited Discourses. With the exception of the Symposia, which are recorded in five volumes of the IAU Symposium series, and two Invited Discourses for which no manuscripts were received, all events are covered in this book. The Special Session on “Astronomy for Developing Countries” is here summarized by its editor as a supplement to the ASP book containing its full proceedings, and Joint Discussion 11 is likewise summarized by its editors, while all the other JDs feature collections of papers representing both oral and poster contributions.

It has been a pleasure for me to edit a book based on all the fine pieces that were delivered and an interesting experience to penetrate accounts of the progress presently occurring in many different fields of astronomy and astrophysics. My warm thanks go to all the authors and editors whose work made this book possible and presented me with a manageable amount of problems to solve. I am also full of gratitude to my predecessor, Johannes Andersen, for having handled the overall scientific planning of the XXIVth General Assembly such that so much fine science came out of it, and to all the other people involved in the organization of the different events. My thanks are also due to Jodi Greenberg at the IAU Secretariat for precious help with collecting the various contributions and preparing the Table of Contents, and to the IAU webmaster Marcus Gunnarsson for solving a number of tough problems with corrupted ps files for some illustrations.

Having said this, I finally have to take personal blame for the inordinate delay in the publication of this volume. The fact that I chose to do my editing fairly ambitiously without asking for help from others may be a partial explanation but no excuse. Every IAU General Secretary is of course a very busy person, which makes it difficult to squeeze in such a major effort between the other urgent duties. I am sorry for the delay but glad to finally present the results of all the work.

Uppsala, January 2002  
Hans Rickman  
General Secretary