

many of the exhibits — I had seen some of Harrison's timepieces years before at the Royal Observatory, for example — and, historically, much of the action actually took place near (51.477°, 0). I was already quite familiar with much of the story from

Dava Sobel's popular book *Longitude*, but this did not prevent me from truly enjoying the exhibition. This refreshing, highly digestible visual take on the quest for longitude masterfully marks the Longitude Act's tricentenary. □

REVIEWED BY BART VERBERCK

■ *Ships, Clocks & Stars: The Quest for Longitude* is at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, UK, from 11 July 2014 to 4 January 2015.

Sky's the limit

EXHIBITION

Looking up at the sky, few can be unmoved by the vivid colours of a sunset, the streak of a comet or the twinkling of a single bright star. Photographers young and old have captured these visual delights (and more) in their entries to the Astronomy Photographer of the Year 2014 competition,

run by the Royal Observatory and *BBC Sky at Night Magazine*. The overall winner (pictured right) was a stunning, ghostly green photograph of the Northern Lights over an Icelandic lagoon, taken by James Woodend of the UK. All of the winning images are available to view online: <http://go.nature.com/6eMqe9>.

Now in its sixth year, the competition drew 1,700 images from 51 countries. There are four main categories: Earth and Space, Our Solar System, Deep Space and Young Astronomy Photographer of the Year. Each category has four highly commended awards, a runner-up and a winner, and there is an overall winner. In addition, there are three special prizes: People and Space, the Sir Patrick Moore Prize for Best Newcomer and Robotic Scope (as implied by the name, these images are taken by a remotely operated telescope).

Two of the eight judges presented the prizes at an award ceremony held in the Peter Harrison Planetarium at the



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Royal Observatory in Greenwich. Sitting there (very comfortably) in the dark, I felt as though I was behind the lens for some of the shots — well, perhaps not for the Deep Space category, whose winners blew me away. The images are luminous and detailed, resembling those taken by space telescopes. For example, look at the winning image (pictured below, right): the Horsehead Nebula is as familiar as it is stunning, with the

billowing 'body' appearing to be moving. The photographer, Bill Snyder, used a 17-inch telescope atop the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the USA. The processing techniques are the same as those used by professional astronomers.

But even without a big telescope and fancy post-processing, there is hope for the rest of us. One of my favourites is the highly commended image of the Moon (pictured below, left) taken by twelve-year-old Emily Jeremy with a 'point-and-shoot' digital camera. Its simplicity and beauty are breathtaking. Shots like this highlight the inclusive nature of astrophysics, which allows amateurs and professionals alike to make a difference. One day, the judges may admit photographs taken by mobile telephones (they are currently below resolution limits), attracting a new generation of astrophotographers. □



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REVIEWED BY MAY CHIAO

■ The winning entries are on display for free at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, UK, until 22 February 2015.