



Dr Kristen Coppin

Kristen Coppin has been a Senior Lecturer at UH for 10 months in the School of Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics and recently acquired Associate Fellowship status in the HEA. This year she taught on two level 4 modules, Mathematical Techniques and Mathematics for Engineering, as well as supervising PhD and level 6 project students. She is currently helping to design a new level 7 module for the 2014-2015 academic year called "Galaxy Formation and Evolution" for the school's new MPhys programme, which is fitting since this is Kristen's prime research area.

Galaxies play a crucial role in building up the elements of which the stars, planets and even people are made. Kristen studies some of the most massive star-forming galaxies that are among those in the earliest throes of formation and some of the most distant galaxies known. In fact, they are so far away that the light we see has taken about 12 billion years to reach us, and we are essentially peering into the past, when the Universe was very young and galaxies were at the beginning of the assembly line. The light emitted by the stellar nurseries in these galaxies first hits a layer of dust, which absorbs the energy and causes it to glow in the infrared; and her research makes use of this intense infrared emission which can be observed using world-class facilities such as the James Clark Maxwell Telescope (JCMT) in Hawaii and the new Atacama Large Millimetre Array (ALMA) in Chile. Kristen started writing scientific journal articles when she was an undergraduate student and to date has 73 refereed publications, with an h-index of 34. She has also been the recipient of several postdoctoral fellowships, including the STFC postdoctoral fellowship in 2008 and the L'Oreal Canada for Women in Science Research Excellence Fellowship in 2011. She cites one of the best things about the job being the international nature of her research field and having the opportunity to travel and work on really interesting problems with an international network of collaborators.

Kristen is from Vancouver, Canada and completed her PhD at the University of British Columbia in Canada in 2006. She met her husband (also an astronomer and Royal Society University Research fellow at UH) when she was an STFC postdoctoral fellow at Durham University. They then moved to Montreal, Canada to take up postdoctoral fellowships at McGill University. They have 22-month old daughter called Sophie and a 4-year old beagle called Darwin. Kristen interviewed for her current post at UH when Sophie was just 3 weeks old and remembers it as one of the toughest things she has ever had to do – but obviously it paid off!

My advice for solving the 2-body problem? I think there is some luck and timing involved which will be somewhat out of your control, but you can still try to make yourself as "hireable" as possible. Make sure you are both doing world-class research and build up and maintain distinct visible international profiles over time by giving lots of departmental talks and attending and presenting at conferences. Applying for and winning competitive fellowships early on in your careers will definitely help both your chances of success later on.

