

Preface

In 1993 we began to consider the possibility of holding a conference on Cataclysmic Variables (CVs) at Keele University. There have been several meetings in the area of CVs recently (e.g. Eilat, Abano-Padova, Capetown). However as preparations for the Keele meeting progressed we realized that, while there had been a number of IAU meetings devoted to related and to peripheral topics (such as IAU Colloquium 122 on Classical Novae in 1989, IAU Colloquium 129 on Accretion Disks in 1990), there had been no IAU-sponsored conferences in the area of cataclysmic variables (CVs) for a number of years.

We felt therefore that the time was ripe to have an IAU meeting devoted to an overview of CVs and related objects and the SOC organized the conference such that there was an emphasis on invited reviews of the most recent advances in the field. The conference covered both CVs and LMXBs and the inter-relations between them. The meeting was held at a time when powerful satellite observatories, and rapid improvements in ground based instrumentation, had led to many advances in both CV and LMXB research. The conference provided a forum to review observations from ASCA, EUVE, ROSAT, Ginga and the recently-refurbished HST. Photometric, spectroscopic and polarimetric observations of CVs and LMXBs have thrown new light on the distribution of matter and the nature of the stellar components in these systems. There have also been a number of important recent developments in our theoretical understanding of the CVs and LMXBs themselves, and in the inter-relationship between the various classes of interacting binary stars.

This volume contains the proceedings of IAU Colloquium 158 *Cataclysmic Variables and Related Objects*, which was held at Keele University in 1995 June 26 – 30. We greatly appreciate the prompt submission of papers by the contributors, and the willingness with which they agreed to modifications and revisions. We also appreciate the co-operation of contributors in the restrictions imposed by the editors, including an excellent paper submitted by la Dous & Howell on the delights of Pecks Restaurant, where the conference dinner was held (this paper can be accessed on the World Wide Web at <http://www.astro.keele.ac.uk/~ftp/pub/cvconf/pecks.html>).

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sity, The Institute of Physics, and Barclays and Midland Banks for their generous sponsorship of the meeting.

The members of the Local Organizing Committee did an excellent job in the preparations for the meeting. However other members of the Keele Astrophysics Group also did a great deal to help in the day-to-day running of the meeting; our thanks go to Jon Lockley, Mark Somers, Derryck Case, Greg Beekman and Andrew Scott. We also wish to record our appreciation for the magnificent support provided by the staff of Keele University Physics Department, in particular Dave Bowyer, Andy Brammer, Mike Daniels, Michelle Evans, Jeanette Lucas, Helen Moors, Bill Robinson, Dave Sammons, Neil Rodgers. Natasha Papousek-Welsh, Gurnos Jones and Lyndon Mitchell did a superb job in organizing the guest excursions.

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