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## PROF. JOCELYN BELL BURNELL University of Oxford The discovery of pulsars – a graduate student's tale

Jocelyn Bell Burnell inadvertently discovered pulsars as a graduate student in radio astronomy in Cambridge, opening up a new branch of astrophysics. The discovery was recognised by the award of a Nobel Prize to her supervisor. Pulsars form during the supernovae of massive stars. The stars' cores collapse gives rise to neutron stars. Due to conservation of angular momentum, the neutron stars will rotate much faster than the

original stars. Under the right conditions, certain neutron stars will develop beams of electromagnetic radiation along their magnetic axis, which can be detected by radio telescopes in the form of a pulsed signal. In this talk Jocelyn Bell Burnell will describe how pulsars were accidentally discovered and relate some instances where they were 'nearly' discovered.



Courtesy of RSE (Royal Society of Edinburgh)