

ABSW Awards 2020

Lifetime Achievement Award:

For a member of the UK journalism science community who has consistently set an exemplary standard in his or her work throughout their career.

Citation: Martin Ince, former Chair ABSW, Chair ABSW Awards 2020

This year the award goes to a journalist who has been Science Editor of *The Observer* since 1982. But even that is not the start of the story. He had history even then, on newspapers in his native Scotland and at the *Times Higher Education Supplement*. When I worked there in later years, he was famous as the reporter who had gone to Hawaii on an astronomy story - and made it to the beach but not to the observatory.

Perhaps most famously, in 1997 the winner broke historic news by publishing the story that Dolly the Sheep had been cloned. The story was under embargo in *Nature*, but that was really incidental in this case. The journalist in question didn't look at the paper, but worked independently to get the story from other scientist sources. He knew the sheep was called Dolly, and even got a good picture.

In another historic story, he outlined the details of the first human genome in 2001.

Today, he is still active at *The Observer*, and there hasn't been a major science story in decades to which he has not added a uniquely informed contribution. This year, he has written powerfully about how fear of Covid-19 has motivated him to lose weight, an astounding 12kg. He has previously won at least three ABSW awards by our reckoning - I wonder if the recipient can corroborate that!

Beyond his work at *The Observer*, the lifetime award recipient has published books on subjects ranging from human origin to acquired immune deficiency syndrome and has produced many science volumes for children.

The winner is: Robin McKie