Sir Willans Owen Richardson Encyclopedia Article

Sir Willans Owen Richardson

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Sir Willans Owen Richardson

1879-1959

British physicist awarded the 1928 Nobel Prize in physics for work on thermionic emission of electrons from hot surfaces. In 1901 he discovered what is now known as Richardson's law, which states that in thermionic emission electron current increases exponentially with increasing temperature. His gyromagnetic researches led him to conclude that electron currents are responsible for magnetism—the Richardson-Einstein-de Haas effect. Richardson was instrumental in the application of physics to radio, telephony, television, and x-ray technologies.