



Science and
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RAL Space

Speaker biographies

Appleton Space Conference 2022



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Gillian Wright MBE

Gillian is Director of the UK Astronomy Technology Centre. She was a staff scientist at and then Head of Instrumentation from 1995 until 1997, when she returned to the UK to join the newly formed UK-ATC. As the European PI for the James Webb Space Telescope Mid-IR Instrument (MIRI) she provides UK leadership for an essential part of this NASA flagship mission.

She has 30 years experience of ground- and space-based instrumentation for astronomy having provided scientific, technical and management leadership for projects ranging from observatory management software to entire flight instruments.



Rebecca Evernden

Rebecca has recently been appointed as the first Director for Space at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Her responsibilities include developing the first National Space Strategy, establishing a new space policy and strategy hub in close partnership with the Ministry of Defence, sponsoring the work of the UK Space Agency and overseeing several of the Government's major space programmes.



Dr Paul Bate

Paul has been CEO of the UK Space Agency, an Executive Agency of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), since September 2021.

Prior to this, Paul was Vice President, Commercial at Babylon Health, working with healthcare organisations in the NHS and across the world. Before that, he was the Executive Director of Strategy and Intelligence at the Care Quality Commission.



Dr David Parker

The European Space Agency's space exploration director since 2016, David manages a 900M Euro annual programme including astronaut missions to the ISS, Mars exploration and Europe's contributions to NASA's Artemis lunar campaign. He has worked in the space sector for over thirty years including 14 years in industry, 6 years in government research agencies and from 2013 to 2016, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency. Dr Parker has advised five UK science ministers on space policy and was the 2019 recipient of the Royal Aeronautical Society's award for long and valued service to the space sector..



Dr Nicholas Walton

Nicholas is an astronomer at the Institute of Astronomy, University of Cambridge. Member of the ESA Gaia Science team since 2007. UK lead of a number of data related projects including significant processing pipeline developments for ESA's Gaia and PLATO missions and large multi-object spectrographs: ESO's 4MOST, ING's WEAVE. Co-Investigator of the IMAXT Cancer Research UK Grand Challenge project. Research interests include studying Planetary Nebulae and the late stages of stellar evolution.



Joseph Dudley

Joseph is director of the Space Skills Alliance, a think-tank and consultancy working to address the skills shortages in the space sector. He has more than 10 years' experience working in space education and skills, and has been recognised with a number of awards, including SSPI UK's Space Personality of the Year 2022. He is the author of many articles and reports on skills, training, recruitment, and demographics in the UK space sector, as well as the Space Training Catalogue, a directory space training opportunities, and SpaceCRAFT, a space competencies framework.



Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon

Anne-Marie is a prodigy in every sense of the word. Aged 11, she was the youngest girl ever to pass A-level computing, and was just 20 years old when she received her Master's Degree in Mathematics and Computer Science from the University of Oxford.

She co-founded co-founded the [Stemettes](#), an award-winning social initiative dedicated to inspiring and promoting the next generation of young women in the STEM sectors. Since its inception 10 years ago, it has exposed 60,000 young people across Europe to Anne-Marie's vision for a more diverse and balanced science and tech community.



Dr Emma Egging

Emma, CEO and founder of the Jon Egging Trust
The Jon Egging Trust supports young people from vulnerable backgrounds to realise their potential by providing life and work-skills training linked to STEM.

Since 2012, JET has supported 35,000 young lives through its inspirational and confidence building programmes, delivered across the UK working in partnership with schools, military units and corporate partners.

There is a skills deficit in the UK, yet 10.6% of young people aged 16-24 are not in full time education or training. Emma is keen to examine how opportunities linked to space can be used to unlock potential for all young people.



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Hannah Bilby

Hannah is currently a Junior Test Engineer within RAL Space, on the STFC Graduate scheme. She completed her MEng Mechanical Engineering in 2022, having undertaken a placement at STFC with her current team, where she worked and continues to work with shock and vibration testing, and the NSTF preparation efforts.



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Morgan Sagar

Morgan is a 4th year Electrical Engineering Apprentice on placement with RAL Space, working with the Environmental Test Division. He helps with the running of the test chambers and the upkeep of the building



Dr Gemma Attrill

Gemma is intrigued by our star, and has been studying and working in the field of Space Weather physics throughout her career. Dr Attrill has led the space environment research undertaken at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory since 2012, and is now Chief Space Weather. Dr Attrill is currently working as the Lead Scientist for the Dstl Space Systems programme, and is project technical authority for the Space Science project. She is a Chartered Physicist, Dstl Research Scholar, has been a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Bath, and is a Fellow of the Institute of Physics.



Anita Bernie

Anita is the Managing Director of MDA Space and Robotics Limited. She has full P&L responsibility for the UK business, with the support of Canada's largest and most successful space company with a 50+ year heritage. She has an acknowledged industry pedigree, having held many leadership positions in the space industry, including a number of Director roles at Surrey Satellite Technology Limited and several years with space systems experts KISPE.



Professor Tim Spiller

Tim moved to York in 2014 as founding Director of the York Centre for Quantum Technologies and he is now also Director of the Quantum Communications Hub. Prior to this, he was at the University of Leeds in the roles of Head of the Quantum Information Group and Director of Research for the School of Physics and Astronomy. Prior to 2009, Spiller was Director of Quantum Information Processing (QIP) Research at HP Labs Bristol – an activity that he established in 1995 – and a Hewlett-Packard Distinguished Scientist.



Mo Belal

Mo is Programme Director of the microwave technologies group at Spire Global who are developing a unique microwave sounding payload for weather observations, using technology heritage from RAL Space. The team is working towards a small satellite constellation to enhance weather forecasting capability. Prior to Spire Mo has co-founded and formed part of the leadership team of a spectroscopy company (MIRICO), spinning out from RAL Space where he worked with the Laser Spectroscopy team as well as working on various scientific and engineering based innovation projects with a focus on environmental and atmospheric applications.



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Dr Nick Appleyard

Nick heads European Space Agency's support for sustainable businesses using Space. As a demand side champion of Europe's flourishing space economy, Nick motivates space-enabled solutions to economic and social challenges, sharing ESA's resources with innovating companies across 23 countries. Previously, Nick has been a quantum devices physicist, developed industrial processes for semiconductors, and led UK government's innovation support for the digital economy.



Dr Damien Weidman

Damien heads the Spectroscopy Group within the Earth Observation and Atmospheric Science division of RAL Space and is the Principal Investigator of the CubeMAP mission. Damien has been working for more than 20 years in atmospheric sensing, in France, the USA and the UK. He has a particular interest in the development and application of novel high resolution sensing solutions enabled by spectroscopy, covering technologies, algorithms, systems, and mission concepts. Damien is also Chief Scientific Officer of a company he co-founded to exploit high-precision gas sensing for terrestrial applications



Stuart Martin

Stuart is CEO of the Satellite Applications Catapult. He joined the Catapult in 2013 from Logica where he was Business Director for Space and Satellite Communications for nearly seven years, leading all the company's activities in the Space domain. Stuart is a former vice-chair of UKSpace, the British trade association representing the Space industry, and council member of Eurospace – its European equivalent. He also sits on the UK Space Leadership Council, the top-level cross-industry, academia and government stakeholder group responsible for overseeing and implementing the UK Space Innovation and Growth Strategy



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Dr Andrew Muir

Andrew is a Director of Future Planet Capital, an FCA-authorized fund management company, and is the Investment Director for the £73M UK Innovation & Science Seed Fund.. Starting his career at Zeneca in advanced materials, he went on to roles in research and business development at the medical device company Biocompatibles and then Vice President of Technology for a US start-up in disinfection of medical equipment.

He started his career in venture capital with NESTA. He has a degree and a PhD in Chemistry from the University of Oxford



Barbara Ghinelli

Barbara is Harwell Campus Business Development Director at UKRI-STFC, where she oversees the development and management of clusters on the Harwell and Daresbury Campuses. She has been instrumental in establishing a high profile for the Space and the Health Tec Clusters and is leading the development of new clusters including Energy Tec.



Hitesh Thakrar

Hitesh is an experienced investor in the technology sector, having spent over 30 years investing in public equities in the life sciences, information technology and innovation sectors. Since 2015, he has moved into early stage venture investing. Hitesh is currently a Partner at Syncona Limited (a Wellcome Trust backed early stage venture fund), a Governance Board Member of KQ Labs at the Francis Crick Institute, an accelerator with the Turing supporting next generation businesses in data science and life sciences, and the Chair of the Investment Committee for Newable Ventures (a pre-Series A deep tech fund).

