

The Journal

Spring/Summer 2020

IST One-Day Technical Conference 2019 Review



On 18th September 2019, delegates arrived from across the country to attend the IST Annual Technical Conference at the state-of-the-art Birmingham Conference and Events Centre.

The convenience of the BCEC being less than five minutes' walk from the train station allowed many of our delegates to arrive by train, along with several especially organised coaches. The staff at the conference centre were

extremely helpful in directing attendees to the registration desk, where they collected their lanyards and delegate bags.



Refreshments were provided as everyone made their way through the door, allowing the early arrivals to start making their way around our sponsors and exhibitors who had eagerly arrived the night before.

After everyone had arrived, IST Chair, Terry Croft, made a prompt start and welcomed everyone to the conference along with IST Registrar Michelle Jackson. Deputy Chair and Finance Officer, Joan Ward, then updated us on what the IST has been up to over the last year, which included workshops, talks and conferences across the

country. Natalie Kennerley, IST Secretary, followed with an overview of our Creative Industries Pilot Project, which provides a professional registration framework for technicians within the creative industries.

How to Discover Black Holes with a (Pretty Damn Good) Ruler



Dr Helen Sharman CMG OBE, the President of the IST, then formally opened the conference and introduced our first Keynote Speaker, Professor Alberto Vecchio. His fascinating talk on the first ever detection of gravitational waves in 2015 received consistently positive feedback following the conference:

"The keynote address was an eye-opener to the field of physics and astronomy." "Excellent, very much enjoyed the first keynote speaker, Professor Alberto Vecchio."

"He made the complex and, for me, unfathomable science of astrophysics, a tad more understandable and fun."

"I never thought I'd understand anything linked to that area of science." "Perfectly chosen talk and speaker."

Following Professor Vecchio's keynote talk, we all split up for the first session of workshops. This year, we made sure to identify themes throughout the workshops, both to ensure we covered a broad range of industries and to help delegates select which workshops would be of most interest to them.

The themes were:

Creative Technologies



Professional Development



Science & Engineering



**Supporting Individuals/
Inclusivity**



Technology (all areas)



Health and Safety



"The topics were well chosen and really show the Institute is really advancing science and Technology with it is workshops and conferences. All the speakers are well verse in the topics delivered."

"Very relevant and something here for everyone!"

"The variety of options across all scientific disciplines was welcome, as the introduction to other technology areas such as in the Arts and Design sphere."



The workshops available in the first session were:

The Molecular Biology Workflow

Peter Rignall (Eppendorf)

"It was really interesting. With this lecture, I'm developing interest in molecular Biology and Forensic Science."

Hydrogen Fuelled Trains

Stuart Hillmansen (University of Birmingham)

"Very nice to hear about recent innovations and technical advance in an area at the forefront of the media and scientific world."

Our Technical Services Apprenticeship Programme

Natalie Kennerley (Manchester Metropolitan University)

"Enlightening discussion indicating how future technician roles will be supported for people new to work & career path."

Photography in 2019

Glynis Johnston & Gemma McKay (Manchester Metropolitan University)

"I found this all very valuable and enjoyable. I think a key point for me was that I could attend sessions relating to aspects I don't normally see - such as this creative photography one."

A Journey to ensure recognition for technical staff at Newcastle University

Mel Leitch & Calum Kirk (Newcastle University)

"An interesting talk with interactive voting involved which I thought was a really good way to engage with the audience."

After the success of these first workshop sessions, a very welcome refreshment break was provided. This gave delegates a further opportunity to visit our exhibitor stands, network and view the posters that had been entered into this years' Roger Dainty Best Poster Competition.



The morning ended with a second session of workshops:

Demonstration of Mobile Eye Tracking

Paul Aldcroft (Manchester Metropolitan University)

"Really enjoyed this - presenter was knowledgeable and asked Qs to audience."



How can we improve Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for Technical Staff?

Denise McLean & Tamsin Majerus (University of Nottingham)

"Loved the group discussions and how passionate the guys were who ran the workshop. Maybe a little more time for discussion would be good. But loads of advice was given in terms of courses or trainings to participate in for personal development. Very encouraging!"

Sharing Best Practice for Risk Assessments

Pamela Lithgow (Canterbury Christ Church University)

"A great discussion of the topic that brought out some good ideas for sharing."

Technician Commitment: Impact and Progress

Jane Banks (Science Council)

"It was interesting to discuss how other institutions are getting along and what issues they too are experiencing (as well as the successes!)"

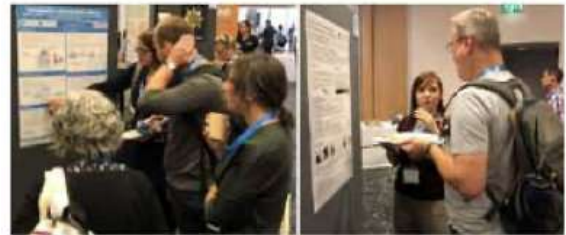
pH measurement in Theory and Practice

Scott Marsden (Mettler Toledo)

"Did exactly what it said on the tin – the speaker was very clear and I now know how to maintain my pH meter properly so 10/10 for this one! Wasn't a sales pitch either."



This led us into lunch, which was supplied by the BCEC. Again, this provided delegates with ample time to make their way around the exhibitor stands, view poster submissions and get to know one another, as well as the keynote speakers and workshop givers. It was also time for the Roger Dainty Poster Prize committee (made up of IST members and executives, including Dr Helen Sharman, and representatives from the key sponsors) to independently judge the competition.



Technical Lessons from Astronaut Training

Helen Sharman

After lunch, it was time for the second keynote speech from our very own Helen Sharman, *Technical Lessons from Astronaut Training*. Once again, our second keynote speaker received great feedback:

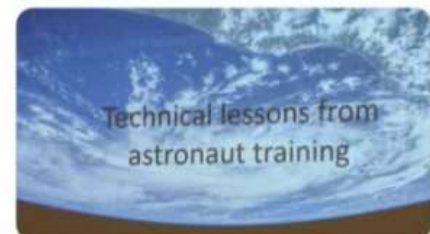
"Really inspirational talk from Helen – thank you!"

"I loved hearing from the first British cosmonaut Helen Sharman and her "ordinary" life/career path before the training. Both speakers were very approachable and totally likeable. Good choice!"

"Really enjoyed this session, interesting and engaging speaker."

"Very relevant, very interesting and great presentation."

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Awesome lunch, then followed up by Dr Helen Sharman, president of the IST discussing her role as a "space technician" #ISTConf2019



This keynote talk was followed by the final session of workshops of the day. Again, the team at the IST worked hard to ensure a variety of topics were covered in each workshop session.

Acid Digestion through to Solvent Extraction: Versatility Is Key

Vincent Cordon (CEM)

“Superb. I fell I love with the acid digestion device and solvent extraction. A new technique that will add value to the world of science”.

Influencing Strategy in Government

Marie Oldfield (Oldfield Consultancy)

“Although not being involved with Government, I entered this talk on the assumption that ‘Government’ could be swapped for any ‘decision maker’ and I was not disappointed.”

Celebrating Technical Staff in the Creative Industries

Natalie Kennerley (Manchester Metropolitan University)

“Very interesting to hear about plans for the new register.”

“Herding Cats” – Reflections on Leading Technical Teams

Kate Dixon (Manchester Metropolitan University)

“Another good example to hear about and how they are working to encourage technicians to gain recognition. I really enjoyed listening to another case example of this.”

Zine Making with Team Trident Press

Lisa Lorenz (Trident Press, MMU)

“Very good practical involvement and promoted interaction between delegates.”

After the third workshop session we had one final refreshment break before heading back into the main theatre, where our prize winners were announced.

The Roger Dainty award recognises the hard work of technical staff who create and deliver these presentations. These are then judged based on the clarity of submitted material, the novelty and the visual impact. Congratulations to the three prize winners which were awarded by Dr Helen Sharman and received £150, £100 and £50 Amazon vouchers respectively.



1st Prize:
Emma Monaghan,
University of
Birmingham



2nd Prize:
Mohammad Ali Salik,
University of Glasgow



3rd Prize:
Jing Wood, University
of York, Accepted
by colleague Simon
Breedon

As we had so many fantastic posters we also award commendations for posters that stand out to our judges.

Commendations:

Mari Pattison, University of Edinburgh (*right*)
Gillian Riddell, Queen's University Belfast
Lisa Van Hateren, University of Sheffield
Gemma Warren, University of Birmingham (*left*)



This year we also held the Outstanding Apprentice/ Trainee Award which was judged by John Robinson Fund representatives.

Nominations came in and were made by technical staff recommending an apprentice or trainee who had played a key role in their workplace. Congratulations to Harrison Barnett, University of Salford for winning this award.

Lloyd Halligan, Manchester Metropolitan University as a close runner up was highly commended with an award also to recognise their outstanding contributions.

After presenting each of the award winners with their prizes, Helen brought the conference to a close and announced that next years' conference will be held in collaboration with the University of York during their technician week on Wednesday 16th September 2020.

We hope everyone had a safe journey home from the conference we hope you had a great day – we know we did! We would like to say a very special thank you to our sponsors, exhibitors and career zone supporters. The conference would not happen without every single person who attended this year, and we hope to see you all next year in York.



See you next year!

Photos Credited to Mr Keith Barber, CPAGD FIScT LRSP, Official IST Photographer.

The IST One-day Technical Conference 2020



Conference
2020

Wednesday 16th September 2020
University of York

Save the date

Spring Lane Building
397 Harewood Way
Haslington
York YO10 5DS



Book and secure your place at:

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