

The UK Acoustics Network Newsletter October 2019

Dear Members

The Network membership keeps growing (748 per 31/10/2019). Please encourage anyone who has any interest in acoustics related research to join.

October events

Another busy month for the UKAN. A key event in October for UKAN was our participation in the New Scientist Live Festival (NSL). This event was held in London ExCeL between 10 and 13 October 2019. This was a big, global audience event: 40,186 attendees across the event with 6,906 children attending with their schools. The UKAN had a strong presence there, engaged with this event throughout the four days and made a clear impact (see photo below). We are very grateful to Artur Gower and the team who organised the stand and worked long hours to make this event a success. The team was interviewed by the New Scientist Live film crew. The footage of this interview is [here](#).



In fact, acoustics was properly represented at the NSL. Gianluca Memoli from Sussex University

produced a lovely Acoustics at New Scientist Live 2019 video which you can watch [here](#).

A very important news for the UKAN was the appointment of Richard Craster, UKAN co-director, as the Dean for the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the Imperial College (see the news [here](#)). This is a very high-profile role, great news for the UKAN and for the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the Imperial. We wish Richard very best in his new responsible position (see figure below).

Professor Richard Craster to lead Imperial's Faculty of Natural Sciences







by Elizabeth Nixon
23 October 2019



Leading mathematician and Director of the Abraham de Moivre CNRS-Imperial international research unit Professor Craster has been appointed Dean.

Professor Craster will take up the role of Dean of the [Faculty of Natural Sciences](#) on 1 January 2020. He will be responsible for providing strategic leadership, planning and coordination for the faculty, and for driving continuing excellence in research and education.

Professor Craster's ties with Imperial go back to the beginning of his career, as he completed his BSc and his PhD at the College. He joined Imperial as a lecturer in 1998 and since then has held a number of key leadership roles.

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In October the UKAN compiled a list of running UKRI grants related to acoustics (as per May 2019).

These new data suggest that the current value of these grants is £163M. This constitutes a 5% growth since the last year. However, there has been a 21% drop in the grant numbers, which means that the grants become larger in value. A majority of these grants come from the EPSRC (£128M). A copy of the full report can be found [here](#). In this respect, we remind our members to respond to our email from the 23rd of October which requests information on new grant applications, collaborations and careers related to UKAN activities. We need this information to understand better the role the UKAN has played in connecting people, supporting their grant bids, providing guidance on new research directions and career developments.

Finally, a really exciting news is that the EPSRC has agreed to allow the submission of the grant proposal for UKAN Plus. A key achievement of UKAN has been to bring the acoustics research community together and to build a critical mass of people and expertise which is now visible and recognised internationally. This an accomplishment that has never been achieved before with any professional body. Acoustics related research in the UK spans too many disciplines and a majority of membership in key professional bodies covering aspects of acoustics are not research active.

The UKAN has completed most of its objectives. The current focus for the UKAN is: (i) to develop an agreed research roadmap and action plan for acoustics under the four Grand Challenges; (ii) to secure a continuous stream of new research funding from the UKRI to carry out the action plan and roadmap; (iii) to become a fully sustainable Network by November 2020.

The purpose of the UKAN Plus is to move beyond the current Network, flesh out strategic connections between the Acoustics Challenges and

Grand Challenges and to tackle these challenges through pilot studies leading to full-scale grant proposals and systematic research projects involving a wider acoustics community. There is a high risk for the future of UK's acoustics related research if we stop at this point, erode the assembled critical mass and loose cross-disciplinary work initiated by the UKAN. A new UKAN Plus Network will take this community to the next stage. Kirill Horoshenkov and Richard Craster will be working on the new grant bid with a view to submit it to the EPSRC by the end of January 2020. We invite our members who are willing to take part in this process to express their interest by writing to info@acoustics.ac.uk. We also like to invite our industry members who wish to support this grant bid financially or in-kind to get in touch with us.

Upcoming events

A very important event for November is the UKAN 2nd Anniversary Workshop. It is to be held tomorrow in Guild Hall, London. This is a full house event. It coincides with the UKAN Steering Committee meeting and Advisory Board. Key topics for the discussion at the Steering Committee are finances, UKAN Plus proposal and UKAN's role in the International Year of Sound 2020.

Two other events are planned for November. These events are: (i) [1st International Photoacoustic Standardisation Consortium Meeting](#) (4 November); (ii) [UK Marine Noise Abatement Workshop](#) (12 November). Funding is available to support attendance at these events and other related events. We strongly encourage our members to come forward with proposals for networking, training and grant writing events to be planned for 2019-20. Cross-SIG events leading to collaborative

grant bids are particularly encouraged.

Sounding out a STEM challenge for Tomorrow's Engineers Week – Careers in acoustics

Engineers looking to make a sound career choice can tap into a series of short films, being launched to mark Tomorrow's Engineers Week (4-8 Nov). National trade body the [Association of Noise Consultants](#) is showcasing a range of videos, aimed at a school age audience, showing acoustics in action. The playlist features nine films, made by acousticians as part of a new accolade under the renowned John Connell Awards programme.

Held in October, the John Connell STEM award - sponsored by the ANC and ANV Measurement Systems – recognised short film communications relating to acoustics, made by people studying or working in the field.

[SRL Technical Services](#) won the title, with a film highlighting how people in the community could be annoyed by irritating noises, and how they can be addressed.

AECOM and LOCHER (Learning Occupational Health by Experiencing Risk) were both Highly Commended. Paul Shields, a member of the ANC Board, said: "The winning and shortlisted videos have all now been uploaded to the playlist.

"These films leave a great legacy, as the applicants have explained a highly technical subject in ways that engage with their young audience.

"They offer a useful resource for people interested in acoustics and STEM in general to tap into and, with the theme this year for Tomorrow's Engineers Week focusing on health and wellbeing, they are particularly relevant.

"World Health Organisation guidelines state that exposure to noise presents the largest health risk to the population of Western Europe, second only to poor air quality.

"Environmental noise can have negative impacts on health and wellbeing and is a well-recognised public health risk.

"These impacts can include cardiovascular disease, annoyance, sleep disturbance and distractions in activities such as reading and conversation.

"As a result, we need talented people to enter our industry and engineer solutions to tackle this."

The playlist initiative is part of the ANC's '#ExploreAcoustics' campaign, launched last year to demonstrate the wide range of opportunities available to students interested in a career in STEM.

#ExploreAcoustics includes video interviews and in-depth case studies featuring students, graduates, professionals and academics in the industry.

Gloria Elliott OBE, Chief Executive of the Noise Abatement Society, said: "We congratulate all of the winners of this exciting new John Connell Award for creating inspirational, informative and accessible videos to inspire young people about the aural environment."

More information, including links to the John Connell STEM Award playlist, can be found at www.association-of-noise-consultants.co.uk/explore-acoustics

Yours sincerely,

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