

27 May 2022
Jodrell Bank, Cheshire, UK

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MAJOR NEW ATTRACTION OPENING AT JODRELL BANK

The First Light Pavilion, Jodrell Bank's highly-anticipated new attraction, is set to open to the public on 4th June 2022.

The stunning new building is at the heart of the **£21.5m First Light Project**, supported by the **National Lottery Heritage Fund**, which aims to open up the inspirational history of Jodrell Bank by engaging visitors with the fantastic stories of its pioneering scientists and their ground-breaking feats of science and engineering.



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The launch of the new Pavilion will firmly establish the **Jodrell Bank** site, which is part of **The University of Manchester**, as a major UK cultural destination, fitting for its uniquely multi-dimensional status as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, national visitor attraction, cultural icon, and globally significant scientific research facility.

Eilish McGuinness, CEO of The National Lottery Heritage Fund said: *“Jodrell Bank is truly a unique heritage site, of national and international importance. The National Lottery Heritage Fund awarded £12.5 million so that the site’s powerful human stories of curiosity, exploration and discovery could be shared with the public. The stunning new building will have a fantastic impact, delighting and inspiring every visitor.”*

David Rutley, MP for Macclesfield, added: *“The opening of the First Light Pavilion will be a remarkable moment not just for Cheshire and the North West but for the whole of the UK. Visitors from across the nation will be able to come here and celebrate the pioneering spirit of endeavour that this much-loved site has come to represent.”*

The concept for the new building was an original idea developed by **Jodrell Bank’s Professors Teresa Anderson and Tim O’Brien** who have passionately spearheaded the project since its inception.

Professor Teresa Anderson, Director, Jodrell Bank Centre for Engagement said: *“After years of planning, we are thrilled to finally be able to welcome visitors in to our new First Light Pavilion. This moment will mark a whole new chapter for Jodrell Bank.”*

The First Light Pavilion was designed by international architecture firm **HASSELL** to respond sympathetically to its unique surroundings. The striking building takes the form of a grass-topped 76m diameter dome which cleverly mirrors the shape and scale of the landmark Lovell Telescope.

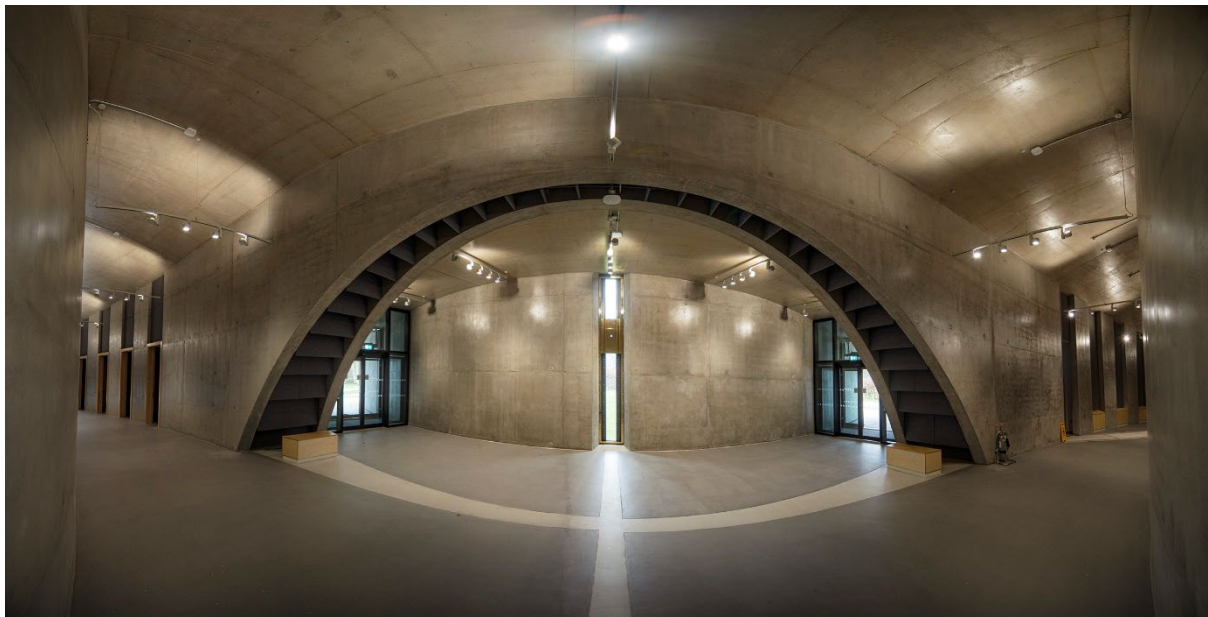
By maintaining an age-old tradition of building structures that express our relationship to the skies above us, the building also makes reference to ancient sites such as Stonehenge and Newgrange, by aligning with the sun via a meridian line cut through the dome’s entranceway.

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Facing due South, a slim vertical window right in the centre of the building invites the sun to shine through a finger of light that moves across the entrance foyer as the day goes on, acting as a giant sundial.



Diana Hampson, Director of Estates and Facilities at The University of Manchester said:
“This is a truly visionary build and a wealth of brilliant people have come together to bring it to life. The ambitious design has been expertly realised by the construction team at Kier and we couldn’t be more proud. We can’t wait to see it open to the public.”

Inside the new Pavilion, visitors will be able to engage with the site’s rich heritage in a brand new permanent exhibition. Created by leading exhibition designers **Casson Mann**, **The Story of Jodrell Bank**, will bring to life the fascinating history of the site which dates back to 1945 and the birth of a whole new science: the exploration of the Universe using radio waves instead of visible light. Jodrell Bank’s story continues through the height of the Space Race and the tensions of the Cold War, to today’s new discoveries and world-leading research.

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Exhibition audiences will be able to see a range of fascinating archive materials brought together for the first time including audio, film, dairies, letters, plans, notebooks and photographs. Highlights include a number of personal items belonging to Jodrell Bank's founder, Sir Bernard Lovell including his school report and family photographs. While mostly digitised, physical items will also be on display including a large section of the telescope gear rack.



The actual fabric of the exhibition will make innovative use of parts of the iconic Lovell Telescope. 15 4m high panels taken from the underside of the Telescope during its recent renovation will serve as the backdrop to interactive projected animations created by the award-winning digital media studio **Squint/Opera**.

Far from traditional displays of words, pictures and static objects, this highly interactive exhibition will weave archives and artefacts together with animations, projections and experiences. Visitors will be able to sit back in a deckchair to experience the thrill of a meteor shower, see like a snake, and even try 'driving' a radio telescope. Once visitors have explored this exhilarating space, they'll be tasked with a quiz where successful completion will allow them to set off a projected meteor shower across the breadth of the exhibition.

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Meanwhile, visitors will also be able to experience vivid planetarium-style shows in a custom built auditorium, complete with a curved projection screen and an impressive 9 digital projectors.

The state-of-the-art **Space Dome** will offer every visitor an immersive audio-visual experience with a specially commissioned film about the history of Jodrell Bank, narrated by Professor Brian Cox.



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And finally, the 130-seat **First Light Café**, complete with a stunning terrace overlooking the **Jodrell Bank Arboretum** and a fresh menu using seasonal and sustainable produce, will also open. Serving breakfasts, lunches, cream teas and more, the cafe will champion a host of local and artisan produce -from Goostrey gooseberries to Cheshire cheese!

All this complements Jodrell Bank's existing visitor offer and audiences will still be able to enjoy the thrill of getting up close to the giant **Lovell Telescope**, experimenting with the science of radio astronomy in the site's current indoor and outdoor exhibits, or exploring the extensive Jodrell Bank Arboretum and browsing the ever-popular **Jodrell Bank Shop**.

First Light at Jodrell Bank is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the UK Government (DCMS), The University of Manchester, and a number of kind donors including the Wolfson, Garfield Weston, Denise Coates, and Stavros Niarchos foundations.

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IMAGES:

Images are available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1chlu8qflznxi5n/AAAKuhmEEG8L3x8OKrIYjjnta?dl=0>

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Jodrell Bank

Founded in 1945, Jodrell Bank's inspirational story includes revolutionary scientific discoveries, amazing feats of engineering, the dawn of the Space Age and the creation of the Grade I listed Lovell Telescope, an icon for British science and engineering. The site is proudly owned by The University of Manchester and is part of The Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics a world-leading science research institute, and The Jodrell Bank Centre for Engagement, a multi award-winning centre for excellence in public participation and engagement with science, culture and heritage. Jodrell Bank was inscribed by UNESCO on the World Heritage Site list in 2019 in recognition of its internationally significance science, heritage and cultural impact.

www.jodrellbank.net

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About The University of Manchester

Jodrell Bank is part of The University of Manchester and helps deliver the University's vision to advance education, knowledge and wisdom for the good of society. The University of Manchester, a member of the prestigious Russell Group, is the UK's largest single-site university with 38,600 students. It has 20 academic schools and hundreds of specialist research groups undertaking pioneering, multi-disciplinary teaching and research of worldwide significance. The University is one of the country's major research institutions, rated fifth in the UK in terms of 'research power' (REF 2014), and has had no fewer than 25 Nobel laureates either work or study there.

www.manchester.ac.uk

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we Inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future. Since The National Lottery began in 1994, National Lottery players have raised over £43 billion for projects and more than 635,000 grants have been awarded across the UK.

www.heritagefund.org.uk