Out of this world: Jodrell Bank's First Light Pavilion



The Lovell Telescope and the First Light Pavilion at Jodrell Bank. Credit: Andrew Brooks

The First Light Pavilion at Jodrell Bank opens this Saturday thanks to £12.2million raised by National Lottery players – the state-of-the-art attraction is a must-see for 2022.

The striking new building at UNESCO World Heritage site Jodrell Bank – **opening this Saturday, 4 June** – will be home to an immersive planetarium, exhibitions and café.

A fascinating history

Inside the new Pavilion, a permanent exhibition will unveil the fascinating heritage of Jodrell Bank and share the stories of ground-breaking feats of science and engineering that took place on the site.

The First Light Exhibition will bring to life the Jodrell Bank story 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.

Visitors will be able to see a range of captivating archive materials brought together for the first time. Highlights include a number of personal items belonging to Jodrell Bank's founder, Sir Bernard Lovell and the 'Blue Book', detailing the original proposal for the Lovell Telescope.

Hands-on heritage

The highly interactive exhibition means visitors can get truly hands-on with the heritage of the site. They will be able to experience the thrill of a meteor shower, crawl into a black hole, and even try ‘driving’ a radio telescope.

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People looking at exhibition inside large building

The First Light Exhibition at Jodrell Bank. Credit: Andrew Brooks.

The opening of the First Light Pavilion will see the return of a planetarium to the site. The state-of-the-art Space Dome will offer every visitor an immersive experience with a specially commissioned film about the history of Jodrell Bank. They can also take off on a ‘Journey through Space’ to witness the beauty and wonder of the universe.

Audience sit facing person on stage

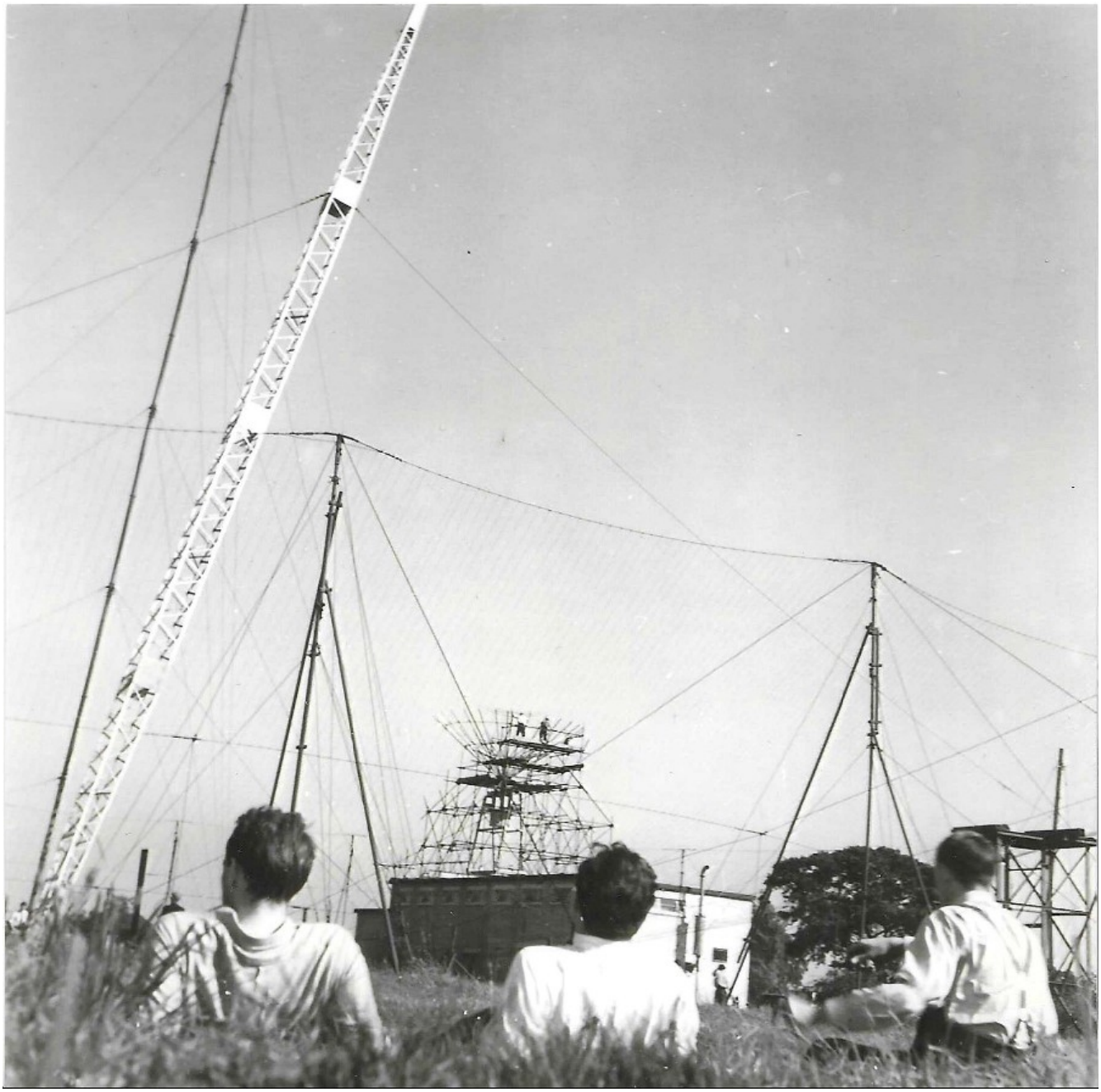
The Space Dome at Jodrell Bank. Credit: Andrew Brooks.

An unexpected link

For one member of staff at the Heritage Fund, the history of the site is very much part of her own heritage too. Isabel Hunt, an Executive Director at the Heritage Fund revealed her father, Barry Wade, worked as a trainee engineer at Jodrell Bank from 1951-1952.

> When I joined The National Lottery Heritage Fund, I was really looking forward to making a difference for the UK’s heritage, but it was even more exciting to find out that one of our major investments was intertwined with my very own family heritage.
>
> *Isabel Hunt, Executive Director of Business Innovation & Insight at The National Lottery Heritage Fund*

During his time on site, Barry and his colleagues worked on model versions of the famous Lovell Telescope. Images passed down from his working days show off the workers’ engineering skills and how Jodrell Bank used to look.



Three men looking on at colleagues working on a telescope at Jodrell Bank. Credit: Isabel Hunt.

Isabel said: “When I joined The National Lottery Heritage Fund, I was really looking forward to making a difference for the UK’s heritage, but it was even more exciting to find out that one of our major investments at Jodrell Bank was intertwined with my very own family heritage.

“My father spoke very fondly of his time at Jodrell Bank, and along with all the other fascinating history being shared as part of the First Light Project, I am sure these stories will inspire the next generation of engineers.”

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