

Gathering of the UK Remote Sensing Clans

The [Remote Sensing & Photogrammetry Society](#) (RSPSoc) [2016 Annual Conference](#) is taking place this week, hosted by the University of Nottingham and the British Geological Society. Two Pixalytics staff, Dr Sam Lavender and Dr Louisa Reynolds, left Plymouth on a cold wet day on Monday, and arrived in the Nottinghamshire sunshine as befits RSPSoc week. The conference runs for three days and gives an opportunity to hear about new developments and research within remote sensing. Both Sam and Louisa are giving presentations this year.

Tuesday morning began with the opening keynote presentation given by Stephen Coulson of the European Space Agency (ESA), which discussed their comprehensive programme including the Copernicus and Earth Explorer missions. The Copernicus missions are generating ten times more data than similar previous missions, which presents logistical, processing and storage challenges for users. The future vision is to bring the user to the data, rather than the other way around. However, the benefits of cloud computing are still to be fully understood and ESA are interested in hearing about applications that couldn't be produced with the IT technology we had 5 years ago.

After coffee Sam chaired the commercial session titled 'The challenges (and rewards) of converting scientific research into commercial products.' It started with three short viewpoint presentations from Jonathan Shears (Telespazio VEGA UK), Dr Sarah Johnson (University of Leicester) and Mark Jarman (Satellite Applications Catapult), and then moved into an interactive debate. It was great to see good attendance and a lively discussion ensued. Sam is planning to produce a white paper, with colleagues, based on the session. Some of the key points included:

- Informative websites so people know what you do
- Working with enthusiastic individuals as they will make sure something happens, and
- To have a strong commercial business case alongside technical feasibility.

Louisa presented on Tuesday afternoon within the Hazards and Disaster Risk Reduction session. Her presentation was 'A semi-automated flood mapping procedure using statistical SAR backscatter analysis' which summarised the work Pixalytics has been doing over the last year on

flood mapping which was funded by the Space for Smarter Government Programme (SSGP). Louisa was the third presenter who showed Sentinel-1 flood maps of York, and so it was a popular topic!

Alongside Louisa's presentation, there have some fascinating other talks on topics as varied as:

- Detecting and monitoring artisanal oil refining in the Niger Delta
- Night time lidar reading of long-eroded gravestones
- Photogrammatic maps of ancient water management features in Al-Jufra, Libya.
- Seismic risk in Crete; and
- Activities of Map Action

Although for Louisa her favourite part so far was watching a video of the launch of Sentinel 1A, through the Soyuz VS07 rocket's discarding and deployment stages, simultaneously filmed from the craft and from the ground.

Just so you don't think the whole event is about remote sensing, the conference also has a thriving social scene. On Monday there was a tour of The City Ground, legendary home of Nottingham Forest, by John McGovern who captained Forest to successive European Cup's in 1979 and 1980. It was a great event and it was fascinating to hear about the irascible leadership style of Brian Clough. Tuesday's event was a tour round the spooky Galleries of Justice Museum.

The society's Annual General Meeting takes place on Wednesday morning; Sam's presentation, 'Monitoring Land Cover Dynamics: Bringing together Landsat-8 and Sentinel-2 data', is in the Land Use/Land Cover Mapping session which follows.

The start of RSPSoc has been great as usual, offering chances to catch up with old remote sensing friends and meet some new ones. We are looking forward to rest of the conference and 2017!

