

The Presenter Network Conference



2022

The Presenter Network was set up in 2014 by the Royal Observatory Greenwich as a way for presenters to share best practice as well as watch others in action to develop their presenting style. Since then we run regular meet-ups in collaboration with other organisations and established hubs covering every aspect of presenting you could ever imagine: using comedy effectively, working with challenging audience members, how to look after your voice and everything in between.

The response to the conferences over the past couple of years had been overwhelmingly positive and so back by popular demand the third annual Presenter Network Conference was organised.

This special one-day event was held on Friday 2nd September 2022 at the Royal Observatory Greenwich in London. The day was jam-packed with sessions facilitated by members of the network with plenty of time to network and share best practice too. This was also our first hybrid conference with livestreamed sessions and online workshops for our online audience.

Frequently asked questions:

- Who was this event for? The event was for members of the Presenter Network. This network is created by presenters, for presenters so whether you are just starting out or want to freshen up your skills there will always be plenty to suit. If you are not actively involved in presenting, then I am afraid this is not the network for you.
- How much did it cost? This event was FREE - yes you read that right - FREE! This group operates purely on the good will of our members. All meet-ups leaders, speakers and workshops facilitators are offering their time and experience for free which we are very grateful for.
- What was the capacity? We would have loved to have opened it up to any presenters that would have liked to come along but we were limited by the capacity of the spaces we were using to around 120 people. We capped our online workshops to 150 participants.

- Where and when was this event? The event was held at the Royal Observatory Greenwich in London on 2nd September 2022.
- Was it all about science? No, we had people from across the public communication sector, however because the network is run by the team here at the Royal Observatory Greenwich our networks naturally included lots of science related places and people.

Conference Programme

9:30am - Registration

This gave delegates the chance to meet each other, sign in and have a quick look around the galleries before we kicked off.

10:15am – Welcome (Livestreamed)

Liz Avery kicked the conference off with a welcome talk.

10:30am – Keynote Address (Livestreamed)

The keynote speaker was the brilliant Grace Webb. You can find out more about Grace and all the awesome things he gets up to in the Appendix.

11:15am – Break and networking

During all of the breaks people from the Royal Observatory Greenwich team and local hub leaders were available to answer any questions about the network or running a session. Delegates were not given a list of attendees but instead encouraged to talk to each other.

11:30am – Short Talks

In this session we heard from some amazing presenters. The speakers and the titles of their sessions were:

- Nigel Clark – From podcasting to presenting.
- Dr Jen Gupta – Do you play computer games Miss? What to do when your audience just doesn't seem to care. Most of us at some point in our career will find ourselves presenting to people who just don't care. Whether they show it by completely disengaging, or by continually asking off-topic questions, these experiences can be disruptive for the rest of the audience and frustrating for the presenter. Jen will share her experiences of doing physics outreach in schools for the last decade, where (spoiler

alert!) the children sometimes couldn't care less about the topic at hand. Along the way she will touch on how she has managed to build a career in public engagement despite being a socially awkward introvert!

Find out more about our tip-top plenary speakers in the Appendix.

1:00pm – Lunch

2:00pm – Busking – up close presenting (onsite)

The focus of this session was to learn from and engage with presenters who do up close presenting. A popular session featuring presenters from a wide variety of disciplines that sparked a lot of conversation amongst conference attendees. Here are the fabulous 'buskers' that participated in the session:

- Dr Matt Pritchard – Surprising Science. This is not just an awe & wonder show but one that encourages scientific enquiry and critical thinking skills as he challenges the audience to discover the sneaky scientific secrets behind the illusions.
- Dwayne Rose – Everyone loves a story. Stories are the culture that science is swaddled in, Dwayne tries to share these stories in his work at the National Maritime Museum. Everything has a story and by finding the right way to tell that story and tease out the human connection associated, it not only provides perspective but also an intimate feeling of wonder and discovery inherent to storytelling.
- Rik Sowden – A step back in time. With character- and object-led interactions Rik brings venues and collections to life, and illustrates parts of history to schools, interest groups, and random collections of people. From 'strolling characters' to fully inhabited historic sites, from the things in my pockets (or pouches) to an armoury, kitchen, or doctor's surgery – sights, sounds, smells, (occasionally) taste, and touch can really help people to connect with the past.
- Ian Dickson – What can we learn from the beauty of a rainbow? Creating the rainbow with a spectroscope allows us to find out what materials make up the Sun. We can also identify what elements are to be found in stars, and other astronomical objects, which helps us investigate how stars are created, how they develop, and how they meet their end. We have used spectroscopes to discover how the Universe may have started and what is happening to it.

– Discussion (online)

In this session, Presenter Network Hub leader Dhara Patel led an online discussion about Eliciting action from your audience. We often find ourselves presenting about growing issues or topical events and hope to inspire our audiences to go

away and act on something they've learnt. But how do we encourage people to follow through and do something once the curtains close and they leave your presentation? Come along to explore some ideas to motivate your audiences to take action, and be prepared to share your own experiences and thoughts for a more fruitful discussion!

Find out more about our buskers and speakers in the Appendix.

2:45pm – Up close presenting panel discussion (Livestreamed)

Our wonderful 'buskers' participated in a panel discussion where they shared their experiences and answered questions from the audience.

3:15pm – Short break

3:30pm – Planetarium show (onsite)

Attendees were treated to a tour of the Universe by one of the ROG astronomers.

– Livestream from the British Association of Planetaria Conference (online)

Paul Cornish shared Native American and Indigenous Star Stories in this session which was livestreamed from the British Association of Planetaria Conference.

4:00pm – Closing Remarks and group photo

4:15pm – Networking

This gave presenters a chance to connect with anyone they missed through the day and a chance to talk to hub leaders about setting up their own local Presenter Network hub.

For more information about the Presenter Network [click here](#).



Presenter
Network

Appendix

Key Note Speaker

Grace Webb (Presenter, Action and Motorsport Enthusiast)

Grace Webb is a presenter with a friendly and engaging style that appeals to all ages and has given her an explosive start to her career. Raised in the Lincolnshire countryside, Grace quickly developed a love for the outdoors and would often be found exploring in her father's engineering workshop. From a family of motorsports enthusiasts and as the granddaughter of Donington Park's Race Circuit founder Tom Wheatcroft, Grace's enthusiasm for adrenaline-fuelled sports doesn't come as a surprise.

Grace's love of motorsport led to her first television appearance as an interviewer on 'Motors TV' for popular motorcycle championship 'Thundersport GB' in 2012. Whilst Grace was filming for Motors TV, she also studied for a degree in Primary Education. Her passion for inspiring and motivating young minds, led Grace to be a classroom teacher for four and a half years before moving to an Assistant Headteacher role for a further year and a half. With her experience as a teacher, Grace was very much welcomed by the audience and has had positive praise for her education work on 'BBC Bitesize', the corporation's biggest ever education programme, which later went on to win a Royal Television Society Award NW for Best Digital Creativity in 2021.

Grace is known for her love of adventure, discovering new things and taking on a challenge. She is a passionate action & motorsport enthusiast, and is one to watch in the world of sports and factual programming.

Instagram - @officialgracewebb

Youtube - /officialgracewebb

www.officialgracewebb.com

Plenary Speakers

Nigel Clark (TV presenter and performer)

Nigel is a TV presenter and performer, best known for his work on The Baby Club and is founder of Dadvengers. He also hosts The Baby Club's spin-off series, The Toddler Club and the BBC Sounds podcast, Baby Bear & Me. Nigel is incredibly passionate about dance, music and sport. He performed in the hugely successful percussion show STOMP which led to performances at events such as the Olympics Closing Ceremony 2012, Live at the Palladium, The Royal Variety Performance and The World Music Awards.

[nigelclarktv](#) and [dadvengersofficial](#) (on Instagram)

Dr Jen Gupta (Astrophysicist and Science Communicator)

Jen is an astrophysicist who loves to talk about how awesome space is with anyone who will listen! Based in the Institute of Cosmology and Gravitation at the University of Portsmouth, Jen is a Senior Public Engagement and Outreach Fellow, in charge of the outreach and public engagement programme for the institute. She is also a freelance science presenter and has been known to perform comedy sets where she uses astronomy to make people laugh.

[@jen_gupta](#) (on Twitter)

Dhara Patel (Astronomer and Presenter Network Hub Leader)

Dhara is a Space Expert at the National Space Centre in Leicester. Prior to that she worked as an astronomer and science communicator at the Royal Observatory Greenwich, though she began her career as a secondary school science teacher after completing a Masters in physics. Dhara is also the Presenter Network hub leader for the Leicester area.

[@d_p4tel](#), [@spacecentre](#) (on Twitter)

<https://spacecentre.co.uk>

Dr Matt Pritchard (Science Magician)

Science magician Dr Matt Pritchard is a Curator of Wonder. His amazing performances both inspire and inform. Matt loves being creative and is passionate about simplifying the complex. As an independent science communicator he works with 100+ schools a year, collaborates with universities on their outreach and works with organisations like the Science Museum Group and Big Bang fairs. Matt's shows are packed with science tricks, stunts and puzzles. Designed to engage due to the fast paced, interactive, and counter-intuitive demonstrations.

@sciencemagician (on Twitter)

www.sciencemagicshows.co.uk

Dwayne Rose (Anthropologist, Science Communicator, Story Teller)

Trained as an anthropologist Dwayne has worn many hats, from science communicator to cultural interpreter and even a creative writer in his spare time, one thing has stood out as important to him, the value of stories. Museums, like libraries are places full of stories and the collections only help us latch onto and explore these stories. Stories are the culture that science is swaddled in, Dwayne tries to share these stories in his work at the National Maritime Museum.

Paul Cornish (Science communicator, Presenter, Public Speaker)

Paul is an experienced science communicator, presenter, and public speaker. He is working on the Planetarium Team at We The Curious where he trains presenters and writes content.

@paulcornish (on Twitter)

<https://paulcornish.weebly.com/>

Rik Sowden (Historical Interpreter, Educator, Entertainer)

As an experienced historical interpreter, educator, and entertainer Rik is used to presenting people and parts of the past as they might have been. With character- and object-led interactions he brings venues and collections to life, and illustrates parts of history to schools, interest groups, and random collections of people. From 'strolling characters' to fully inhabited historic sites, from the things in my pockets (or pouches) to an armoury, kitchen, or doctor's surgery –sights, sounds, smells, (occasionally) taste, and touch can really help people to connect with the past.

[@HistoricEchoes](#) (on Twitter)
<http://historicechoes.co.uk>

Ian Dickson (Observatory Explainer)

As an Observatory Explainer at the Royal Observatory Greenwich, Ian loves engaging with the public about all things science and astronomy.