

[Press release: Minister for Europe to champion UK-Spain ties at annual talks](#)

Sir Alan Duncan, the Minister for Europe, will join the UK-Spain Tertulias event, which will celebrate the UK's strong bilateral and cultural links with Spain and commitment to strengthening the UK-Spain relationship after Brexit.

The 30th edition of the event, to be held in Malaga today and tomorrow (Oct 26-27), will see the Minister meet with Spanish Foreign Minister, Josep Borrell, Europe Minister Luis Marco Aguirano and Minister for Territorial Policy, Ignacio Sanchez Amor.

Speaking ahead of the event, Sir Alan said:

The annual Tertulias dialogue not only demonstrates the importance of our close links for UK and Spanish citizens, but illustrates the many layers of friendship and shared history between the UK and Spain – a relationship we are committed to strengthening as we prepare to leave the EU.

Malaga is also one of the most important hubs of British life in Spain, and plays a key role in British-Spanish relations. At the heart of Costa del Sol, Malaga is home to 55,000 British residents and welcomed more than three million British tourists last year. It is one of the most popular destinations for British people visiting in Spain.

Further information

- Follow Sir Alan Duncan on Twitter [@AlanDuncanMP](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email

newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Newsdesk

020 7008 3100

[Press release: Minister for Europe to champion UK-Spain ties at annual talks](#)



Sir Alan Duncan, the Minister for Europe, will join the UK-Spain Tertulias event, which will celebrate the UK's strong bilateral and cultural links with Spain and commitment to strengthening the UK-Spain relationship after Brexit.

The 30th edition of the event, to be held in Malaga today and tomorrow (Oct 26-27), will see the Minister meet with Spanish Foreign Minister, Josep Borrell, Europe Minister Luis Marco Aguirano and Minister for Territorial Policy, Ignacio Sanchez Amor.

Speaking ahead of the event, Sir Alan said:

The annual Tertulias dialogue not only demonstrates the importance of our close links for UK and Spanish citizens, but illustrates the many layers of friendship and shared history between the UK and Spain – a relationship we are committed to strengthening as we prepare to leave the EU.

Malaga is also one of the most important hubs of British life in Spain, and plays a key role in British-Spanish relations. At the heart of Costa del Sol, Malaga is home to 55,000 British residents and welcomed more than three million British tourists last year. It is one of the most popular destinations for British people visiting in Spain.

Published 26 October 2018

News story: Desert test drive for Mars rover controlled from 1,000 miles away

The ExoFiT Mars rover testing team will use a new model called 'Charlie' to test hardware, software and to practise science operations for the future European Space Agency (ESA) ExoMars rover, which will look for life on Mars in 2021.

The team will practise driving Charlie off its lander, identifying and travelling to a geological outcrop, and then sampling the rock with its drill.

Credit: ESA / Airbus DS / Mullard Space Science Laboratory / LATMOS – Universite Pierre et Marie Curie / Open University / Imperial College / Natural History Museum.

Graham Turnock, CEO UK Space Agency said:

After the Earth, Mars is the most habitable planet in the Solar System, so it's a perfect destination to explore the possibility of life on other planets, as well as the history of our own.

These small steps to check systems in Spain provide us with confidence that ExoMars will achieve what it was designed to do. This and future trials will prepare our scientists and engineers for the real operations. I'm proud that British science and ingenuity is critical to the success of this mission.

During the testing, the ExoFiT team will assess Charlie's individual systems including the:

- WISDOM ground penetrating radar
- CLUPI close up imager
- The Panoramic Camera (PanCam) mast imager which provides 3D maps of the area around the rover and the coring drill to take below ground samples identified by WISDOM.

Rigorous testing of equipment and the development of best practice will help to ensure mission success with the future Mars rovers.

Ben Dobke, Airbus project manager for ExoFiT said:

One of the primary goals of ExoFiT is the setup of efficient remote science operations. It will allow the team of instrument scientists and engineers to practice how to remotely operate and interpret the data from rover mounted instruments. It is setup as a blueprint to develop operational experience for both ExoMars and future robotic

Mars missions.

The Remote Control Centre (RCC) for Charlie will be hosted at STFC Harwell Mission Operation Centre, with each science team having a remote instrument operator based there.

Credit: STFC RAL Space /Airbus DS /ESA.

Dr Rain Irshad, Autonomous Systems Group Leader at STFC RAL Space said:

It's been a really exciting week. The team at Harwell were working from limited information – we created digital maps of the terrain for them and they had the data sent each day by the rover. From this they had to decide where the rover should go and what instruments it should use to get the most interesting science. This test-run was very similar to the way that rovers are operated on Mars

There will be a follow up test drive in the Atacama Desert in Chile next year.

ExoFiT is an ESA funded project managed and implemented by Airbus Defence and Space, backed by MREP (Mars Robotic Exploration Programme) as a technology development activity.

The future ExoMars rover will be the first of its kind to travel across the Martian surface and drill down to determine if evidence of life is buried underground, protected from the Sun's radiation that bombards the surface of the 'Red Planet'.

The UK is the second largest European contributor to the ExoMars mission, having invested €287 million in the mission and £14 million on the instruments.

Airbus Defence and Space in Stevenage is leading the build of the rover while the UCL Mullard Space Science Laboratory is leading on a key instrument known as the PanCam, a high-resolution 3D camera which will be used to look at the terrain and rocks to try to detect signs of life.

Leicester University and Teledyne e2v are working on the Raman Spectrometer with STFC RAL Space providing some of the electronics including the data processing board.

[News story: Problem with our phone lines](#)

Updated: Issue with our phone lines.

We're investigating an intermittent problem which is affecting our phone lines. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Our online services are available as normal and you can use [our guidance](#) for further assistance.

If you have a query, email us at enquiries@companieshouse.gov.uk

[Press release: HS2 begins archaeology work exploring over 10,000 years of British history](#)

- Over 1,000 archaeologists set to explore 10,000 years of British history across more than 60 separate sites, Neolithic tools, medieval pottery and Victorian time capsules already discovered
- Four-part BBC documentary on the history of Britain exposed by HS2 to be aired 2019/20 presented by Professor Alice Roberts

As part of HS2's enabling works, over the next 2 years, more than 1,000 archaeologists, specialists, scientists and conservators from across the UK will be exploring and recording over 60 archaeological sites for the project.

Ranging from the Prehistoric and Roman Britain to the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods, and the Industrial Revolution and World War 2, HS2's archaeology programme is Europe's biggest dig and promises to provide a fascinating insight into the everyday lives of the people and communities who made modern Britain.

The [archaeology programme](#) is a central part of HS2's ground preparation works for Phase One of the project, London to Birmingham. HS2, its contractors and supply chain are well underway with a programme of work, clearing sites, ahead of main construction works next year. Given the historical significance of the sites, HS2 will be engaging over 1,000 archaeologists to ensure that we carry out the works to a professional standard while leaving a lasting legacy of skills and apprenticeships as well as new discoveries.

Early finds include prehistoric tools in Buckinghamshire, medieval pottery in Stoke Mandeville and 2 Victorian time capsules with more discoveries to come as archaeologists begin the exploration of our past.

[HS2: A train through time](#)

Commenting on HS2's archaeology programme, Mark Thurston, HS2 Ltd Chief Executive, said:

How we build HS2 is as important to us as what we are building and we are committed to sharing as much of our cultural heritage as possible. Before we bore the tunnels, lay the tracks and build the stations, an unprecedented amount of archaeological research is now taking place between London and Birmingham. This is the largest archaeological exploration ever in Britain, employing a record number of skilled archaeologists and heritage specialists from across the UK and beyond.

As well as improving connectivity, generating 30,000 new jobs and creating a network of new wildlife habitats, our archaeology programme shows that HS2 is more than a railway; it's an opportunity to tell the story of our past, create opportunities in the present and leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Highlights along the line of route include:

- exploring a prehistoric hunter-gatherer site on the outskirts of London;
- researching an undiscovered multi-period site (Bronze and Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval) in Northamptonshire;
- excavating a Romano-British town in Fleet Marston, Aylesbury;
- uncovering the remains of a medieval manor in Warwickshire;
- finding out more about the Black Death and its impact on medieval villages;
- re-telling the story of a Buckinghamshire village through the careful excavation of a 1,000 year old demolished medieval church and burial ground;
- comparing and contrasting the lives of the buried population in 2 Georgian/Victorian burial grounds in London and Birmingham; and
- discovering a WW2 bombing decoy in Lichfield.

HS2 has granted BBC Two access to this pioneering project, to be documented in a new series made by Lion TV, due on air in 2019/20 presented by Prof. Alice Roberts.

HS2 will also share the finds with local communities through a series of open days and talks and will create a permanent archival legacy of artefacts and discoveries for future generations.

Helen Wass, HS2 Ltd Head of Heritage, said:

The sheer scale of possible discoveries, the geographical span and the vast range of our history to be unearthed makes HS2's archaeology programme a unique opportunity to tell the story of Britain. From Prehistoric remnants and Roman settlements to deserted medieval villages, Wars of the Roses battlefields and Victorian innovation, HS2's archaeology programme has it all.

All artefacts and human remains will be treated with dignity, care and respect and our discoveries will be shared with communities in a variety of ways through open days, expert lectures, the BBC documentary and online. This is a very exciting time for archaeology in Britain and we are committed to make sure that HS2's archaeology programme creates knowledge for further study, engages with communities and leaves behind a lasting archival and skills legacy.

The archaeological investigation is expected to last around 2 years with over 1,000 archaeologists, experts and engineering personnel beginning work on site. They are part of more than 7,000 people already employed on the project, which is expected to support up to 30,000 jobs at the peak of construction.

Welcoming the launch of HS2's archaeology work, Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive of Historic England, said:

With the building of HS2 comes a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve our understanding of how people have shaped England's landscapes over thousands of years, from the first prehistoric farmers through Roman and Saxon and Viking incomers to the more recent past.

Historic England is working closely with HS2 archaeologists so we can make sure that this opportunity is seized and we are advising on how we can get the best possible results from the discoveries.

Press and media enquiries

For enquiries during office working hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
020 7944 6149

For enquiries outside of these hours and at the weekend
020 7944 0550

The press and media enquiries line is for accredited journalists only