

Press release: Britain's first astronaut and Professor of Space Physics receive New Year's honours

Dr Helen Sharman.

The New Year's Honours list recognises the achievements of a wide range of extraordinary people across the country. Helen Sharman is appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) for services to science and technology educational outreach, while Michele Dougherty is awarded a CBE for services to UK Physical Science Research.

Science Minister Jo Johnson said:

"The UK is a global leader in science and research because of the achievements of extraordinary people.

"When the Cassini spacecraft plunged into Saturn in September with the world watching, it carried an instrument built in the UK by a team led by Michele Dougherty. As the UK's first astronaut, Helen Sharman is already an inspirational figure and has dedicated much of her life to inspiring the next generation through education and outreach. I'm delighted to congratulate them both."

Since becoming Britain's first astronaut in 1991, and the first woman to visit the Mir space station, Helen Sharman, a member of the Association of Space Explorers, has carried out a huge number of outreach activities to inspire young people. She has supported educational charities and is the patron of Spacelink Learning Foundation and the President of the Institute of Science and Technology.

Helen, who was awarded an OBE for her pioneering work in 1993, works full-time at the Department of Chemistry, Imperial College London. During Tim Peake's Principia mission she supported the UK Space Agency's education and outreach activities with public appearances, media appearances and events with schools.

Michele Dougherty, a Professor of Space Physics at Imperial College London, is recognised by the UK Science Council as one of the top 100 UK scientists for her work on planetary physics and for her role in encouraging young women into science. She is distinguished for her scientific leadership role on the Cassini-Huygens space science mission, which explored Saturn and its moons.

Michele Dougherty. Credit: Imperial College London.

She has contributed significantly to the work of the UK Space Agency, by chairing its Science Programme Advisory Committee from 2014 to 2016. In 2017 Michele became only the fifth woman to receive the Royal Astronomical

Society's Gold Medal, its highest honour, for her contribution to the national and international space physics community.

Graham Turnock, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, said:

"I would like to congratulate Helen and Michele on behalf of everyone at the UK Space Agency.

"They have made huge contributions to the space community and provided inspiration for thousands of young people across the country."

Read more about [New Year's Honours 2018](#).