

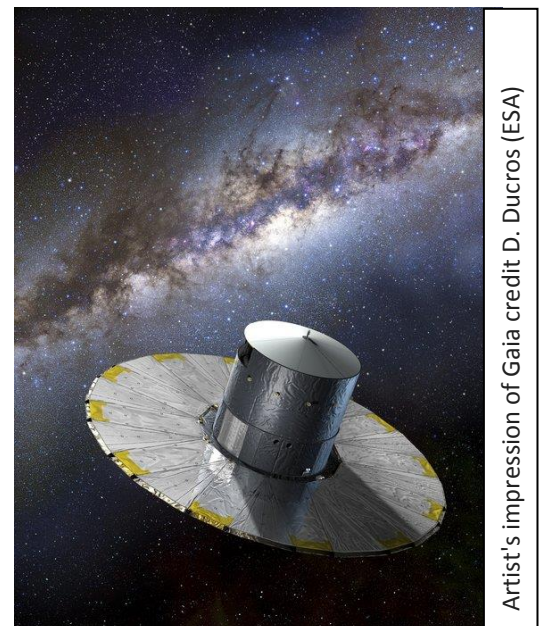
Institute of Physics Lecture Series
at the
University of Hertfordshire

Gaia revolutionising Astronomy
by
Richard Smart

Lindop Building
College Lane Campus, Hatfield

Wednesday 28 June 2017 at 7.00pm

In September 2016 the ESA space mission Gaia completed 1000 days of observations and crowned this period with a first release of positions, magnitudes, parallaxes and proper motions on 2 million stars and positions and magnitudes of over 1 billion stars and other objects in the celestial sky. This data set in one swoop increased the number of objects with precise distances by an order of magnitude and allowed us to reliably catalogue objects in the sky with a confidence previously unattainable. This is only the beginning: Gaia will observe for at least 3 more years and will find distances, colours and motions of over 2 billion objects and infer many physical parameters such as age, composition, temperature and mass for many of those objects. It will be a game changer. We discuss the mission, first results and the possibilities for the future.



Artist's impression of Gaia credit D. Ducros (ESA)

Ricky Smart is a Visiting Leverhulme Professor at the University of Hertfordshire on leave from a Researcher position at the Osservatorio Astrofisico di Torino. He has over 30 years' experience in Astronomy studying in the UK and the USA as well as working in the USA, Italy and the UK. He is an Astrometry expert applying this expertise to studying areas as wide ranging as the location of QSOs, to the Warp of our Galactic Plane and the investigation of nearby cool brown dwarfs.

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