



Presenter Biographies Day 1 – Theme 1

Victoria Savage - NOC Sustainable Procurement Lead



Victoria is the IT Procurement Category Manager and Sustainable Procurement Lead at the National Oceanography Centre. With 13 years' experience working in Procurement, Victoria is qualified at CIPS Advanced Diploma (Level 5) and is trained in ISO 20400 for Sustainable Procurement. As the Sustainable Procurement Lead, Victoria was responsible for the development of NOC's 3-year sustainable procurement strategy and for managing it's roll out across the business. Before starting her role at the National Oceanography Centre 3 years ago, Victoria worked for 9 years as a Procurement Manager in marine, specialising in manufacturing and technology.

Mark Burnett – Director of Special Operations Seiche Group



Mark Burnett is Director (Special Operations) with Seiche Group, with whom he has been employed since November 2016. Immediately prior to this Mark was the CEO of WGP Group where he spent the previous 19 years.

Mark is a graduate of Liverpool John Moores University (**BSc (Hons) Maritime Studies**) and has over twenty five years' cross maritime sector experience.

The First part of Mark's career involved offshore technical roles then onshore operational support and management positions in the marine geophysical sector, working in most corners of the world from Azerbaijan to Sakhalin, Greenland to Papua New Guinea.

Mark's current role in Seiche focuses on the Defence & Security, Offshore Energy and Marine Science sectors with particular interest in Marine Autonomy, Novel Sensors and Collaborative Partnerships.

Mark is the Chair of the recently formed North Devon and Torridge Maritime Network, and Clean Maritime Champion for Northern Devon - Focusing efforts to develop the regional economy, innovation and skills in the blue economy sector.

Dr Sara Fowell – Marine biogeochemist at the National Oceanography Centre



Dr Sara Fowell is a marine biogeochemist at the National Oceanography Centre who specialises in pushing novel autonomous sensors to their limits, deploying them deeper and longer than before, or in places almost no one has ever heard of. Sara is particularly interested in deciphering drivers of coral reef metabolism, and the response of these ecosystems to climate change. Sara especially enjoys making marine technology available to users outside of academia, realised through her work with Small Island Developing States through to large commercial subsea infrastructure companies. When she's not studying the ocean, she can usually be found swimming or scuba diving in it!

Dr Alex Phillips – Head of MARS National Oceanography Centre



Dr Alex Phillips is a qualified Naval Architect with 15 years' experience in the unmanned marine industry. Upon graduating from the University of Southampton, Alex spent two years in the offshore industry before returning to Southampton to complete a PhD in hydrodynamics of underwater vehicles. On completion of his PhD, he continued to research in the field of underwater robotics. In 2015 he joined the National Oceanography Centre as Head of Marine Autonomous Systems Development within the Marine Autonomous and Robotic Systems group where he lead the development of Autosub5 and the Autosub Long Range 1500 programme. In 2023 he was appointed Head of the NOC's Marine Autonomous and Robotic Systems (MARS) facility with responsibility for both ongoing development of the equipment and the global operations of the NOCs large fleet of marine autonomy.

Melissa Sandison – Principle R&D Engineer – Robotics ORE Catapult



Melissa Sandison is a Principal Robotics R&D Engineer at the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult, where she supports the UK supply chain in advancing robotic systems for land, sea, and air. She leads the development and foundational research of robotics initiatives spanning applications from operations and maintenance to environmental consenting. Melissa holds a PhD which focused on development of exoskeleton medical robotics, and her postdoctoral research concentrated on heterogeneous autonomous aquatic robot fleets for nuclear decommissioning.