

Press Release

Tuesday 1st December 2009

Space pioneer Sir Martin Sweeting awarded the IET's Faraday Medal

Sir Martin Sweeting of Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) has been awarded the Faraday Medal, the Institution of Engineering and Technology's (IET) most prestigious award, for his outstanding contribution to the advancement of satellite technology.

The Faraday Medal was established to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the first Ordinary Meeting of the Society of Telegraph Engineers. It is awarded by the IET for notable scientific or industrial achievement in engineering, or for conspicuous service rendered to the advancement of science, engineering and technology.

Sir Martin commented on the award, "It gives me great pleasure to receive this award and I hope that it may inspire young engineers to challenge conventions and pursue their ideas with conviction. The space industry has changed a great deal since I was a research student, with space technologies developing rapidly, and I am delighted that the UK's engineers continue to push the boundaries at the forefront of satellite innovation."

Sir Martin started his career in the mid-1970s as a young communications researcher at the University of Surrey. At a time when space exploration was something only countries with enormous aerospace budgets, such as the US and the (then) Soviet Union could pursue, Sir Martin believed that it could be done cheaper and more quickly. Sir Martin and a small team of fellow researchers decided to experiment by creating a satellite using standard consumer technology, known as 'commercial off-the-shelf' (COTS) components. That first satellite, UoSAT-1 (University of Surrey satellite) was launched in 1981 with the help of NASA, who had become very interested in the group's work. The mission was a great success, outliving its planned three-year life by more than five years. Most importantly, the team showed that relatively small and inexpensive satellites could be built rapidly to perform successful, sophisticated missions.

Sir Martin founded SSTL in 1985 and his pioneering approach to the design, build, launch and operation of satellites has propelled SSTL to the forefront of the global small satellite industry, fundamentally changing the economics of space. The Company now has a world-class reputation for building and developing small satellites, specialising in delivering satellite missions as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.

The growth in the Company's size and the technological capability delivered to its customers has continued to accelerate. SSTL currently employs almost 300 staff, has launched 34 spacecraft, with 7 more under manufacture, and is delivering missions that provide critical and valuable services to customers across the globe.

Today Sir Martin is the Executive Chairman of SSTL and also Chairs the Space Centre at the University of Surrey.. He continues to look to the future, commenting, "I am interested to use the innovative techniques developed at Surrey to reach beyond Earth's orbit and reduce the cost and increase the tempo of space exploration: it is a long-held dream of mine to launch an affordable UK mission to the Moon". That possibility is coming closer to reality with SSTL being chosen as the prime contractor for the UK's lunar mission, MoonLITE, and being recently selected by ESA to manage the European Student Moon Orbiter Mission.

About the IET

The Institution of Engineering and Technology was formed in 2006 by the joining together of the IEE (Institution of Electrical Engineers) and the IIE (Institution of Incorporated Engineers). The IET is one of the world's leading professional societies for the engineering and technology community, with more than 150,000 members in 127 countries and offices in Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific. The IET provides a global knowledge network to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote the positive role of science, engineering and technology in the world. It is licensed to award professional qualifications by the Engineering Council and accredits over 1,000 undergraduate programmes in the UK.

About SSTL

Surrey Satellite Technology Limited (SSTL) is the world's leading small satellite company, delivering operational space missions for a range of applications including Earth observation, science and communications. The Company designs, manufactures and operates high performance satellites and ground systems for a fraction of the price normally associated with space missions, with 300 staff working on turnkey satellite platforms, space-proven satellite subsystems and optical instruments.

Since 1981 SSTL has launched 34 satellites as well as providing training and development programmes, consultancy services, and mission studies for ESA, NASA and commercial customers, with its innovative approach that is changing the economics of space.

Based in Guildford, UK, SSTL is owned by EADS Astrium NV.

www.sstl.co.uk

Notes to editor:

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[http://www.sstl.co.uk/News and events/Latest News](http://www.sstl.co.uk/News_and_events/Latest_News)

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