

## Our graduates and apprentices

**Tom Dack** has been interested in science and technology for as long as he can remember and was encouraged to study STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, maths) throughout his school years. Tom found that he particularly enjoyed using computers and programming to enable his research so, after gaining his Physics degree, he made the decision to change direction and completed an MSc in Computer Science.

His first encounter with STFC was when his college visited the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory for a Particle Physics Masterclass. Later, Tom discovered that STFC runs a graduate scheme and says it struck him then, that "STFC was not only a cool place to work, but the perfect place to pursue a career in computing within a research environment."

When he finished at university he became a member of the STFC graduate scheme, working in a number of different groups within the Scientific Computing Department to gain the knowledge and skills required for his chosen career.

Tom now has a permanent staff role as a systems administrator in SCD's Distributed Computing

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## GRADUATE TRAINEES

recruited since 2004

Infrastructure group. Here he is developing and managing an Identity and Access Management (IAM) service for use by IRIS, a nationwide collaboration which coordinates e-infrastructure needs and knowledge exchange to enable the exploitation of data outputs from high-energy physics communities.

## This year we had

# FIVE

### APPRENTICES

working in and around SCD

Put simply, Tom says he is "setting up a computer system to make sure the right people have access to the right things!"

**Becky Fair** joined STFC on the graduate scheme after completing her degree in astrophysics at University of Liverpool and now works in SCD's Theoretical and Computational Physics group.

During her training, Becky worked on a diverse range of projects including user interface development, database monitoring and fluid dynamics. Her work took her to a conference in Spain where she gained experience in public speaking. She has recently published a scientific paper based on her graduate placement work on fluid dynamics, which has applications in naval architecture and offshore oil rig design, amongst others.

Now Becky works in a permanent role on the PACE project, working with the Excitations group at the ISIS Neutron & Muon Source. Her project aims to lower the technological barriers for users to analyse their data. "Before I started this role I knew very little about the experimental method (inelastic neutron scattering) and the thing being observed (phonons) so it's been a steep learning curve," she says. "I feel like my intuition is much better now but I'm still learning new things all the time."

**Matthew Richards** is a second year apprentice, based in SCD at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory



Tom Dack

Matthew Richards



Becky Fair



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graduates who completed the scheme in the past 10 years  
ARE STILL EMPLOYED BY

# SCD

in Oxfordshire. He says that opting out of the traditional university route has allowed him to thrive. "It allows me to study for a degree in the subject while gaining on-the-job experience. I can appreciate how different classroom learning is to what goes on in industry."

As a computing apprentice he rotates roles every six months, trying out new departments and building his skillset. "I enjoy the wide variety of work," he says. "There's always things I'm more interested in doing

due to gaining experience and confidence levels with the technologies used, but it's good to be exposed to new things." He spent one rotation working with high performance servers in the SCD 'batch farm', and another developing and maintaining a tool to update operating systems used on STFC's cloud service.

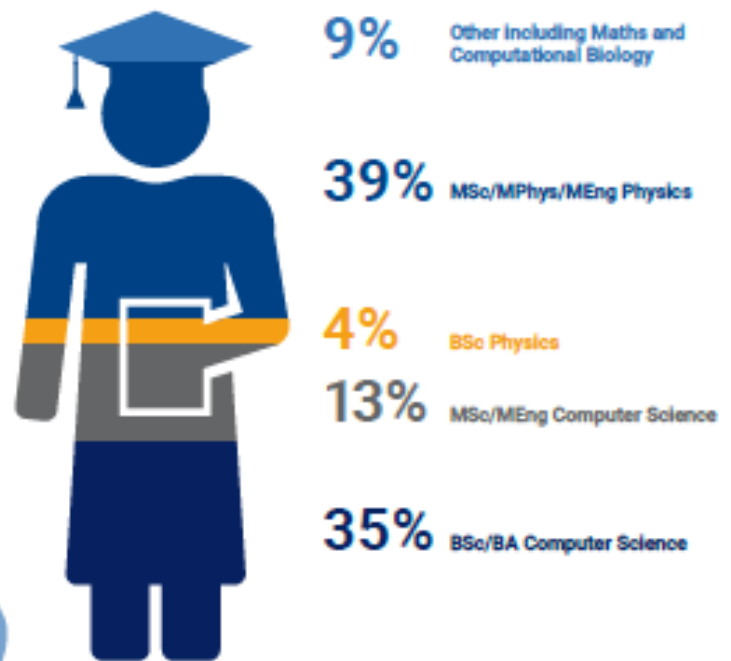
More recently he has worked on testing tiles of the Large Pixel Detector (LPD), a large x-ray laser which can image ultrafast chemical reactions in exceptional detail.

Matthew appreciates the opportunities he has to keep learning and to explore areas that he didn't know would interest him. "I've discovered you can work in this industry without initially thinking you're interested in science but having worked here, the science that goes on throughout the campus is really interesting and diverse. Seeing the amount of work that goes into making a scientific facility such as ISIS is amazing. There's so many aspects to the facility and an incredible amount of skilled engineers have built it."

Where our graduates studied.



Degrees studied before joining SCD.



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