

## Best wishes for the season

### *Space, by Natasha aged 6*

*"In space there is now gravity sow astronauts float around. The place is trawling around Eth at 17000 mays p awer." "I want to go BLASTING! OFF! INTO THE SKY! GOWWING AT 99000KLOMITS AN AWAR". (As phonetically described by Natasha).*

Some of the most challenging presentations I write are aimed at children between 6 and 10-years old. It is an audience which can contain the most difficult questions, truthful suggestions and even advice.

A few weeks ago, after one of my last presentations, 6-year old Natasha handed me a hard copy set of power point slides that she had carefully prepared to help me with my next talk. Her excitement explodes off the slides, as she writes about space exploration and life as an astronaut. She wants to work in space - and may well do.

Travelling back from visiting the Shetland space port in May, and after giving an interview to the BBC, I was collecting luggage in Edinburgh when a family approached me. Addressing me by name they thanked me for giving their boys a future! I was absolutely humbled and could only splutter that it was not me but those behind the space ports in Scotland, tireless entrepreneurs and the backing of the UK Government.

Space is among the most powerful subjects to inspire the coming generations; offering intrigue, exploration, challenge but also practical economic growth and future employment for people like Natasha. Space offers hope for our future where terrestrial bickering does not.

I am often told to "make space relevant to the man who watches X-Factor." And it is. But in 2019 perhaps we in the space industry need to make the X-Factor watchers more aware of the actual potential of the space industry to benefit: agritech and food production; global distribution of commodities; telemedicine across remote areas of the globe; the aging population; and education across the world, which inspires the young while offering them sustainable employment. Space applications can bring connectivity, and thus education, to the "other four billion" - as well as data applications of which we cannot even conceive.

As for inspiration, is that not one of the finest gifts we can give our 6-year olds this holiday season?

In Natasha's words:

*"I want to go to space in a space rocket with pawfool engoons at the back witch pawer the rocket. But I don't actually need go to space I can send cameras to visit space so I can stay at home drinking hot cocoa."*

### **All best wishes for the holiday season and an inspiring 2019.**



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