

Connecting the community through science

We have recently provided the East Anglian Astrophysical Research Organisation (EAARO) with an existing and vacant building at Alconbury which they have converted into a new space observation centre dedicated to the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence (SETI). With the installation of a two petabyte data centre donated from General Electric, the centre has the processing power and space to store and sift through the weak radio signals that reach the UK from space.

EAARO, founded in 2011, is on a mission to inspire interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects through the wonders of space. The team of three which runs EAARO hopes to appeal to all ages, invigorate an interest in space exploration within the local community and engage local schools. The new building has also allowed EAARO to throw its doors open to the public, with recent events including get-togethers to watch meteor showers and demonstrations of how radio waves can be bounced off the super-heated trails of meteors, resulting in a distinctive sound.

Given that Houlton was once the world's most powerful radio transmitter and was used by a self-proclaimed British interplanetary psychic in 1926 to try to send a message to Mars, we may now, through Alconbury, also be home to the means of listening for the response.

