
The 69th RJ Mitchell Lecture

# Taking Connectivity to New Heights: The World Mobile Stratospheric Journey

Hydrogen-powered platforms, sustainable innovation, and the mission to connect the unconnected

**Richard Deakin BSc(Hons), MBA, HonDEng, CEng, FRAeS**

Free & Open to All
Turner Sims SO17 1TR

Wednesday 15th October 2025
Drinks 6pm – Lecture 7pm

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www.solent-raes.org.uk/rj-mitchell

ROYAL AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY
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World Mobile
Stratospheric

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**Richard Deakin BSc(Hons), MBA, HonDEng, CEng, FRAeS**

Richard Deakin is a Chartered Engineer and Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society with more than 30 years' leadership experience across aerospace, defence, and precision engineering. He has held senior roles at Airbus, BAE Systems, Thales, TRW, and GKN Aerospace, and from 2010 to 2015 served as CEO of NATS, the UK's leading air navigation services provider, where he delivered record safety, operational, and financial performance.

Since 2019 Richard has been CEO of Stratospheric Platforms Ltd, securing significant investment and overseeing the world's first 4G and 5G telecoms calls from the stratosphere, before leading the company's integration into the World Mobile Stratospheric joint venture in 2025. He also advises government and industry on uncrewed systems, high-altitude platforms, and aerospace transformation.

Richard holds a first-class honours degree in Aeronautical Engineering from Kingston University, an MBA from Cranfield, and an Honorary Doctorate in Engineering.

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Richard will explain how World Mobile Stratospheric is melding leading edge aerospace and communications technologies to provide targeted, high-throughput connectivity from the stratosphere anywhere on the planet. This is something that legacy, ground based towers can't scale to whereas hydrogen powered high altitude aircraft with a precision engineered antennae can. A fleet of hydrogen powered aircraft designed for easy and low latency connectivity to mobiles, stratospheric reach and climate friendly full reuse solves the cost, sustainability and operational management challenges that low earth orbit constellations face.

He will describe how working with BT at Adastral Park to demonstrate AI-driven splitting of the coverage into precise, discrete cells and teaming with Isle of Wight and Solent based Britten-Norman to validate its aerodynamic design in real world conditions have set the stage for full-scale development and deployment.

That also provided the confidence needed for the World Mobile Stratospheric Joint Venture to come together and provide the commercial, legal and technical capabilities and knowledge to now accelerate development of the full-scale stratospheric system. Just what that entails and what opportunities it offers, Richard will outline.

An adjunct to this is how the Royal Aeronautical Society, with its multi-discipline membership and constitution, continues its 150 year tradition of bringing experts in all fields together to ensure that aerospace continues to benefit everyone, both locally through the Solent Branch and internationally through the Society, the International Divisions and the over 80 branches in the UK and around the world.

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