

Instructions for the Parkes virtual history in Gather.Town

GatherTown is a proximity social media platform in which participants are represented by icons that they move around their screen in a virtual “space.” When icons are close to one another, participants can see and hear one another, similar to Zoom. As icons move away from one another the video and sound fade and eventually cut off, much like wandering around a room at a meeting. The “space” we will be using goes back in time to explore the history of the Parkes Telescope. Participants will be able to hear and see one another when they co-locate their icons close together in the same time zone. Although co-located participants will be able to speak to and see one another, other participants will not hear them or see them. Each icon will display each participant’s name. Everyone will be able to see a list of all participants at all times and you can locate people if you click on them.

Thanks to Vanessa Moss and her TFoM team for inspiring me to make this unusual use of GatherTown and for their help generating the space. Images are mostly from CRAIA and John Sarkissian.

Here's the procedure:

1 Open up the Parkes history GatherTown in your browser. You do not need to download any software.

<https://gather.town/app/uUZhK6tXbUAzIRuJ/Parkes%20history>

2. Chrome or Firefox are recommended browsers but I have been using MS Edge.

3. Follow the prompts to allow camera and microphone access, add your name, and pick your avatar (your image and name will be used when you talk to people so choice of a suitable avatar isn’t very important).

4. Using your computer's cursor keys, move your avatar around to different times (hence entry via Tardis) and join groups to talk to different people.

5. Arrow indicate new spaces you can move into. You can also go into the telescope through the marked doors.

6. If you are lost look for the EXIT signs.

7. Just close the window when you are done. No need to log out.

Ron Ekers
29 Oct 2021