

# Helen Sharman

1963-

## Brief Biography

Helen Sharman was the first British man or woman in space. She was also the first Briton to visit the Mir space station. She launched into space as a research cosmonaut with two others, Anatoly Artsebarsky and Sergey Krikalyov on 18 May 1991. She returned to Earth aboard Soyuz TM-11 on 26 May 1991.

Helen was born on 30 May 1963 in Sheffield, England. She graduated in Chemistry from the University of Sheffield in 1984 and received a doctorate from Birbeck College, London.

Sharman worked for Mars (the confectionary company) as a chemist, before going into space. She explained that she liked to eat chocolate and was interested in exploring different flavours.

She spent 8 days in the Mir space station and was one of the youngest ever people to go into space. Helen Sharman was 27 when she went aboard the space station. While on board the Mir, Sharman's tasks included taking photographs of the UK, and agricultural tests. She also took part in an amateur radio transmission with children in a British school.

To qualify, Sharman underwent a strict selection process, based on her scientific and educational background, as well as weight. She was one of almost 13,000 applicants for the chance to go into space.

Helen Sharman spent 18 months training in Star City, a Russian raining facility. Many Russian cosmonauts have trained there, and it has its own shops, restaurants, school, post office and railway station. The astronaut programme was called Project Juno. It was a partnership between Russia and several British companies, and money was also raised by a lottery. She got to know about the Project Juno through a radio advert in 1989 while working as a research chemist.

Helen Sharman has a star on the Sheffield Walk of Fame. She was awarded the OBE in 1993, and there are several school buildings named after her, both in the UK and in Europe.

Currently, Helen Sharman is working as operations manager in Imperial College London's chemistry department.

