

British Science Association news

Ollie Christophers on competitions and winners



STEMgagement

Two worthy causes in the STEM community have been brought together to create a new competition with the aim of encouraging more women in the field of STEM to take up opportunities in the 'green' sector of the industry.

GreenSTEM is an initiative that helps unemployed female science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) graduates. Help is provided to develop innovative business ideas for green-themed products and services; for women to receive training in business, communication, web and marketing skills; form networks and contacts; and present their concepts to public and businesses.

Participation in the programme will culminate in a Dragon's Den type competition during Global Entrepreneurship Week 2010 (15–21 November), where participants will be able to present their ideas to a panel of business people, green workers and members of the public. The winner of the competition will receive the title of GreenSTEM Entrepreneur 2010 and a cash prize.

The scheme is open to new graduates and women wishing to return to work after a career break. GreenSTEM is funded by the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology¹ and is run by the LeicesterHerDay Trust and the British Science Association in association with the University of Leicester.²

Impressed with CREST

Year 1 of the CREST Expansion Project, funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), has been a fantastic success. The Association is receiving targeted support from the DCSF in order to deliver increased participation in CREST in England over a two-year period (starting April 2009). The funding focuses on schools with a high proportion of high-achieving or potentially high-achieving Key Stage 3 and 4 students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

During Year 1, over 150 schools engaged with CREST for the first time. Bronze and Silver CREST Award registrations have increased by a massive 24 per cent. We are now evaluating the past year's progress, to see how Year 2 can be even better.

Award Lecture winners

Each year, the British Science Association honours five outstanding young communicators with the opportunity to present a prestigious Award Lecture at the British Science Festival.

The Award Lectures are a rare opportunity to honour five professional scientists or engineers in the early stages of their career, who show outstanding skills in communication to a non-specialist audience.

This year Jessica Grahm has won the Charles Darwin Award for 'Hit me with your rhythm schtick – the connection between music, movement and the brain.' Suzie Sheehy has won the Lord Kevin Award for 'The Big Bang dilemma'. Sarah Bell has won the Charles Lyell Award for 'Watering Thirsty Cities'. Mark Young has won the Isambard Kingdom Brunel Award for 'Letting George do it: Are we over-automating our lives?' And Nick Lee has won the Joseph Lister Award for 'Can marketers control your mind?'

Come and see them in action at the British Science Festival in Birmingham, 14–19 September.³

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The British Science Festival student bursary scheme

The Festival bursary scheme offers students aged 18 or above the opportunity to attend our Festival, the largest annual public science festival in Europe.

Institutions and companies have the chance to sponsor students at a greatly reduced cost of £350. Deadline for applications is Friday 16 July 2010.⁴

Going places

We are delighted to announce that Michelle Masson, previously Head of Charity Accounts at the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, has been appointed as Director of Finance and Resources to succeed John Gagg.

John Gagg is leaving us to take his well earned retirement. Since he joined us nearly 10 years ago, he has been an integral part of Association. He will be greatly missed by us all.

¹ www.ukrc4setwomen.org

² More information at www.greenstem.org.uk

³ More information at www.britishtscienceassociation.com/awardlectures

⁴ More information at www.britishtscienceassociation.org/studentbursary or contact supporters@britishtscienceassociation.org.



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What next for Science and Society?

Karen Folkes looks forward



<http://sciencesowhat.direct.gov.uk>

The five expert groups published their reports and action plans in the spring. Separately addressing the five key themes that emerged from the consultation on a Science and Society Strategy for the UK¹ enabled us to develop some meaningful actions for change.

However, the reports have also shown that there are significant synergies between the areas which make it vital that this continues to be taken forward as a coherent framework for science and society in the UK.

Some actions from the plans are already in train and follow-on groups are forming to decide how best to tackle the rest. On this page, we focus on the Science for Careers and Science and Learning reports. Elsewhere in this issue, you'll be able to read more about the plans for Science for All (p19), Science and the Media (p18), and Science and Trust (p20).

Careers

The Science for Careers group was charged with raising opportunities for those who study science and providing increased information on the range of science careers available to those who study STEM subjects. The group recommended a number of actions to achieve these goals. These included ensuring there is appropriate engagement and involvement with influencers, such as parents; developing volunteering opportunities for scientists and engineers of all ages and experience; and improving Labour Market Information for careers Awareness, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance stakeholders and users.

Key to these actions is improved communications, and in particular communicating the importance of STEM study to parents and carers. They are cited by a significant majority as the most important role model in the life of a young person. The group also wishes to demonstrate the value of science skills in the workplace, and build partnerships between business, schools, colleges and universities to enhance work experience and mentoring opportunities.

Learning

The Science and Learning group's report was a timely update on the progress made so far in STEM education. It recognised the government's long term commitment in the ten year Science and Innovation Investment Framework, which spans the education system, the wider science and mathematics communities and many others. The report clearly identifies some important issues, particularly in relation to the content, delivery and assessment of science and mathematics in schools. It also highlights the challenge of building increased confidence in all aspects of pre-19 science learning.

Whilst this particular phase of work is now formally concluded, we expect many people to continue to engage with these issues as government works closely with partners and stakeholders in considering the contribution that the recommendations can make to further improvement.

We continue to invite dialogue and comment on the strategy overall and on the work of the groups in particular. Progress will be updated on the Science and Society interactive pages.²

Update on Science: [So what? So everything]

Activity associated with the Science: [So what? So everything] campaign is currently under review in the wake of the general election. Many useful lessons have been learned on effective ways of engaging the public's interest in science with a particularly effective strand of the campaign being direct engagement.

In March the campaign took to the road with The Science of Curry School Tour and science busking at TV celebrity Jimmy Doherty's rare breeds farm near Ipswich.

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The Science of Curry tour was run in conjunction with the British Pharmacological Society who recognised that an 'appetite' for science is that much keener when linked to this favourite staple of the British diet. After its successful debut at the Cheltenham Science Festival, the Science of Curry proved hot stuff at school venues in Tower Hamlets, Peckham and Southall which hosted evening events commanding good turnouts from the local area.

- <http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/scienceandsociety/site/test-page/>
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