

British Science Association news

Ollie Christophers



Into perspective

Gemma Webster, a PhD student from the University of Dundee, has won the British Science Association *perspectives* competition for her poster, 'What's in a label?'

perspectives is a poster competition in which researchers funded by Research Councils UK present and explore the social implications of their work.

Gemma's project, supported by the EPSRC, deals with dementia. At first sight it's a food label. It describes Helen, an 87-year old woman with dementia, in the terms of popular stereotype. 'Directions: Place contents in a chair and move once or twice a day.' 'Ingredients: awkward; demanding; irritating; forgetful.'

Gemma explains that it 'aims to help people see the whole person, not just the illness, and treat the person as an individual not simply a set of needs to service.' Check your perspective at www.britishtscienceassociation.org/perspectives/

Down to Earth

National Science & Engineering Week (NSEW) 2010 is drawing ever closer and the creative juices at the British Science Association have been bubbling away behind our theme of 'Earth'.

Drawing inspiration from the International Year of Biodiversity, we are preparing for an all out 'bioblitz' during NSEW to engage parents, schools and children in our annual celebration of the UK's dedication to addressing the most topical science issues of our time.

Mud on your hands

The real success of NSEW comes from the involvement of our dedicated supporters, such as the readers of *People & Science* magazine. If you want to get involved with our 'Earth' theme, find out more at www.nsew.org.uk

Going out with a Bang!

Applications have closed; the entries have been counted and verified... We are now one step closer to revealing the winners of the 2010 National Science & Engineering Competition! The finalists' letters are in the post and they will soon be joining us at The Big Bang: UK Young Scientists' & Engineers' Fair in Manchester in March, followed by proud parents and satisfied schools.

The current winners, Peter Hatfield and Chris Jefferies, have enjoyed a fantastic year as the title holders and will soon be jetting off to NASA in the USA as part of their prize package, but the time to hand over the crown is rapidly approaching. For your chance to see the finalists battling it out for the ultimate prize, come along to The Big Bang on the 11-13 March 2010. For more information visit www.thebigbangfair.co.uk

Oil Aboard!

This year's Festival was a fabulous success and plans are well under way for the 2010 British Science Festival. We will be visiting Birmingham in partnership with Aston University. We are delighted that the 2010 Festival will be supported by Advantage West Midlands and Saudi Aramco.

We are also delighted to announce that BP and Network Rail are now supporting CREST (CREativity in Science and Technology), alongside the Research Councils UK. CREST is the only nationally-recognised

Plans are well under way for the 2010 British Science Festival. We will be visiting Birmingham in partnership with Aston University

accreditation scheme for project work in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths. CREST enables students of all abilities to explore real scientific, engineering and technological problems for themselves, and promotes work-related learning.

There are still lots of exciting sponsorship opportunities available for the Festival and CREST (and indeed for all our programmes). If you would like to find out more please contact Aoine Saunders, Corporate Partnerships Manager at aoine.saunders@britishscienceassociation.org or on 020 7019 4948

Branching Out

Following the success of the British Science Festival in Guildford, we are leaving behind a lasting legacy in the form of a brand new branch of the British Science Association. The new branch will be on the lookout to bring a range of events to the Guildford area all year round, to continue to engage the local community with science and engineering. For more information and details of how to join the branch visit www.britishtscienceassociation.org/guildford



Ollie Christophers is the British Science Association's Communications Officer
ollie.christophers@britishscienceassociation.org



Government news

Science and Society strategy

The government's long-term action plan for science and society in the UK is progressing through the work of its five strategy groups. One of them, the *Science for All* group, has developed a shared vision for public engagement and a description of the rationales and purposes underlying this activity.

Over 20 organizations from industry, government departments and agencies, charities and higher education establishments met in October to share how their organisations have embedded public participation in their processes, governance, and thinking. *Science for All* will incorporate their experiences into an action plan being developed to show how partners can enhance public participation within their organizations.

Science and the Media

By mid-November, the *Science and the Media* group had met three times and covered science journalism training, science programming and the future of science journalism in the digital age. The group is considering offering training content to university journalism courses and collecting some science champions to lobby broadcasters for the best science programmes.

Check out the latest on all the Science and Society Strategy groups at <http://interactive.dius.gov.uk/scienceandsociety/site/>

Sciencewise dialogues

The Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre for Public Dialogue, which is funded by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), is supporting a range of exciting new dialogue projects in association with a number of government departments, agencies and research councils.

One new project is on synthetic biology. This is an emerging, multidisciplinary research area that aims to design and engineer biologically based parts, novel devices and systems as well as

redesigning existing, natural biological systems. As with any new technology, it brings both potential benefits and societal, ethical and regulatory implications.

Other projects cover consumer engagement on GM food, geoengineering, the use of animals containing human material in medical research and, finally, the low carbon communities challenge.

More details for all of these will appear on the Sciencewise website as they get up and running:

<http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk>

Science: [So what? So holidays]

Although not a barbecue summer, it was certainly a sizzling August for visitors to six major UK seaside resorts. They were waylaid by a team of Science: [So what? So everything] seaside scientists and regaled with a range of science stunts. These science buskers were trained and led by Edcoms science communicators and recruited from the STEMNET ambassador network. This tactic met with a positive response on the promenade but also achieved significant media coverage, including local TV.

The biggest PR success since the campaign launched in January 2009 was the initiative, The Questions Kids Ask. This was a poll for the most popular science questions asked by children of their parents, backed up with authoritative answers. It resulted in headline coverage on ITN news as well as extensive national print and on-line coverage. It generated around 32,000 hits on the campaign web site in two days, becoming the third most read story on the BBC news website.

The campaign's website has been recently upgraded to be more interactive. If you think you have a good science story to include, please send it to the Science and Society team.

The new website can be found at the old address:

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

the *Science for All* group, has developed a shared vision for public engagement and a description of the rationales and purposes underlying this activity

Postgraduate Review

Lord Mandelson has announced a review of the UK's postgraduate provision, to be led by Professor Adrian Smith, Director General of Science and Research at BIS. The review's four principal areas of investigation will be global competitiveness, the benefits of study, the needs of employers and participation in terms of access and diversity.

We encourage you to submit your perspectives on areas of postgraduate provision that should be considered by the review. These can be submitted via www.bis.gov.uk/pgreview or emailed to postgraduatereview@bis.gsi.gov.uk



The Science and Society team at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)
scienceandsociety@bis.gsi.gov.uk