

British Science Association news

Ollie Christophers



The Big Bang goes off in Manchester!

The Big Bang Fair is well on the way to being the biggest single celebration of science and engineering in the UK, with more than 16,000 people registered to attend this year's event.

Furthermore, there is a new feature at The Big Bang on Saturday 13 March, where children are encouraged to invite their families along to a 'bring your parents' day.

The event taking place in Manchester has pulled out all the stops and has secured more than 120 interactive activities, exhibitions and live shows, including *Bang Goes The Theory* and *Brainiac Live* and the 2009 Royal Institution Christmas lectures as well as the finals of the National Science & Engineering Competition.

For more information, please visit www.thebigbangfair.org

The Festival family continues to grow

Plans are well underway for this year's British Science Festival which is taking place in Birmingham in partnership with Aston University and supported by Advantage West Midlands and Saudi Aramco. We are delighted to announce that BlackBerry and SAGE have now joined our Festival sponsors. SAGE is sponsoring one of the prestigious Award Lectures.

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. For more information about the Award Lectures please visit www.britishecienceassociation.org

On the site you can find more information on the exciting sponsorship opportunities still available for the Festival and indeed for all of the Association's programmes. As well as the latest news from the Festival including our partnership with the BBC on their quest to find the BBC's Amateur Scientist of the Year.

If you would like more information on the sponsorship opportunities available please do not hesitate to contact Aoine Saunders, Corporate Partnerships Manager at aoine.saunders@britishscienceassociation.org or on 020 7019 4948.

CREST Star Investigators – new activities

CREST Star Investigators, our UK-wide award scheme for 5-12 year olds, now offers even more resources to participating schools.

Millgate House have worked with us to create three new practical science activities for the scheme. The activities, Peggy Problem, Tea Bag Trouble, and Testing Timers, will soon be sent – free of charge – to all those already using Star Level packs. They'll also be included in packs for schools and groups new to the scheme.

The activities provide organisers with further ideas for practical science and design & technology investigations – all can be used to support or enhance the curriculum.

CREST Star Investigators enable children to solve scientific problems through practical investigation. Activities focus on thinking about, talking about, and doing science.

Visit www.britishecienceassociation.org/additionalresources for additional resources, extension activities and curriculum links.

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Date for your diary....

The 2010 Science Communication Conference will take place on Monday 24 and Tuesday 25 May at Kings Place in London. The theme for this year is 'Audiences for engagement' which will explore different types of audience and engagement styles.

The Conference addresses the key issues facing science communicators in the UK and each year brings together people who are involved in public engagement – a diverse group of people from a broad range of backgrounds. It is a fantastic opportunity to network and share ideas and best practice. Kings Place is just 150m from Kings Cross and St Pancras Station, overlooking Regents Canal. It offers a range of flexible spaces which makes it ideal for small breakout sessions as well plenary sessions.

For more information see www.britishecienceassociation.org/ScienceCommunicationConference



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Five go public on science and society

Karen Folkes has had a lot to read

The five expert groups, asked by Science Minister Lord Drayson to tackle different aspects of science and society, are revealing their plans.

Media

*Science and the Media: Securing the Future*¹ lays out the recommendations of the Science and Media Group. Clive Cookson, science editor of the *Financial Times*, commented: 'Anyone interested in science journalism should look at the report. What is really impressive... is the array of new initiatives already inspired by the group's activities.'

They recommend first, a national co-ordinator for science journalism training, as part of a wider drive on training that also includes scientists and science communicators. Second, a science lobby group which would use the 'luvvie power' of science supporters in the arts world. Third, resources for science journalists including a science programming centre to facilitate contact between scientists and programme makers.

The group also identify a threat to the quality and independence of science reporting posed by the wider crisis in journalism.

Public engagement

The report from the Science for All Expert Group gives a snapshot of the current state of public engagement with the sciences. It outlines a vision, makes the case for public engagement and lays out a roadmap for everyone who is committed to further development.

The group feel actions could most effectively be focused on, first, a wider understanding of why, when and how the public engages with the sciences. Second, supportive networks and mechanisms for effective engagement. There is a significant lack of joined-up working between organisations. Third, a professional culture that values, recognises and supports public engagement with the sciences.

The group is developing an open process for implementation, bringing together different organisations and people involved in public engagement. Please visit the Science for All webpage to find out how you can get involved.²

Careers

The Science for Careers Group is calling for action in four key areas. First, within the careers landscape, including awareness along with education and information, advice and guidance. Second, better, forward-looking labour market information that can inform both individual career choices and the market for qualifications and training. Third, strengthening the careers Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) profession. The group believe this would enhance the continued professional development needed around science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers IAG. Fourth, learning from employers what skills actually make STEM graduates employable, to support the message that STEM degrees are important.

Trust

The Trust Group has thought long and hard about what is actually meant by appropriate 'trust'. They have developed actions in a number of key areas, including first, how to build capacity for public bodies to make better informed judgements about science and its applications. Second, reviewing the impact of the Universal Ethical Code for Scientists, and whether it is fit for the future. Third, the use of scientific evidence in government and other contexts.

The group are grateful to those readers who responded to its requests for help through Survey Monkey in the autumn.

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Learning

The Science and Learning Group reported jointly to the Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills and Children, Schools and Families, demonstrating a cross-departmental commitment to science learning.

The group consulted widely within the science and education communities, including visits to a number of schools and colleges.

The report's recommendations cover a range of issues within STEM, from recruitment of school and college staff, and continuous professional development, to ensuring a rigorous curriculum and providing sufficient STEM education and careers IAG.

Keep your eye on the Science and Society interactive pages to see further outputs from the groups.³

¹ <http://tinyurl.com/ygx288u>

² <http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/scienceandsociety/site/science-for-all/>

³ <http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/scienceandsociety/site/>



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