

HIGHLIGHTS

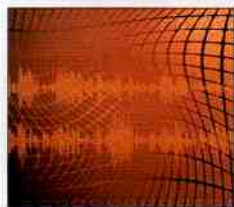
Dame Jocelyn shortlisted for festival prize

The Institute's president-elect, Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, has been shortlisted in a poll to find the most celebrated female scientist of all time. Bell Burnell, who takes over the Institute's presidency from Peter Saraga in October, is among 39 scientists named in L'Oreal's "For women in science"

competition, launched at the Cheltenham Festival of Science, which took place on 4–8 June. After Bell Burnell was appointed as Professor of Physics at the Open University in 1991, the number of female physics professors in the UK reportedly doubled. In 1974 she was passed over for a share of a Nobel Prize for her discovery of radio pulsars in 1967, when she was a 24-year-old research student. Readers wishing to cast a vote in the competition can do so at www.womeninscience.co.uk.

Film sells Integrated Sciences to students

The Institute has produced a short film to promote the new Integrated Sciences degree in time for the clearing process for university applications. The video is available on the Institute's website and will be sent out to students, teachers, universities, the Royal Society and the Science Council. This will be the second year that the BSc in Integrated Sciences is available at the universities of Surrey, East Anglia and Leicester, and London South Bank University (LSBU). Applications for the Leicester course are up by 20% from last year, with more students also applying to Surrey and LSBU. The Integrated Sciences degree, one-third of which is made up of physics courses, is intended to offer students a broad range of scientific subjects as well as in-depth knowledge in an integrated programme. Appearing in the video, Derek Raine, head of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Science at Leicester University, says: "The new Integrated Sciences degree is an attempt to bring together the various sciences into a meaningful relationship, so that people can address real-world problems from a scientific perspective."

Metamaterials could deliver an "acoustic cloak"

Researchers in Spain have shown that metamaterials could be used to produce an acoustic "cloak" – a device that can make objects impervious to sound by diverting sound waves around them. Their paper, "Acoustic cloaking in two dimensions: a

feasible approach", appears in the *New Journal of Physics*, published by the Institute. The research builds on recent theoretical work that has sought ways to produce metamaterials – materials defined by their unusual man-made structure that can hide objects from sound, sight and X-rays. Daniel Torrent and José Sánchez-Dehesa from the Polytechnic University of Valencia calculated how metamaterials constructed with sonic crystals – solid cylinders in a periodic array that can scatter sound waves – could be used in a multilayered structure to divert sound completely around an object. One of the first uses of the material is likely to be in cloaking warships from detection by sonar.

Online network for members is in the pipeline**MPs' censure of STFC**

It is "simply wrong" to suggest that £80 m has been cut from the budget for the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) as this figure relates only to the STFC's "aspirations" for 2008–11, the government has said. Its statement comes in a 24-page response to a report by a select committee of MPs that was highly critical of the handling of this year's science budget allocations and the STFC's resulting delivery plan.

The response, produced by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) with input from the STFC, says that the increased science budget for 2008–11 was "a strong settlement in a tight fiscal environment". It defends the way discussions between DIUS and the STFC were conducted during the allocation process, which had to allow for candid discussion and protect commercial confidentiality, it says, arguing against greater public exposure.

It gives detailed commentary on some of the STFC's commissioning. "The government's select committee's criticism of the STFC's peer-review process of those researchers who have taken it, to be unhelpful and misleading," it says. It does, however, state that the STFC will not implement changes in its rolling grants to universities until the result of the Winton review of the health of physics is published in September, it says.

The STFC does not accept that the particle physics community was dled with a £75 m deficit" to cover additional costs of running laboratories after two funding councils merged to form the STFC, it says. However, the STFC admits that it could communicate its plans better and undertake an organisational restructure.

Responding to the document, the Institute's director of education



The Institute's Physics in Society team visited the Bradford Mela including balloon kebabs, Alka-Seltzer rockets and straw oboes. Outreach officer Liz Jeavans and five student volunteers went to the event where people can try at home using everyday products. By performing a range of physics tricks, the team raised awareness of physics among those who don't seek out science. This year several of the Institute's branches will be performing physics tricks at an Asian cultural festival. Volunteers from the East Anglia branch will be performing physics tricks at the East of England Show in June, and local branches are organising events at the Green Man Festival (19–20 July), the Green Man Festival in Wales (15–17 August), and

Schooldays cloud view of physics of physics", found that the public would like real scientists, not just those viewed as impartial and trustworthy.