

Chair's Report 2007

The following is a bullet-point summary of the Chair's Report as given by Dr John Clark (Fine R&D Ltd.) 13th June 2007 at the Annual General Meeting of the East Anglia Branch of the Institute of Physics.

REGIONAL OFFICER

- Dr Esther Haines – Started in November.
- Brief: Focus on making the IOP part of the Eastern region Business Community; Building Links with EEDA, Cambridge Network etc.

MEET THE EMPLOYERS

- Careers fair at the Cavendish Lab
- Open admission
- Observations: Attendees seemed unaware of how to go about impressing potential employees – an opportunity for the branch?

DECEMBER EVENT

- Main lecture: Rock Guitar in 11 Dimensions – Dr Mark Lewney (Famelab 2005 winner).
- Call My Audible Bluff
- Hands-on demonstrations: Helium Elvis, Cambridge Carbon Footprint, CHaOS, Quizzes, the largest, smelliest comet in East Anglia and lots more...
- Attendance ~150; below previous years. Why? Timing? Key Premiership match, but more importantly it clashed with another science event.

DA pointed out that a major factor was lack of advertising.

TW noted that this was made more difficult by the lack of “pull” factor (as previously noted by HD) – the media (e.g. radio, a major advertiser in previous years) was less inclined to advertise an event without, for example, a TV-based hook.

All agreed that lessons had to be learnt for next year to get the maximum “outreach return” from all of the effort and expense.

JDC recommended that the next committee should meet in July to start planning, and that everyone should start thinking about a (preferably TV-based?) theme for December 2008. Other science organisations should also be contacted well in advance so that clashes are avoided in future (and if anything, events are coordinated).

THE EAST ANGLIA BRANCH OF THE INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS

LAB IN A LORRY

- Staffed by Branch volunteers at Suffolk Engineering Showcase, March 2007
- Founder Charles Jenkins – received the 2007 Kelvin Medal, “For his development of Lab in a Lorry.”

THE TROUBLE WITH PHYSICS

Talk given by Prof. Lee Smolin (Perimeter Institute, Canada) as part of a tour promoting his book (and to stimulate debate on the nature of research and how string theory may not necessarily be the answer, of course). Held at the Pippard Lecture Theatre, Cavendish Laboratory – capacity 400, packed out.

Too controversial for the Cavendish to host, so we got an excellent, well-attended talk essentially for free. BP will be in a position to hear about similar opportunities should they arise...

CAMBRIDGE SCIENCE FESTIVAL

- Main lecture – “*The Big & the Small*”, Prof Malcolm Longair
- Hands-on demonstrations: Naked Scientists(?), Cambridge Carbon Footprint, CHaOS, quizzes, the largest, smelliest comet in East Anglia and the only lab bench demo of General Relativity you’ll ever have seen.
- Cavendish event - we co-sponsored.
- Attendance 2000+ (and MUCH better than Astronomy event!!)

PAPERCLIP PHYSICS

Numbers down, but keenly fought – the winners were Bourne Grammar School. Many thanks once again to Mike Coleman for coordinating the last instance of the competition in its current form – for many years it has been a very successful schools outreach event, largely down to his efforts.

The committee recognised this with a vote of thanks (JDC, TW).

SPONSORSHIP

- CHaOS (Cambridge Hands On Science) - Student society dedicated to outreach to youngsters;
- Cambridge Physics Centre – Lecture programme for schools;
- Sponsored website – www.fizzix.co.uk;
- Technobots – 12-13 yr old team building robots who won through to competition in USA. We co-sponsored £500 and attracted a great deal of press & radio publicity. As part of the sponsorship arrangement, they exhibited at Cambridge Science Festival – and went down very well.

THE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

In November, the EA Branch set-up a collaboration with The Communications Network (once the Institution of Post Office Electrical Engineers). Members were invited by TCN to a talk by Simon Singh at Adastral Park, Martlesham

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and the Branch made a small contribution to TCN to co-brand the event at Suffolk schools.

THANK YOU

JDC thanked all of the Committee for all of their hard work throughout the year.

- Jeannette Fine, VC & Newsletter Editor;
- Tom Whyntie, Acting Hon Sec;
- Bill Proud, Treasurer;
- Paul Millar, fertile source of ideas, never afraid of hard work;
- Mike Coleman, ditto, especially for organising Paperclip Physics;
- Harry Druiff, implementer of wacky ideas extraordinaire;
- And all the committee

JDC also wished to formally thank the Cavendish Lab and Adastral Park for providing great venues for EA IoP events throughout the year – they have proved to be very generous hosts.