

## **‘Tis the season to be jolly ... Nadolig Llawen**

A few seasonal questions!

- Why there are so many “fa la’s” in [carols](#)?
- Why is mincemeat called [mincemeat](#) even though it doesn’t contain meat?
- What is [Yuletide](#)?
- Why do we hang [fairy lights](#) on Christmas trees?
- What is [Hanukkah](#)?

(The words in blue are hyperlinked to the relevant pages in [Wikipedia!](#))

If you have anything that you think you would like covered in the e-bulletin or anything you feel the Institute should be doing in the New Year then please drop me an e-mail ([Angharad.Thomas@iop.org](mailto:Angharad.Thomas@iop.org))

Best wishes and I’ll be back in the  
new year!

Dymuniadau gorau a wela i chi yn y  
flwyddyn newydd

*Angharad*

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### **News in Brief**

### **Newyddion yn Fyr**

[Minister stresses importance of physics research for the UK economy.](#) “The new science and innovation agenda” was the topic of lively discussion at the Institute of Physics Key Insight Business Briefing. Representatives from businesses across the UK attended the event to hear both the Minister of State for Science and Innovation and Sir John Chisholm, Executive Chairman of Qinetiq, set out their vision for science in the coming decades. IOP used the opportunity to highlight their recent research which

demonstrates the important contribution that the physics-based sector has been making to the UK economy since 2000.

The [Telegraph](#) has reported on a physicist called Garrett Lisi who has proposed a theory of everything. Garrett is being portrayed as a “surfer dude” and even though he spends most of his year surfing in Hawaii he has a doctorate in theoretical physics. The online paper’s title is [An Exceptionally Simple Theory of Everything](#).

Are you worried about thieves entering your house over the holidays? Approximately 28% of the burglaries in the USA were no-force entries; therefore the simplest solution would be to lock doors and windows. For more suggestions on how to protect your house, click [here](#).

For anyone who has found the program “Google Earth” fascinating – this is the webpage for you - [How Google Earth Works](#) (on [www.howstuffworks.com](http://www.howstuffworks.com))

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## Institute of Physics in Wales

## Sefydliad Ffiseg yng Nghymru

The next meeting of the Science Alliance Cymru will be held at the National Waterfront Museum, Swansea on Wednesday, 5 December, between 4-6pm. There will be three interesting speakers and there will be an opportunity for networking. (If you wish to attend this event please e-mail Cass ([Catherine.Beddoe@the-ba.net](mailto:Catherine.Beddoe@the-ba.net))).

[Schools Lecture Series 2007 - Light Fantastic: the Science of Colour](#). It is the turn of the three Physics departments in Wales to hold the Schools Lecture and it will be at Aberystwyth this Wednesday (5 December), and at Swansea (11 December) and Cardiff (12 December) next week. For further information please click on the link above to obtain the relevant contact details.

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## Institute of Physics

## Sefydliad Ffiseg

The Institute has a range of professional development and training services, designed exclusively for IOP members. These include: [MyCPD](#) – a free online tool which allows you to identify your development needs and plan and record new learning; [Learning Online](#) – a range of transferable skills courses you can undertake at your own pace and in your own time. There are a number of other new member services – keep an eye on [www.iop.org/careers](http://www.iop.org/careers) for further developments.

[Forthcoming Institute Conferences](#)

[What’s on in Physics](#)

physicsweb events listing which lists [all physics related events](#).

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## Events in Wales

## Digwyddiadau yng Nghymru

The Cardiff School of Engineering's Institute of Medical Engineering and Medical Physics' annual Christmas lecture will take place at [Techniquest](#), Cardiff Bay, on Tuesday 4 December at 6pm. The talk is entitled "The impact of engineering on the practice of medicine", and will be given by Professor David Delpy FRS, Chief Executive of the EPSRC. To reserve a place, please contact Bryn Harries by [e-mail](#) or on 02920 874726.

[The Pursuit of Happiness and Health](#) – Science in Health Public Lecture will be held on Thursday 6 December in Cardiff's School Of Medicine - Lecture Theatre 1 at 7.30pm (Refreshments will be available from 7pm). The lecture will be given by Professor Mansel Aylward CB, Director of The UnumProvident Centre for Psychosocial and Disability Research.

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## Useful Links

## Cysylltiadau Defnyddiol

[EPSRC](#) – Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

[STFC](#) – Science and Technology Facilities Council

[HEFCW](#) – Higher Education Funding Council for Wales / Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru

[bbc.co.uk/wales](http://bbc.co.uk/wales) / [bbc.co.uk/cymru](http://bbc.co.uk/cymru) – BBC Wales / BBC Cymru website

[The National Assembly for Wales](#) / [Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru](#)

[The Welsh Assembly Government](#) / [Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru](#)

[European Commission – Research](#)