

April Fools' Day

Dydd Ffwl Ebrill

I mentioned last year about my favourite hoax being the one when a newsletter reported that the Alabama state legislature had voted to change the value of pi to 3. However, I think I've found a better one – in 1976 Sir Patrick Moore told radio listeners that because of the alignment of two planets, the resultant upward gravitational pull would make everything lighter at precisely 9:47 a.m. He invited people to jump in the air at exactly 9:47 a.m. to experience weightlessness. Many listeners rang in to declare that they had experienced a floating sensation! (For more history and hoaxes go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/April_Fools%27_Day.)

Have you ever wanted to do a scientific experiment where gravity was not a factor? Following the successful installation of the Columbus laboratory at the International Space Station, there is a competition called "[Take your classroom into space](#)." ESA invites ideas for experiments that can be carried out onboard Columbus to demonstrate the effects of weightlessness to young scientists. If you have an idea but are not eligible to enter please e-mail me and I will try and put you in touch with a local school which would be interested in entering.

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

Best wishes – Dymuniadau gorau

Angharad

News in Brief

Newyddion yn Fyr

Interested in learning more about the devolution process? [Tomorrow's Wales](#) and the [Institute of Welsh Affairs](#) are co-hosting a series of seminars looking forward to the launch of the All-Wales Convention and the implications of a move towards further devolution of powers. For further information click [here](#).

On long drives through Wales when singing in the car have you ever wanted the road to sing along with you? In Japan, singing roads have been created! To see a video click [here](#).

The strongest creature in the world, the Hercules Beetle, has a colour-changing trick that scientists have long sought to understand. Research published in the [New Journal of Physics](#), details an investigation into the structure of the species' peculiar protective shell which could [aid design of 'intelligent materials'](#).

A [Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales](#) has been appointed by the Welsh Assembly Government. Professor Christopher Pollock CBE, former director of the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research ([IGER](#)) at Aberystwyth was appointed by the First Minister Rhodri Morgan on 18 September 2007 to advise the Government on scientific matters. A petition, submitted by the Royal Society of Chemistry on behalf of the scientific community, was debated on 31 January 2008. Rhodri Morgan has written a [response](#) stating that that Christopher Pollock is the Chief Scientific Adviser for Wales.

Institute of Physics in Wales

Sefydliad Ffiseg yng Nghymru

The [National Eisteddfod](#) is in Cardiff this August. I've joined forces with Catherine Beddoe (Regional Officer, Wales, for the British Association for the Advancement of Science) and we will have an exhibition in the Science and Engineering tent. The theme is cosmology and we are planning to have demonstrations on the planets and on Columbus. The Eisteddfod runs from Saturday 2 August to Saturday 9 August. Any offers of help would be gratefully received – even if you can only spare a morning.

Institute of Physics

Sefydliad Ffiseg

The Institute of Physics actively encourages its members and others, to communicate exciting aspects and applications of physics to a wide audience. Applications are now being invited for Round 2 of the 2008 [Public Engagement Grant Scheme](#) which is designed to give financial support of up to £1000 to individuals and organisations running physics-based outreach activities during 2008. Application forms and full guidelines for the grant scheme are available online at www.iop.org/activity/outreach/ or by e-mailing physics.society@iop.org. Applications must be received by 2 May 2008.

A new IOP mentoring service has been launched which allows members to match themselves with other members who wish to be mentored or act as mentors. Registration is online, and initial contact is made via Institute staff. When you have registered, you will be able to search for an appropriate match, depending on your needs

and experience. For more information click [here](#) or e-mail mentoring@iop.org. The professional development and careers teams will be touring the UK to offer you the chance to attend a mentoring workshop and to get involved in mentoring. They are visiting Wales on Thursday 19 June 2008, at the [Royal Hotel](#), Cardiff. Places are on a first come, first served basis. Therefore if you would like to book your place, please click [here](#).

[Forthcoming Institute Conferences](#)

[What's on in Physics](#)

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

Events in Wales Digwyddiadau yng Nghymru

[Mars in their Eyes](#) – an exhibition of cartoons and caricatures about space is at the National Museum Cardiff between 23 February and 1 June.

For those members interested in the dawn chorus, there is an early morning bird walk followed by a picnic breakfast at St Fagans: The National History Museum. For more details click [here](#).

For information on what's going on in Wales – have a look at "[What's on Wales](#)" or "[Golwg ar Gymru](#)".

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 / 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](#)