

ASE in action

ASE Scotland Conference

In early March, ASE Scotland held its Annual Conference. For the first time the Conference was a collaborative venture between the ASE Scottish Region and a national CPD initiative called Improving Science Education 3–18. This collaboration enabled a very smooth management of the conference administration and a richer programme of events, over two full days, than in the past. The theme of the Conference was Increasing Engagement, Improving Achievement and the defining features of the Scottish Conference remained, namely the programme balance, the parallel technician sessions and the annual ceilidh and dinner.

This year's keynote speakers included Professor Brian Boyd of the University of Strathclyde; Walter Whitelaw, Senior Adviser for mid-Lothian Council and a leader of the Science Curriculum Review in Scotland; and Professor Paul Black, OBE, Emeritus Professor at King's College London.

SEP/ASE Beginning Teachers Handbook CD

You may have heard already about the exciting project from the Science Enhancement Programme and ASE which has resulted in a number of new resources for science teachers. The SEP/ASE Beginning Teachers Handbook CD-ROM (see *EiS*

September 2005, p.28) has now been published. A limited number of CDs have been produced for current secondary science ITE students who will obtain posts in UK public sector schools in September 2006. If you are the course leader/tutor for a secondary science cohort completing this academic year, please contact Adrian Fenton at ASE Headquarters (e-mail adrianfenton@ase.org.uk) for further details of how you can receive a copy of the CD-ROM and multiple copies for your students – all free of charge.

KS3 Review: teachers share their views

The recent ASE Area Conference in Chelmsford on 25th March provided a great opportunity for teachers to share their thoughts and opinions regarding science at key stage 3, through a focused event that took place as part of the Conference. This event supplemented the meetings led by QCA earlier this term (for local authority advisers/consultants, along with one KS3 practitioner from each authority). Check the ASE website for updates about the Review or contact adrianfenton@ase.org.uk.

KS4: Resourcing the new science GCSEs

With the new science GCSEs starting in September 2006, departments will be carefully considering what resources they will need to follow through these changes. Of course, resourcing does not just mean buying new textbooks, but also refers to the broader preparations including adapting existing resources, equipment and integrating new contemporary examples into your science teaching. Further consideration of this subject will be featured in subsequent issues of *EiS*. In the meantime, check the ASE website for the latest news as further materials become available. If you have seen resources that will help others teach 'How science works' or if you have reviewed new publications for your own school, then we would be pleased to hear from you. Contact adrianfenton@ase.org.uk or via the website at www.ase.org.uk/html/homepage/notes_news/may_05/gcse_info.php.

Where's Bob?

Bob Kibble gives a snapshot of his life as Chair of the Association and adds new meaning to the phrase 'Where's Bob?'.



It was in the Netherlands that I discovered that to be 'Bob' is to fulfil a specific social function. When out and about in a social group, the person who elects not to drink but to drive the others is known as 'Bob', hence the phrase 'Who is going to be Bob tonight?' An enterprising taxi service in Belgium, one which uses mopeds to ferry late-night revellers home, advertises its services using the catchphrase 'Where is Bob?' In my role as ASE Chair this year, I too have had to produce a 'Where is Bob?' sheet for my colleagues in Edinburgh. ASE commitments come fast and furiously and it is often hard to update colleagues as to just where Bob has disappeared to. The 'Where is Bob?' sheet displayed on the prep-room wall gives a clue. So where is he likely to be? The adjacent diary is a snapshot of life on the road following the Annual Conference in January.

I must add that normal work goes on around these commitments and I am indeed fortunate that supply staff help to cover for my occasional absence. It is a fast and rich life, with both ends of the candle being incandescent some of the time. Much of the ASE business does happen electronically and I am aware that my carbon footprint is temporarily high. However, a few more months and I turn back into a pumpkin!

- Feb 2** Fly to London for ASE Advisory Council.
 - Feb 3** Train to Hatfield for Finance and Trustees meeting.
 - Feb 4** Chair Council III at Hatfield. Fly home.
 - Feb 8** Fly to Inverness to deliver CPD 'Rockets'.
 - Feb 9** Fly to London.
 - Feb 10** Chair Executive III. Fly home.
 - Mar 3** Drive to ASE Scotland Conference. CPD input 'Rockets'.
 - Mar 5** Drive home.
 - Mar 10** Drive to Cheshire for HoS after dinner speech.
 - Mar 11** Drive home.
 - Mar 17** Fly to Luton. Finance and Trustees meeting.
 - Mar 18** Chair Council IV. Fly home.
 - Mar 23** Fly to Luton, hire car, drive to Milton Keynes. Speak at RSA event. Drive back to Hatfield.
 - Mar 24** Chair Executive IV. Fly to Dublin. Drive to Athlone for ISTA Conference.
 - Mar 25** Speak at ISTA.
 - Mar 26** Fly home.
 - Mar 31** Drive (bike) across to Donegal. Speak at conference.
 - Apr 1** Bike back.
 - Apr 2** Train to London.
 - Apr 3** Fly to Anaheim, NSTA Conference. Speak at NSTA.
 - Apr 9** Fly home.
- Have Easter holiday week off. Phew!**

ASE AREA CONFERENCES

Put the spice and enjoyment into science this June by attending our Area Conferences.

Come and hear nationally acclaimed speakers such as Jonathan Osborne, Brenda Keogh and Stuart Naylor. Be excited about science – and excite your pupils!

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Visit www.ase.org.uk and view Conferences on the home page

E-mail: conferences@ase.org.uk

Tel: 01707 283000 and ask for Conferences



SATURDAY 17 JUNE 2006

West of England Science & CPD Conference at UWE, Bristol

FRIDAY 23 JUNE 2006

Northern Science & CPD Conference at the Science Learning Centre, Yorkshire and the Humber, Sheffield

FRIDAY 30 JUNE 2006

South East Science & CPD Conference at the University of Surrey, Guildford

Make a note in your diary now!

Strengthening science education: what research has to say

ASE, in partnership with the Teaching and Learning Project (TLRP) funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), is developing an initiative to link more closely research and development in science education. The first step in this initiative took place on 16th March 2006, as part of National Science Week, with the launch and publication of a statement under the title of *Strengthening Science Education: what research has to say*.

This statement has been drawn up by a group of the leading professors of science education – familiar names and everyone a long-standing member of ASE. It very briefly reviews the current situation and draws attention to the fact that in science education we have a good track record of translating research findings into classroom practice.

For example, the *Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education (CASE) Project* showed that it was possible to improve students' performance through explicitly supporting them to develop their critical thinking skills. The *Children's Learning in Science Project (CLISP)* and the *Science Processes and Concept Exploration Project (SPACE)* for secondary and primary science, respectively, demonstrated the importance of understanding children's pre-existing ideas. The *ASE-King's Science Investigation Study (AKSIS)* developed insights into teaching specific skills, particularly the use of graphs.

Science education has made significant progress through its engagement with a research agenda that is linked to practice, but it has only scratched the surface and

much more needs to be done. The aim of this initiative is to bring research and development together in order to continue strengthening science education for the future.

Techcen developments

Development of Techcen, the national technician's assessment centre, is continuing, with 100 technicians engaged in the pilot and working towards the level 2 (LATA NVQ) award. All have now received training in how to use the website and the virtual learning environment. The online provision is working well, enabling technicians to plan, claim assessments and upload evidence to an e-portfolio. This is a significant development in NVQ delivery models and candidates are rising to the challenge and tackling the ICT competences in order to engage with the programme. One candidate from the South West already has a full range of evidence in her portfolio, including photographs, Word documents and even video footage and has generally found the system 'easy to use', with the occasional hiccup being quickly resolved by Techcen support staff.

One of the biggest challenges identified in the pilot is finding enough existing and potential assessors (to be trained by Techcen), to enable technicians to enrol irrespective of their location. A database of technicians who would like to contribute to or participate in the project is being established. Trained assessors (A1 or D32, D33 qualified) or technicians who would be interested in becoming assessors can get further details of the project by e-mail from admin@techcen.org.

ATSE Summer Conference 2006

The ATSE Annual Conference will be held at the Caerleon Campus, University of Wales in Newport, from Wednesday 30th August to Friday 1st September, with the theme Resourcing Initial Teacher Education.

The focus will be on a range of new and updated resources which support ITE science tutors, teachers and teachers in training. Examples of topics/materials to be covered are: TTRB and the sci-tutors website; the TTA under its new guise as the TDA; the Science Learning Centres; and a large range of web and other resources supporting the changes in the National Curriculum, especially at key stage 4.

Please contact Jane Pagan with proposals for papers, putting ATSE Newport 06 and your name in the subject line of an e-mail and send it to jane.pagan@newport.ac.uk.

Free places for tutors new to ITE If you are a new science education tutor, primary and/or secondary, you can apply to attend the ATSE Summer Conference free of charge, sponsored by the sci-tutors project. The sponsorship covers the cost of the conference, accommodation and hospitality and you will just need to pay your transport costs.

To apply for a free place, please e-mail Keith Ross at kross@glos.ac.uk with ATSE Caerleon free place and your name as the title, and provide full details of your post and date of appointment. There is a limited number of free places, so please apply as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. To review comments from previous conferences please register and log on to www.ase.org.uk/sci-tutors and then go to the bulletin board.