

# ASE in action

## 2007 ASE Annual Conference

The 2007 Annual Conference will be held at the University of Birmingham from 4th–6th January, with the International Day on Wednesday 3rd January.

The Annual Conference still boasts over 350 sessions on all aspects of science education, an exhibition that displays the latest resources and plenty of opportunities to meet, debate and share best practice with science educators from around the globe. Given this impressive programme, we feel sure you will not want to miss it.

If you have not yet been to an ASE Annual Conference, it is the perfect time to experience the vast range of expertise, ideas and resources on offer. If you are an Annual Conference regular, then we hope to see you there again.

Special events include the **ASE Presidential Address**, by Dame Julia Higgins, on Friday 5th January. Friday 5th January will also be the **Technicians' Day**, and there will be the usual **ASE Primary Science Day** on Saturday 6th January. Please have a look at the enclosed Programme Preview to see a fuller list of the sessions, workshops and social events on offer in Birmingham, as well as details of the accommodation available. The full programme is now on the ASE website, under the Conferences tab; a particularly useful feature on the web is the 'build your own' timetable, which helps you to plan ahead how you might spend your days.

If you would like further copies of the Programme Preview or if you just want to ask some questions about the Annual Conference, please contact the Conferences and Events Team at ASE Headquarters. E-mail: [conferences@ase.org.uk](mailto:conferences@ase.org.uk). Tel: 01707 283000.

## Changes at Headquarters

As reported in the June issue of *EiS*, there have been some changes in the personnel in Headquarters during the year that have provided an opportunity to examine the overall management and staffing structure. At the time of writing, it is not possible to give details of the new arrangements but these will appear in the November issue.

We are, however, pleased to announce that with effect from 1st August 2006 Headquarters now operates in three interlinked areas of activity:

- **Corporate Operations** with responsibility for overall governance and running of ASE as a professional organisation;
- **Communications and Membership Services** provides the direct support for Regions and special interest groups, running of conference activities and promotion of ASE including recruitment and retention; and
- **Professional and Curriculum Innovation** incorporates the work of ASE projects, production of publications and other curriculum materials and the work of ASE INSET Services including professional development activities for teachers and technicians.

Each of these is led by an Executive Director: John Lawrence (Corporate Operations); Alan Rhodes (Communications and Membership Services); and Marianne Cutler (Professional and Curriculum Development). We are sure that they can count on your continued support as they work with you and all our colleagues to ensure that ASE is in a strong position to meet the challenges that face us all in science education over the next few years.

## Quality and Audit Committee: Call for nominations

The June 2006 edition of *EiS* provided the background to this new Committee that is concerned with ensuring that the Association continues to be a high-quality organisation. The Quality and Audit Committee (Q&A) therefore is constituted independently of Council and will be elected by members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The former Trustees, acting as the interim Q&A Committee, have agreed the election process with Council.

Membership of the Q & A Committee is open to current ASE members who:

- have had at least five years full membership of the Association;
- can demonstrate a commitment to ASE through involvement at regional and/or national level; and

- have relevant expertise and, if possible, experience in relation to the functions of the Q&A Committee.

Nominations should be submitted on the appropriate form which requires a short paragraph (not more than 250 words) written by the nominee in support of their application. The form should be countersigned by two current members of the Association.

The remit of the Q&A Committee, full details of the election procedure and the nomination form are available on the ASE website at [www.ase.org.uk](http://www.ase.org.uk). Alternatively, further information can be obtained from John Lawrence at Headquarters who is also available to discuss the potential nominations in confidence.

**The deadline for nominations is 31st October 2006.** The names of applicants meeting the criteria and therefore eligible for consideration at the AGM in January 2007 at Birmingham University will be posted on the ASE website with the papers for the Annual General Meeting.

## ASE Special Service Award: a reminder

In June *EiS* we announced the introduction of the ASE Special Service Award to enable us to recognise in some more formal way the contributions, mainly voluntary, by the many 'active' members who work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the ASE network of committees, events, publications and meetings moving forward.

We would like to make the first awards and to acknowledge the individuals concerned at the next Annual Conference and so the **deadline for these inaugural awards is 1st November 2006.**

These awards will be made annually with awardees to be acknowledged at Members' Reception during the Annual Conference.

Full details of the ASE Special Service Award can be found on the ASE website at [www.ase.org.uk](http://www.ase.org.uk).

So if you know anyone who you think should be acknowledged for their contribution, why not look on the website and nominate them for an ASE Special Award.

## ASE speaks on behalf of its members

During the past 12 months or so, the profile of science education has been high. Government recognition of the 'importance of a strong supply of scientists, engineers and technologists to support the UK's ambition to move to a higher level of research and development intensity' (*Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004–2014: Next Steps*), and acknowledgement that high-quality science teaching and learning at all stages underpins the success of that ambition, puts science education high up the agenda. (For further details see June 2006 *EiS* Notes and News, and the document can be found on <http://hm-treasury.gov.uk> or via the ASE website.)

What constitutes quality science teaching and learning, where and how these can be improved and what support is needed to aid such improvements are the fundamental questions of a wide range of formal consultations and reviews that ASE has been involved with in recent months. These include QCA's reviews of science at key stage 3 and GCE. (These take effect from September 2008. Further details and opportunities to contribute are available at [www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)) Consultations include those on out-of-classroom learning, revised OfSTED subject inspections and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) professional classroom standards.

Most recently ASE has provided evidence to the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee on *Science Teaching in Schools*.

All ASE consultation responses are available in the curriculum support area within the members' area of the main ASE website.

Members can help us represent their experiences and views to influence developments in science education more effectively. We value the opinions of our wider membership and there are many ways to make your views count. All major consultations are posted up on the main ASE homepage for open comment, and discussed in detail by Council and its committees. E-mail

[mariannecutler@ase.org.uk](mailto:mariannecutler@ase.org.uk) to express your views. Better still, get involved with your Region committee for some lively discussions that feed into these debates.

## Eureka: Stories in Science

The ASE project Developing the Global Dimension to Science has produced some new materials which can be downloaded from the ASE website. The thinking behind this project is based on students' interest in story lines. Why is Archimedes' realisation

that submerged objects displace their own volume of water so familiar? Why is Newton's 'discovery' of gravity easy to picture? For most students, the events will be easiest to recall where they associate the science with a story and characters. A few scientific developments have well known stories. However, many more are little known but are just as remarkable or entertaining and all can be part of the longer story of developing and using theories and explanations.

In English, religious studies, history, geography and even in design and technology, students use timelines and storyboards to learn about developing situations, plots or processes. It is a familiar technique for them and lends itself to successful learning styles and activities such as card sorting, discussion and research, making links between developments and providing a visual picture. A similar approach in science is sometimes used in situations such as life processes (e.g. reproduction, digestion) or industrial processes (extraction of metals, manufacture of fertilisers). Wider storylines are rarer.

The key stage 4 Programme of Study gives the opportunity to expand timelines to incorporate wider themes and scientific developments. The ASE project Developing the Global Dimension to Science has produced some science timeline materials which can be downloaded from the ASE website – Global Dimension pages. These include key events, discoveries and inventions related to the development of aspects of scientific knowledge through history and across the world. These will be added to periodically. The aim is to place the characters and events into longer and wider stories of the development of scientific knowledge. Only stories up to 2006 can be taken, but this 'loose end' gives further opportunities for students to look into the future and at how they can contribute to the science or to decisions about it.

## NAIGS News

NAIGS, the National Advisers and Inspectors Group for Science, a Special Interest Group within the ASE, held this year's conference at Stratford-upon-Avon and attracted over 130 delegates. Charlotte Clarke (see page 7) finished her year as Chair of NAIGS in July and has been succeeded for 2006/7 by Steve Davies of Worcestershire. A major overhaul of the NAIGS members' area of the ASE website is being undertaken, and this should be 'live' by the time you read this notice.

Earlier this year the NAIGS national committee met with Ian Richardson HMI and Peter Slade of QCA. The debates that took place at these meetings informed discussions with Paul Wagstaff, Director of the Primary National Strategy. As a result, NAIGS members are working with the Primary Strategy on revisions to the literacy and mathematics frameworks, and on the development of associated material.

The National Science Database now resides on the ASE website (see article in *EiS* June 2006). Individual schools can contribute to this to help them and ASE get a picture of provision in secondary science departments in England.

If you are involved in advising schools, e.g. as an adviser/inspector, advisory teacher, consultant or AST, then NAIGS is your Special Interest Group within ASE. For membership application information, please contact Barbara Mahmoudi at ASE Headquarters. E-mail: [barbaramahmoudi@ase.org.uk](mailto:barbaramahmoudi@ase.org.uk).

## ATSE News

ATSE, the Association of Tutors in Science Education, a Special Interest Group within the ASE, held its Spring Conference at the University of Winchester, taking as the theme Challenging Children's Enthusiasm. The Summer Conference was in Caerleon, Newport with the theme Resourcing Initial Teacher Education.

Current initiatives of the Committee include:

- peer reviewing of papers at the ATSE Summer Conference;
- the formation of BERA-SIG (Science Interest Group of British Educational Research Association which is the premier research conference for UK education); and
- possibly holding conferences in parallel with NAIGS and with some joint speakers.

ATSE has recently responded to three consultations on behalf of its members: *Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004–2014: Next Steps*; *Call for Evidence: Science Teaching in Schools*; and the Consultation on the *Review of Professional Standards for Teachers*.

*STE* is now firmly built into the ATSE structure, with the editor, Neil Burton, an ex-officio Committee member.

The sci-tutors website is nearing completion and Keith Ross, Director of the project, has submitted a bid for funding for three more years from the TDA.

ATSE information is available on the ASE website through the membership and conferences tab. For more information, visit [www.ase.org.uk/htm/membership/atse.php](http://www.ase.org.uk/htm/membership/atse.php).