

SCIENCE IN PARLIAMENT

The Journal of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee.

The Committee is an Associate Parliamentary Group of members of both Houses of Parliament and British members of the European Parliament, representatives of scientific and technical institutions, industrial organisations and universities.

Science in Parliament has two main objectives:
a) to inform the scientific and industrial communities of activities within Parliament of a scientific nature and of the progress of relevant legislation;
b) to keep Members of Parliament abreast of scientific affairs.



Welcome to the Autumn edition of Science in Parliament. As Chairman of the Editorial/Management Board of this Journal, I have been trying to encourage more coverage of the controversial aspects of science that might generate a "Letters Page". We welcome your views on the issues that we cover and others of current interest.

News that a single stem cell can be removed from an embryo, apparently without preventing normal development of the embryo, and that an adult cell can be "wound back" to a stem cell have given great hope to this rapidly developing field of science.



The GM crops debate is back on the agenda with BASF's announcement of a blight-free potato. With most countries in North and South America, China and India, and even countries closer to home, such as Spain, now growing GM crops, how long can Britain remain GM crop free? Some argue that public reaction to GM crops has damaged Britain's biotechnology industry badly. We need a sensible and well-informed debate free of the emotion of earlier debates.

This Summer has seen the publication of the usual Annual Reports of a plethora of organisations – State Departments and their agencies included. For those who have the time to read them, they contain a wealth of information which, fortunately, suggests that our science base is healthy for the time being. The Food Standards Agency published its "Science Strategy 2005-2010" in July (<http://www.food.gov.uk/science/>). I congratulate Universities UK for publishing "EurekaUK", which describes "100 discoveries and developments in UK universities that have changed the world". I had great pleasure, on 25 July, in presenting the President of the American Chemical Society with a copy.

Dr Brian Iddon MP
Chairman, Editorial Board
Science in Parliament

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