

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.



We are preparing for the Second Reading debate in the HoC of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill. Unlike in the HoL, the Government has conceded free votes for Labour Members on issues of conscience, which

are likely to be on admixed hybrid embryos, the need for a father and saviour siblings, as well as on any amendments to the Bill on abortion.

Chemistry & Industry (2008, 7 April, 5) reports that Pfizer, in its lawsuits with 3,000 individuals and organisations over its sale of COX-2 inhibitors, has failed to make the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the *Archives of Internal Medicine* reveal the names of their peer reviewers. Had Pfizer been successful in this court battle there would have been serious consequences for the publishers of all learned journals. The publication by Duckworth Overlook of Nigel Lawson's book, "An Appeal to Reason", a sceptical look at climate change, is timely in view of Parliamentary consideration of the Climate Change Bill.

Government has decided to launch a carbon capture and storage competition to clean up coal burning power plants with post-combustion technology. Would it not have been better to give pre-combustion carbon capture an equal chance of success to kick-start the hydrogen economy? The race is on, but Japan has the clear lead at this point in time.

Nature (2008, 452, 674) has revealed that, of 1400 scientists surveyed in 60 countries, one in five had used methylphenidate (better known as Ritalin), modafinil, or beta-blockers to enhance their cognitive performance.

The controversial Galileo project finally got off the ground on 27 April with the launch of the second and final test satellite Giove-B, put into orbit by a Soyuz rocket in Kazakhstan. It carries the most accurate atomic clock in the world. This is Europe's equivalent to the US GPS system for navigation.

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Science in Parliament

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