

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:

- to inform the scientific and industrial communities of activities within Parliament of a scientific nature and of the progress of relevant legislation;
- to keep Members of Parliament abreast of scientific affairs.



Dr John Snow died on 16 June 1858, and I had the pleasure to visit the John Snow public house in Soho on the morning of 16 June, when the Royal Society of Chemistry invited a 'flurry' of Snows to attend the unveiling of a 'blue plaque' by the Rt

Hon Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Health, to commemorate his work. For those who are unfamiliar with Snow's work Dr Stanwell-Smith reminds us of its importance in this edition of SiP. The John Snow Society believes that his work is of equal importance to that of engineer Joseph Bazalgette, who was instructed by Parliament in 1858 to stop raw sewage flowing into the River Thames, which created the 'Great Stink' of that year. The smell of the river was so bad that Parliament considered moving to Hampton Court Palace.

Worryingly, our pharmaceuticals industry has lost more than 8,000 jobs in the last three years, according to recent figures released by the ABPI. "The pharmaceutical industry has lost confidence in the country as a place to do business", a new survey by the ABPI and CBI of 100 UK-based pharmaceutical companies has revealed. 35 companies are expecting to reduce their level of R&D investment over the next 12 months, currently worth £4 billion, the level of manufacturing is forecast to drop in 42 of the companies, and 46 of them are expected to reduce the number of clinical trials. Our Government should be concerned by these trends.

Recent experience with the Energy Bill and the DIUS Select Committee, which has just published *Renewable electricity-generating technologies*, has convinced me that the biggest barrier to renewable energy is access to the transmission grid. Unless owners of the grid can sort out these access problems shortly, there will be fresh calls for its nationalisation.

The P&SC has opened a discussion forum on its website, www.scienceinparliament.org.uk, and we invite members to give their views on current controversies. For example, it has been proposed (not by Government) that teaching in FE and HE be administered by a single funding council. Would this lead to a single salary scale for academic staff and grants for all students, whether in FE or HE? What changes would it bring to our universities? What do you think?

Dr Brian Iddon MP
Chairman, Editorial Board
Science in Parliament

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