

£5 million of additional funding was allocated in the Budget to science and mathematics education and £750 million to a new Strategic Investment Fund, which will be focused on emerging technologies and regionally important sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, digital technologies and biotechnology.

A further £50 million has been set aside for the Technology Strategy Board and £250 million will be invested in low-carbon technologies. Set against these gains DFID has announced a cut of £10 million in its R&D budget, whilst the MoD's Nuclear Weapons Capability Sustainment Programme will lose £170 million.

On Budget day the Institute of Biology and the Biosciences Federation announced that their memberships have voted overwhelmingly in favour of unification to form a new 'Society of Biology'. We wish the new society well in its future work.

We report in this issue of SIP on the Big Bang, the UK's first annual national science fair celebrating young people's achievements in science and engineering, which will be held next year in Manchester (11-13th March), and on SET for BRITAIN, a poster session for young scientists and engineers whose careers are emerging, which the P&SC has now adopted. Thanks to all those who have organised and/or funded these important events for young people.

The US Research Advisory Committee established a strong dose-response link between Gulf War Illness and soldiers' exposure to pesticides, insect repellents and pyridostigmine bromide (used against nerve gases). Now, Professor Robert Haley at the University of Texas has used the new technique of 'arterial spin labelling' to establish differences between veterans with and without the illness. Slowly it is being revealed that this is not a psychological disorder but is based on physiological changes in the white matter region of the brain (see *Chemistry & Industry*, 2009, 13 April, p 5).

In the UK Patents Act 1977 provisions were made for employees named as inventors on patents to benefit from income to companies from patents of 'outstanding benefit'. In February this year the head of a research group and a bench chemist formerly at GE Healthcare were the first to benefit from this provision, when the English Patent Court awarded them £1 million and £0.5 million 'compensation' respectively.



Dr Brian Iddon MP
Chairman,
Editorial Board
Science in Parliament

SCIENCE IN PARLIAMENT

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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:

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

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