

I was saddened to hear that Dr Ian Gibson, the former Member of Parliament for Norwich North, had decided to retire before the end of this Parliament. We will all miss his many contributions to science in Parliament, and I know that many Members of Parliament want to thank Ian for the tremendous effort that he made in this policy area, including his impressive work on cancer.

I had just completed an article for the June edition of *Future Medicinal Chemistry* on the Government's re-organisation of its structures and on its new sense of direction on R&D that emerged during the last two years when my article immediately became out of date, with the Government's announcement of a merger of the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) with the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR), to form the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS).

Some commentators have criticised already the transfer of further and higher education into this overweight department rather than back into the Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCFS).

This merger also means an end to the short-lived Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills (IUSS) Select Committee. Those of us who have served on the IUSS Committee have felt tensions between covering education and skills on the one hand and the STEM subjects on the other.

I have been critical of the loss of the cross-cutting remit that the former Science and Technology Select Committee had and have called, along with many others, for the reformation of this Committee. It is pleasing, therefore, that the Government has listened and that the Committee will be re-formed.

The Public Analysts Service has been in a state of decline for several years now. In 1959, there were 150 Public Analysts working in 45 laboratories; today, only 21 laboratories remain and 27 of the remaining Public Analysts are over the age of 50. The Food Standards Agency was set up in 2000, so what have they done to address this problem since then?

The IUSS Committee has recommended the appointment of a Chief Engineering Adviser to the Government and the Welsh Assembly will shortly appoint their first Chief Scientific Adviser.



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.

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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.

## CONTENTS

<b>ANYONE OUT THERE?</b> Ian Taylor MP	<b>2</b>	<b>DOES SECURITY TECHNOLOGY RESTRICT PERSONAL FREEDOM?</b> Addresses to the P&SC by Professor John Pethica and Dr David Murakami Wood	<b>18</b>	<b>THE CARP AND THE RABBIT</b> Professor Alan Malcolm	<b>42</b>
<b>SCIENCE POLICY RE-EXAMINED</b> Tim Boswell MP	<b>3</b>	<b>TAKING SCIENCE TO THE STREET</b> Addresses to the P&SC by Professor Anthony J Ryan, Dr Daniel Glaser and Dr Mae-Wan Ho	<b>22</b>	<b>HOUSE OF COMMONS SELECT COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, UNIVERSITIES, SCIENCE AND SKILLS</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>CHALLENGES AS THE CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISER OF DEFRA</b> Professor Robert Watson	<b>4</b>	<b>CATALYST SCIENCE DISCOVERY CENTRE: AN EXCITING PLACE TO BE!</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT SECTION</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>DISHING UP GOOD FOOD SCIENCE</b> Tim Smith	<b>6</b>	<b>LEADING LIGHTS – STEM AMBASSADORS</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>HOUSE OF LORDS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SELECT COMMITTEE</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>THE LAUNCH OF THE FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH AGENCY</b> Professor Nicola Spence	<b>8</b>	<b>WATER SCARCITY AND FOOD SECURITY</b> Colin Chartres and Samyuktha Varma	<b>34</b>	<b>PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>JOHN INNES CELEBRATES ITS CENTENARY – GENETICS 100 YEARS ON</b> Sarah Wilmot and Dee Rawsthorne	<b>10</b>	<b>THE ANCIENT SCOURGE OF MALARIA</b> Stephen O'Brien MP and Prudence Hamade	<b>36</b>	<b>SELECTED DEBATES AND PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>SCIENCE: OUT OF THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN</b> Lord Rees of Ludlow	<b>12</b>	<b>TACKLING PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE</b> Dr Desmond Turner MP	<b>37</b>	<b>EURO-NEWS</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT DEAD BODIES</b> Dr Suzy Lishman	<b>14</b>	<b>THE PRIME MINISTER IN BRAZIL</b> Damian Popolo, São Paulo	<b>39</b>	<b>SCIENCE DIRECTORY</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>LEADING THE SEARCH FOR ANIMAL ALTERNATIVES</b> Dr Vicky Robinson	<b>16</b>	<b>AND IS THERE HONEY STILL FOR TEA?</b> Tim Lovett	<b>40</b>	<b>SCIENCE DIARY</b>	<b>64</b>

