

Annual report 2005 -2006

AGM Thursday 19 October 2006, Huxley Building, Imperial College London SW7 2AZ

1. Introduction

This has been a successful year with a full programme of well-attended events, an increase in membership and greater financial stability.

We continue with our aim of helping the College with one of its five strategic intents “to communicate widely the significance of science in general, and the purpose and ultimate benefits of its activities in particular.”

2. Organisation

This is the first year that your committee has taken on the responsibility for the organisation of our membership and activities. We are responsible for our own finances, arranging lectures, organising food and drink, managing bookings and membership.

The College has continued to support us in many ways. Firstly through promoting our lectures to the 80,000 or so on their database of members. Secondly the College provides the lecture halls and the attendant security and technical staff at no cost.

During the year our administrator, Graham Rainford, resigned, at the end of the Autumn term, as he became more fully committed to work at Holy Trinity, Sloane Square. He has been replaced by Jill Cook who has a great deal of experience in administering clubs and societies and has been working very effectively with us since Easter.

Our new website at www.friendsofimperial.org.uk continues to provide downloadable booking forms and other information. Events will continue to be available on the College website.

An Imperial College graduate Richard Tang has built a database which allows us to manage our membership and event booking records on the web. This provides a single point for members of the committee to review our records, and will replace records held on individual computers.

3. Finance

We took over our finances in October 2005 and the College transferred £2,663.08 in to our account. This sum represented the membership fees for the previous year. We reduced our membership subscription from £35 a year to £25 with a reduction to £20 if the gives an email address or pays by standing order. This has attracted more members. We have also run each of our events in surplus. I can report that our funds at the end of the year stood at about £4500.

4. Donation to the college

The committee took a decision that we should donate a sum of money to the College towards encouraging young people to study science. It is proposed that this should be paid into the Students Opportunity Fund, which helps to promote sciences amongst schools, supports needy students and contributes to new facilities like the new library. We plan to donate £1000 which with an additional donation of £1200 from Rita Leek, one of our committee members we will be giving £2200 to the Fund this year.

We have also made a commitment to donate at least £500 to the Fund each year in future.

5. The year's events

We have organised seven events during the Academic Year 2005 to 2006 – our largest programme so far. The lectures attracted audiences of between 70 and 90. The Behind-the-Scenes events attracted between 30 and 40. We promoted our lectures on the web and in print and attracted many people who had never visited the College.

Tuesday 27 September 2005

The emergent mind

Emeritus Professor Igor Aleksander FREng, formerly Professor of Neural Systems Engineering and Gabor Chair of Electrical Engineering gave a lively talk on his work on human and machine consciousness with particular reference to his new book. *The World in My Mind, My Mind in the World: Key Mechanisms of Consciousness in People, Animals and Machines*.

Tuesday, 8 November 2005

Private View - Andre Derain: The London Paintings, Somerset House, Strand.

A wonderful reception and private view by kind invitation of the City and Guilds College Association, Imperial College London of Andre Derain's Mediterranean view of London in 1906 and 1907. Twelve of his large highly-coloured paintings were brought together into one room for the first time.

Monday 5 December 2005

Christmas Carol Party in association with Imperial College Women's Club.

A convivial evening of carols, mince pies and mulled wine led by the Medical School Choir singers in the magnificent College Council Room of 170 Queens Gate, a Norman Shaw designed 1889 Grade II listed building.

Tuesday 17 January 2006

Mad cows, monkeys, and Chinese ducks – the birth of new epidemics

Professor Sir Roy M Anderson FRS, Chair in Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Chief Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Defence gave an enthralled audience not only a historic and clinical perspective but also an insight into the problems facing governments in trying to second guess how large an epidemic might be and what action can be taken to limit its impact.

Wednesday 22 March 2006,

Behind-the-Scenes @ Imperial College Visit to Aeronautics

Professor Richard Hillier, Chair of Compressible Flow, Head of Department hosted an exciting evening Behind-the-Scenes in the Aeronautical Department. Aeronautics was first taught at Imperial College in 1909 and the department has been involved in many of the key advances in the history of flight. Members viewed a flight simulator for the new Airbus 380, explored the Mach 9 hypersonic wind-tunnel, visited the moving floor wind-tunnel.

Wednesday 3 May 2006

Planes, trains and automobiles: Journeys from Hell or green paths to the future?

Professor Rod Smith returned by popular request of Friends and took his audience through the basics of carbon emissions and showed how different modes of transport contributed to carbon load. He believed that the UK should adopt a varied energy policy including nuclear and renewables in order to keep all options open.

19 July 2006

Behind-The-Scenes @ Institute of Biomedical Engineering

Professor Christofer Toumazou, Director and fellow Research Directors Professor Guang-Zhong Yang and Professor Tony Cass spoke about the extraordinary range of research work being carried out in the, not quite completed, Institute. "We are here to graduate very very wealthy Nobel Laureates," Professor Christofer Toumazou told a large group of Friends and their guests before taking us for the tour of facilities.

6. The programme 2005 -2006

We have published our programme reasonably well in advance this year. It is available on the web at www.friendsofimperial.org.uk. We hope that our members and others will circulate it widely and encourage their friends to join.

Thursday 19 October 2006, Huxley Building, Queen's Gate

"1089 – and all that" An Evening with Dr David Acheson, Oxford University

Dr David Acheson unravels the mystery and magic of mathematics. From the extraordinary conundrums surrounding the number 1089 to an explanation of the most famous illusion in the history of the world – the legendary 'Indian Rope Trick'..

Thursday 23 November 2006, 18.30

Behind-the-Scenes @ Incubator Centre, Susan Searle, Chief Executive of Imperial Technologies plc

Imperial Technologies plc is to launch on the London stock market this Autumn. Susan Searle will explain the background to the decision and how it fits in with the strategy to commercialise research from the College. We are hoping there will be an opportunity to tour the recently completed incubator centre where fledgling companies maintain premises.

Wednesday 13 December 2006

Children's Christmas lecture, Professor Guang-Zhong Yang, Director of Medical Imaging, Institute of Biomedical Engineering,

Professor Guang-Zhong is an expert in how we see, what we see and how we use our hands and arms to process that information. He is closely involved in the development of robots that carry out surgery on the heart whilst the surgeon manipulates a computer rather like a computer game. This is an opportunity to bring your friends and relatives to hear an outstanding and entertaining speaker who is a leader in his field.

Wednesday 24 January 2007, 19.00

Invisible cloaks and a perfect spyglass, Professor Sir John Pendry, FRS

New materials are being designed and manufactured which have an extraordinary property when exposed to a beam of light. Instead of light bending through them as it does in natural materials like water and glass, it bends the wrong way. It has the potential to make objects invisible and provides the basis for a perfect lens: one that can focus more precisely than the wavelength of light itself.

Tuesday 20 February 2007, 19.00

Relieving 500 million from "forgotten" diseases, Professor Alan Fenwick OBE, Chair of Tropical Parasitology,

Schistosomiasis (bilharzia) is one of a number of "forgotten diseases" including Elephantiasis, Worms, and River Blindness that together affect more than half the world's

population. Prof Fenwick is working to provide an affordable, effective, pro-poor, community based, sustainable solution to the disabling parasitic diseases in the developing world supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other groups.

Thursday 10 May 2007 (Date and programme to be confirmed)

Behind-the-Scenes @ Environmental Engineering

Imperial College is in the forefront of development of environmental policies for the application of engineering in dealing with liquid and solid waste; water, energy, air and other issues. The Centre for Environmental Policy provides a unique interface between science and technology and the economic and policy context in which it is developed and applied. Its focus is on environmental and development issues, including energy, pollution, conservation of natural resources, food security and poverty reduction.

June 2007 (Date and programme to be confirmed)

Summer party

The newly refurbished 58 Prince's Gate is a lavishly decorated and panelled late Victorian House on the junction with Exhibition Road. The rooms are spectacular and one of them has access to a Garden Terrace overlooking Prince's Gardens. The College have installed a new kitchen and just started using it for meetings, lunches, dinners and functions. This is a wonderful opportunity to invite guests from neighbouring resident's associations to join us for wine and bites in a spectacular setting.

7. Thank you

I would like to thank the members of the committee who have contributed so much to the smooth running and success of the events.

At the beginning of the year Manu Duggal offered to take over the onerous duties of Treasurer. His experience as a banker is very useful to us.

Rita Leek joined the committee at Christmas and is helping promoting our activities.

We have also been joined by Ted Wynne who has brought a great deal of his North American experience to bear on our activities.

Richard Tang has been co-opted as he is developing our web-based database.

Both Anne Barrett and Melanie Thody retired from the committee during the course of the year. Both have been members for a very long time and are still very supportive of our efforts. Thankyou.

Our particular thanks go to Philip Temple who has retired from the committee after many years very valuable service, latterly as Secretary. He has been a great strength to us all.

We have great pleasure in presenting him with an Imperial College tankard inscribed "Philip Temple, Friend of Imperial College".

*Roderick Rhys Jones,
Chairman, 19 October 2006*