

Annual report 2011 - 2012

AGM Thursday 29 November 2012, Imperial College

1. Overview

This year we have continued to maintain the high level of activity achieved last year. Our membership has increased slightly. Finances have improved. Our donation to the College increased. We organised twelve events this year including one off campus; as we did last year. Our total audience numbers for the year were up, boosted by an estimated audience of 500 at an event we sponsored at the newly inaugurated Imperial Festival.

We continue to attract a wide range of people to membership and to our events. Through our programme of promotion many of the people attending our events are new to the College and we have continued to attract a number of school groups. In this way we help to promote science to a broad spectrum of people and to young people as a future career.

Through our programme of events we are fulfilling 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".

We increased our donation to the Rector's Scholarship Fund (previously the Student Opportunities Fund) to £3000 from £2500 last year.

Winton Capital Management Ltd has made a generous donation for the sixth year running. This donation allows us to maintain low subscriptions and low ticket prices whilst promoting Friends' events in local magazines and other media.

We continue to receive a great deal of support from the College through the provision of lecture theatres, technical support and promotion of our events. We are very appreciative of this funding and support of our activities.

We were invited to nominate a member to the re-established Imperial College Court which represents a wide range of stakeholders. It was agreed that the Chairman should represent the Association and he attended the first meeting in May 2012.

We believe that now is the time to apply for charitable status in order to enhance our image, provide further funds for the College and also circumvent difficulties we sometimes encounter in dealing with other organisations. We believe that we meet the criterion of providing a public benefit. The idea has been mooted with the College which generally supports the move.

2. Organisation

This is the seventh year that your committee has taken on the responsibility for the organisation of our membership and activities.

The College has continued to support us in a number of ways: through promoting our lectures to the many alumni through publications and emails; featuring our events prominently on the College website; providing the lecture halls and the attendant security and technical staff at no cost.

Our new website launched two years ago has continued to perform well with an increase in the number of our audience booking and paying for their ticket over the web, thus reducing our administration costs.

Our administrator Jill Cook retired in July having provided the association with outstanding service for seven years. Her husband has now retired and they are taking the opportunity to sail more from their South Coast home and to travel more.

During the summer we advertised widely for a new administrator and received a large response. We appointed Katherine Orr who has extensive experience organising events whilst working for Intercontinental Hotels and the Imperial War Museum. She read Environmental Archaeology at Edinburgh University. She lives at Harpenden.

3. Committee

The committee met five times during the last academic year.

Rodney Allen retired at the beginning of the year and we thank him for his long and committed service.

At the AGM last year we elected two new members, Katri Yates and Paul Garwood.

Other committee members serving during 2011-2012 were Bill Blackburn (Treasurer), Rita Leek (visits), John Little (IT), Zoe Perkins and Louise Birrell (alternate OAD representative), John Nuttall (strategy), Paresh Parmar (event promotion), Roderick Rhys Jones (Chairman), John Sanderson (reception), Riitta Soininen, Katri Yates (membership secretary elected 2011), Paul Garwood (elected 2011).

4. Finance

We are financially independent of the College and therefore aim to make a surplus on all our events which, together with our membership subscriptions and the donation from Winton Capital Management, provides sufficient funds to cover administration and promotion.

This year's financial statement shows that income rose by £1218 from £17,756.00 last year to £18,974 this year.

Expenditure increased by £3601.99 from £12,581.40 to £16,183.39 due to a payment for previous summer party falling in this financial year and increased administrative costs as our activities expand.

I would like to thank Bill Blackburn who has continued as our very efficient Treasurer.

5. Donation to the College

This year we increased our donation to the Rector's Scholarship Fund to £3000 from £2500 last year.

The Fund helps to promote science amongst schools, supports needy students and contributes to new facilities at the College.

Our members and sponsors are to be congratulated for the huge support that they have given us again this year.

6. Imperial College Court

The College invited Friends to nominate a member for the re-established Imperial College Court which represents a wide range of stakeholders. The Court is intended to promote a better understanding of the College and to ensure its strategies take into account the interests, aspirations and concerns of stakeholders. The Chairman represented Friends of Imperial College at the Court meeting at the end of May.

The Court's Terms of Reference include advising the Council, hosting an annual event to promote the academic work of the College, approving amendments to the Charter and making representations for the appointment of a College Visitor.

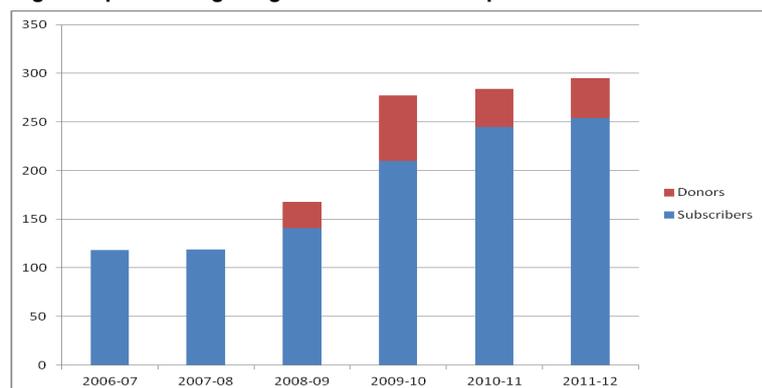
The Court has over 85 members incorporating members of the College Council and Management Board, College alumni, external members nominated by the College's Development Board, representatives from teachers associations, research sponsors, associated NHS Bodies, certain employers who recruit significant numbers of the College's graduates and post-graduates, and other stakeholders. Three elected academic staff and one elected academic related staff will serve on the Court for four years. Two Deputy Presidents of the Imperial College Union are also members of the Court. One of our Committee members, Paul Garwood, is also a member of the Court representing Alumni.

7. Membership *

Last year our membership rose by a modest 4% from 284 to 295 – see Fig 1.

Forty one donors have taken up our offer of free annual membership this year as against 39 last year. A number of them opt to become subscribers whilst continuing to donate to the College.

Besides the 295 members our database has a further 1800 email addresses of those who have attended one of our events in the last few years (1421 last year). This circulation list is valuable in promoting our events.

Fig 1 Graph showing the growth of membership and the relative level of donors

We wish to know a little more about our members and non-member supporters and have been gathering information about the connections that our members and supporters have with Imperial College. In Fig 2 we categorise them as alumni, donors, local, staff, student, school pupil, parents, other connection, no connection. Some members and supporters will fit two categories – for example an alumnus and a donor.

We are working to improve the unknowns and accuracy of these figures. The three columns are members, non-members who have attended one or more events in the last three years and non-members who have not attended in the last three years but may have attended an event before that. On the face of it the data suggest that our lectures have attracted a high proportion of people who have no connection with the college hitherto. It also shows that staff and students are coming to those events that interest them but are not attracted to becoming members.

Fig 2 Table showing the connections that members and supporters have with Imperial College

| Connections | Members | Attendee | Non-Attendee |
|----------------|---------|----------|--------------|
| Alumnus | 85 | 127 | 40 |
| Imperial donor | 56 | 2 | 2 |
| Live Locally | 17 | 15 | 6 |
| None | 44 | 262 | 197 |
| Other | 99 | 177 | 70 |
| Staff | 7 | 201 | 36 |
| Student | 5 | 278 | 101 |
| Parent | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 315 | 1,063 | 453 |

8. The year's events

We organised 12 events again this year; six public lectures and the ever popular physics graduate show making a total of seven public events. We also sponsored a repeat of the physics graduates show during the Imperial Festival,

We organised four members-only events: two Behind-the-Scenes events, the visit to the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and the Summer Party.

Our events for the year 2010-2011 are listed below

Members only

1. *Behind-the-scenes @ Department of Materials. Professor Neil Alford, Head of the Department of Materials Monday 26 September 2011*
2. *Behind-the-scenes @ Lifelong Health Project Armand Marie Leroi, Professor of Evolutionary Development Biology Wednesday 18 April 2012*
3. *Visit to Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Didcot 10 May 2012*
4. *Friends annual Summer Party Sir Keith O'Nions; 27 June 2012*

Public events

5. *The extended mind: recent experimental evidence. Dr Rupert Sheldrake, Fellow of the Institute of Noetic Sciences. Tuesday 18 October 2011*

6. *Celebrating chemistry - past, present and future. Emeritus Professor David Phillips OBE, President of the Royal Society of Chemistry. Tuesday 8 November 2011*
7. *Oddities of Science! Explosion! Implosions! Simon Foster and a team of physics graduates explore the quantum world in a show of the strangest, most intriguing and nerdiest feats that science has to offer. Wednesday 25 January 2012*
8. *The human genome: 21st Century medicine. Professor Timothy Aitman, Consultant Physician, Imperial Academic Health Sciences Centre, Chair in Clinical and Molecular Genetics, Head of Molecular Genetics and Rheumatology Thursday 2 February 2012*
9. *Where does life come from? Dr Zita Martins, Royal Society University Research Fellow, Imperial College London Thursday 15 March 2012*
10. *Plastic electronics: the coming revolution. Professor Donal Bradley, Lee-Lucas Chair of Experimental Physics, Imperial College London, Deputy Principal of the Faculty of Natural Sciences. Director, Centre for Plastic Electronics Tuesday 15 May 2012*
11. *Changing lives globally: technological innovation for health. Professor the Lord Darzi of Denham PC, KBE, Paul Hamlyn Chair of Surgery, Chairman, Institute of Global Health Innovation, Imperial College London Tuesday 12 June 2012*

Imperial College Festival sponsorship

12. *Imperial Festival sponsor of Oddities of Science show, 11 May 2012*

9. Attendance *

Our audiences increased this year to a total of about 2000 including our public, members-only and sponsored events. Last year our total was 1441.

The large increase is principally because Friends sponsored a performance of the *Oddities of Science* at the newly inaugurated Imperial Festival in May. It attracted an estimated audience of 500 in the Great Hall mostly of students, alumni, parents and some members of the public. This event gave us an opportunity to promote Friends to a large new audience.

Our seven Friends' public lectures also attracted larger audiences than last year, up from 1199 to 1421, an increase of 19%. Average attendance rose from 173 to 205.

The figures suggests that we are attracting more members of the public as two thirds of our audiences were non-members, up from 60% last year.

Once again the *Oddities of Physics* show proved our most popular event (audience of 288) with the lecture by Dr Zita Martins entitled *Where does life come from?* the second most popular with an audience of 286. Rupert Shelldrake's controversial lecture entitled *The extended mind* came a close third with 276 – see Fig3.

Fig 3 Attendance by category at Friends' public events 2010 -11

| | Member | Comp limentary | Guest | School | Staff | Student | Total non members | Total |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------|--------------|
| BTS @ Dept of Materials (Sep) | 28 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 36 |
| The extended mind: Shelldrake (Oct) | 88 | 30 | 81 | 20 | 19 | 38 | 188 | 276 |
| Annual General Meeting | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| Celebrating chemistry (Nov) | 45 | 2 | 17 | 25 | 5 | 5 | 54 | 99 |
| Oddities of Physics (Jan) | 52 | 11 | 60 | 51 | 26 | 88 | 236 | 288 |
| The human genome (Feb) | 58 | 13 | 62 | 17 | 13 | 45 | 150 | 208 |
| Where does life come from? (Mar) | 77 | 22 | 82 | 23 | 12 | 70 | 209 | 286 |
| BTS @ Lifelong Health Project (Apr) | 34 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 40 |
| Visit Rutherford Appleton Lab (May) | 21 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 23 |
| Plastic electronics (May) | 62 | 2 | 28 | 0 | 7 | 21 | 58 | 120 |
| Changing lives globally (Jun) | 51 | 9 | 43 | 0 | 22 | 29 | 103 | 154 |
| Annual Summer Party (Jun) | 34 | 5 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 53 |
| Total | 541 | 97 | 396 | 136 | 104 | 300 | 1054 | 1,605 |
| Percentage of total | 34% | 6% | 25% | 8% | 6% | 19% | 66% | 100 |

Attendance at the four events for members-only declined from 161 to 134. Strict limits on space in the laboratories visited are in part to blame. However the *Behind-the-scenes* visits are still popular as we receive more applications than we can accommodate.

As Fig 4 shows, the number of members attending our lectures are declining whilst most other types rise. In particular guests, non-members and students. The rise in numbers of guests suggests that members are confident that we will provide an entertaining and interesting evening. The rise in the number of non-member attendees suggests that our promotion is reaching out to new audiences. Our promotion to Imperial students appears to be working well. Our events have continued to be featured on the student union web site and the student weekly magazine has featured reports of some of our events. Serving wine may also have its attractions for the student body. The number of school children has remained much the same for the last three years.

Fig 4 Breakdown of types of attendee at events in each year

| | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Members | 738 | 578 | 529 |
| Guests | 262 | 361 | 396 |
| Staff | 126 | 86 | 104 |
| Student | 252 | 228 | 300 |
| School | 133 | 131 | 136 |
| Complimentaries | 0 | 9 | 97 |
| Non Members | 773 | 815 | 1033 |
| Total | 1511 | 1393 | 1562 |

With audiences overall on the increase it is somewhat anomalous to find that 73% of our audience visitors only attended one event, up from 64% last year and 53% the year before. However 17% attend two or more events and 15% three or more. This suggests that members and non-members chose carefully which lecture they are going to attend. Although the figures might suggest that our audience does not come back because they are dissatisfied, this is not borne out in the results of our audience research which shows a very high level of satisfaction. We also know that if a subject is particularly attractive people who have not attended for a year or so will book for the attractive event.

10. Audience research

We carried out two surveys of audience satisfaction during the year. Dr Zita Martins lecture *Where does life come from?* and the *Oddities of physics* show.

Both showed very high levels of satisfaction. 98% and 99% found each event very enjoyable or reasonably enjoyable. 96% and 97% found them very informative or reasonably informative. 96% said Dr Martin's lecture was very challenging or reasonably challenging. As one would expect far fewer 60% found *Oddities of Physics* as challenging.

The profile of the audience showed a wide range of ages, from under nineteen to over sixty, and education attainment from GCSE/O level to postgraduates both in arts and science. Both shows were popular (209 and 236 attendees). The physics show was particularly popular with both Imperial and school students. A higher percentage of members and their guests attended Dr Martin's lecture which suggests that our members are keen for challenging scientific subjects and many will have seen a similar physics show the previous year.

11. Member benefits

Our membership has grown modestly in the last two years so a sub-committee was set up, led by Paul Garwood, to review the costs and benefits of membership with the idea of making it more attractive.

The cost and benefit of reducing subscriptions were discussed and rejected. The benefits of having a joint membership reduction for co-habitees was also rejected principally because only a handful of couples would benefit. It was also thought that special membership rates for students and staff would not encourage many new members from this sector.

It was however agreed however that members should have the benefit of lower ticket prices for their invitees. It was agreed that price of £8 against the current price of £10 for non-members would be attractive to members.

It was felt that we should seek to increase the number of member-only events but not at the expense of our open events where the public are welcome.

We are also negotiating access to a coffee lounge near the entrance to the College on Exhibition Road which has been created for alumni.

12. Strategic development

We have continued our strategy of consolidating whilst experimenting with other kinds of events. We supported Imperial Festival in May and are looking to increase our role next year.

Following the success of our off-campus visits to Harwell, led by Rita Leek, we are planning a trip to CERN in 2013.

We have continued to improve our web-based booking and member administration system thanks to John Little. It has led to considerable reductions in administration time which we have been able to direct on marketing.

During the year we have decided to apply to the Charity Commissioners to become a charity. We believe this will attract more funds to allow us to develop our services and to provide further donations to the College. It will also regularise our status.

13. Thank you

I would like to thank our sponsors Winton Capital Management Limited, the College, our members and other supporters and particularly members of the committee and our administrator Jill Cook, all of whom have contributed so much to the smooth running and success of our year.

Roderick Rhys Jones,

Chairman, 29 November 2012