Editorial
This is the third newsletter but the first with our newly elected committee in place. The elections took place at our Annual General Meeting at Institute headquarters on September 9th.

The keynote address at the AGM was given by Prof. Sir Bill Wakeham, (Vice Chancellor of Southampton University) who spoke about the perceptions of physics and revealed something of a dichotomy between those who want to emphasise the utility of physics and those who take a more purist view of the subject as the pursuit of pure and fundamental knowledge.

Associate Professor Sue Stockelmeier who is the Director of the Australian Centre for Public Awareness of Science at the Australian National University spoke about how physics is being communicated to the public. She argued that the public only learn from formal presentations if some form of reinforcement takes place later.

A fuller account of the AGM is given in the Group’s web page
Committee
The following are your new committee members:

- **Chair**: Averil Macdonald
- **Secretary**: Martyn Bull
- **Treasurer**: Bob Boutland
- **Members**: Susan Cartwright, Pete Edwards, Bob Fairbrother, Laura Grant, Ann Marks, Paul Millar, Robert Round, David Smith, Keith Williams

Bob Fairbrother and David Smith will be in charge of the Newsletter, and Paul Millar will be the Webmaster.

We had our first committee meeting on November 6th and managed to keep everyone quiet and still in order to take a photograph.

Committee members: **standing (L to R)** Ann Marks, David Smith, Laura Grant, Robert Round, Robert Fairbrother, Keith Williams, Paul Millar, Susan Cartwright

**Seated (L to R)** Martyn Bull, Averil Macdonald, Bob Boutland

Pete Edwards was unable to be at the first committee meeting so he gets a special photographic slot all to himself.
Who are we?
We range from Peter Edwards in Durham to Averil Macdonald in Reading with connections to Southampton University. Below is a brief pen portrait of three of our members. We will give others in future newsletters.

**Averil** says, “I hold the Chair in Science Communication at the University of Reading and am the mother of two teenage daughters. I toured the UK in 2002/3 giving the Institute of Physics Schools and Colleges Lecture and have since given this lecture to over 75,000 people including audiences at the Royal Institution and the Royal Society in London. In addition to communicating science, my other drive is in encouraging girls into science and in supporting and advancing women’s careers in science. I believe it is essential that women have the full opportunity to demonstrate their skills in all spheres, and that science will advance more quickly if we make full use of all talents and approaches.”

**Laura Grant** runs an independent science communication consultancy based in London. “While I now focus on research and evaluation, my background in science communication inspires my current work. As a PhD student I ran a company from the Department of Physics at the University of Liverpool giving demonstration lectures and running workshops in schools and museums. Following this I have been involved in some larger lecture tours, co-presenting the 2003 IET Faraday Lectures (and the accompanying documentary) and the 2005 Institute of Physics Schools and Colleges lecture series.”

**Robert Round** says, “I blame Quatermass and Gagarin. I always wanted to be a scientist, even before I had a science lesson. Teaching first in ceramics and later in engineering at Staffordshire University I have never had the luxury of an audience of physicists. All my teaching now revolves around project-based learning where I try to encourage students to draw not only on their studies but also on their life experience to draw together what they know and translate it to their current project and communicate their findings to the assessors. This I apply from acoustics to xylophone design.”
Activities

What kind of meetings?

Earlier in the year we surveyed Physics Communicators group members about their preferences for meetings. We received 77 /100 responses which is a very high return. Thank you everyone.

The survey confirmed that the group is on target with what is needed by our members. Some key points were:

- London is the most favoured venue
- Saturday meetings should be avoided
- Informal meetings would be welcomed
- Engaging with public audiences was a strong theme
- There was a low desire for activity engaging the media

A more detailed summary is provided on MyIOP.

The website

Paul Millar is coordinating comments from the committee about the content of the group’s web pages. At the same time the Institute is thinking about the design of its website and about what content would be appropriate for Group pages. The intention is for guidance to be circulated before the end of the year. We would welcome any thoughts you have on this. Please send them to Paul: paul.millar@btinternet.com

MyIOP

We have been talking about the effectiveness of MyIOP. Within the committee there are mixed opinions and we have decided to have a more detailed debate. If you would like to make any comments, please send them to Laura Grant: laura@lauragrantassociates.co.uk

Workshops

We are planning to run some workshops in the coming months. If you would like us to deal with any particular issue, or if you would like to make a contribution on something in which you have a special interest, please contact Martyn Bull, our secretary.

Annual General Meeting

You might think it a little early to mention the next AGM, but this is just to let you know that the next AGM and our Summer Meeting will be held on 6th July, (not September as last time). Again, if you have anything you would like us to include, please let us know.
Feedback
The committee welcomes comments on the above and suggestions for other activities. Please contact the secretary Martyn Bull directly (martyn.bull@stfc.ac.uk 01235 445805) or through MyIOP (http://my.iop.org).

The Group’s webpage is http://pcom.iop.org

Newsletter
If you would like to include something in future editions of this newsletter please send copy to Robert Fairbrother (r.fairbrother@kcl.ac.uk) or David Smith (david.smith@brunel.ac.uk).

Joining the Group
To join the group please log onto MyIOP (http://my.iop.org), navigate to the relevant Network for the Group and select "Sign up for this network". Alternatively please contact the membership department. All groups are free to join, however to join a group you must first be a member of the Institute. Details of how to join the Institute can be found at www.iop.org