

NEWSLETTER No 16
News from 2011 - 2012

Welcome notes from Carol Thompson, WIPG Chair

Welcome to our latest newsletter – with reports of some of the things which shaped 2011 for Women in Physics. You will see here not only news of our Group, but also how we have been working with so many others around the world, of several of our sister organisations and of individuals' achievements as well.

Starting close to home, at the AGM in November 2010, we said goodbye and thank you to Dr. Nicola Wilkin as she came to the end of her term as Hon. Secretary and welcomed Amy Preece to that role. Dawn Leslie took on the role of Hon. Treasurer. A newcomer to the committee was Dr. Heather Williams, Senior Medical Physicist from Central Manchester University Hospitals.

In April, members of WIPG were part of both the UK and Ireland delegations attending the 4th International Conference on Women in Physics. This amazing event, which brings together women physicists from all around the world, is run by the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics, specifically by their working group on Women in Physics. This year it was held in Stellenbosch, South Africa – a beautiful university city in the Western Cape region – more on the conference can be found in this newsletter.

We have been maintaining our links with the Institution of Engineering and Technology, by sending representatives to the annual award of the Young Woman Engineer of the Year, and welcoming the IET to our events. Sarah Curtis of E.ON, the 2010 Young Woman Engineer runner-up and winner of the 2010 WES prize, joined us on the 4th of May, for the 2011 Very Early Career Woman Physicist award ceremony, to share her experiences.

Previous VECWP winners continue to publicise the roles of women in science, with Victoria Hodges taking part in the L'Oreal UNESCO and Zoological Society of London "Soap box science" event in July 2011. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you can find more about WIPG's involvement with EPWS - the European Platform for Women Scientists and full details of the group's Advisory Panel.

Thank you all for your support over the year, and best wishes for 2012 and beyond!
Carol.

WIPG Contacts:

Chair

Dr Carol Thompson

Hon. Secretary & Treasurer

Dr Dawn Leslie

WIPG Website:

<http://www.iop.org/activity/groups/subject/wip/index.html>



You can also find the Women in Physics Group on Facebook, see page 7



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For the
very early-career
prize

for a
woman in physics

See Page 8 for details

For your Diary

Spring 2012

Call for nominations for the
Very Early Career Woman
Physicist Award

October 2012

Award Ceremony

November 2012

WIPG AGM

Get to know your committee...

Dr Heather Williams



Heather with the state-of-the-art PETCT scanner in the Nuclear Medicine Centre, Central Manchester University Hospitals

Heather is a Senior Medical Physicist working at Central Manchester University Hospitals (CMUH). She specialises in Nuclear Medicine, a diagnostic medical imaging and treatment speciality in which radioactive tracers are administered to patients to diagnose and/or treat disease. She is one of 6 physicists in the Nuclear Medicine Centre at CMUH, working alongside clinical and technical staff to deliver a high-quality diagnostic and therapeutic service. The majority of her work involves optimising current imaging procedures and developing new image acquisition and analysis techniques. She has a particular interest in paediatric imaging, brain imaging and Positron Emission Tomography (PET). In addition, she regularly teaches at postgraduate level, and hence holds an honorary lectureship with the University of Manchester. Heather is also actively involved in Physics outreach as a STEM ambassador, giving public lectures and careers talks in local schools, and working as a demonstrator for Lab in a Lorry and the BBC's Bang Goes the Theory LIVE.

Heather's career path was fairly orthodox for a Medical Physicist: a good Physics degree (1st in Physics with Medical Physics, from Nottingham), followed by a relevant MSc (Physics and Computing in Medicine and Biology, from Manchester) and postgraduate training leading to a professional diploma from IPEM. She then took a side-step into academia to study for a PhD in quantitative PET, working between the Christie Hospital and the Department of Instrumentation and Analytical Science (DIAS) at UMIST. Whilst writing up her thesis, she returned to apply her skills within the NHS, joining CMUH in 2004.

She says: "I've joined the committee primarily to represent the many women working in Medical Physics; there are a lot of us as there is generally a good balance of men and women in the professional workforce. I'm also motivated by my personal experience of issues that women tend to wrestle with – balancing work and home responsibilities, and the impact of flexible working and maternity leave on career progression – as I have two young children and am currently working part-time."

Dr Heather Williams

WIPG Committee

2011

Ordinary Members

- Professor Philippa Browning FInstP
- Dr Gillian Butcher CPhys MInstP
- Professor Helen Gleeson OBE CPhys FInstP
- Miss Karla-Luise Herpoldt AMInstP
- Mrs Ann Marks MBE CPhys FInstP
- Dr Isobel Piper MInstP
- Miss Amy Preece MInstP
- Dr Heather Williams MInstP

Diary of activities 2011

February 2011

Committee meeting

May 2011

Committee meeting and Very Early Career Award Ceremony

November 2011

Dr Elizabeth Pollitzer spoke on her Experience of genSET and the Gender Summit. AGM and Committee meeting

Congratulations

At the recent International Conference on Frontiers of Polymers and Advanced Materials, held in Pretoria (May 2011), one of our committee members, Helen Gleeson was presented with an award in Recognition of her Achievements in Scientific Endeavors.

Helen was one of two women at the conference who received the award, which was presented at the conference dinner, having had her face painted in traditional Zulu style! The conference covered a wide variety of topics in materials science and Helen gave a Plenary Lecture on Laser Tweezing in Liquid Crystals. Attending the conference also gave the opportunity to follow up on a Royal Society funded visit to the Laser Institute in Pretoria, made in September 2010. Helen is following up this trip to Africa with a visit to Nigeria in January 2012 to explore possible new collaborations and interactions with the University of Nigeria.

*Professor Helen F Gleeson OBE FInstP
School of Physics and Astronomy
The University of Manchester*

IOP Awards Ceremony dinner – receiving the Juno Champion Awards

It was my first time. The invitation said: Black tie and orders. I was a little bit stressed by Black tie, orders: no problem, have not yet got any. But I took my husband Daniel as my guest and I was not looking forward to getting his outfit. To my big relief we managed to get everything one week before the event without any problems.

The dinner took place in the Landmark hotel in Marylebone, a rather glitzy and grand place, exactly what I expected for the equivalent of the Oscars in Physics. Drinks were served in the glass-roofed courtyard of the hotel. The guests had to walk up a glamorous staircase to a balcony where everyone was greeted by the president of the IOP. A pianist provided the background music and champagne was flowing freely.

The crowd consisted of elderly ladies and gentlemen, heavily clad in orders, middle aged rugged looking James Bond type men, and, I can happily report, without Bond girls but with their same aged partners and some younger faces. It showed that I have been in the business for a while since I met quite a few people I knew from different conferences and collaborations. The latest gossip was exchanged and in no time we were asked to go to the dining room. It seems to be the latest fashion at dinner parties to separate couples and mix with other guests. I was lucky and was seated between Mark and Martin from Imperial College who entertained me all night with gossip and funny stories about colleagues and students. I was told the award ceremony itself could be long and strenuous, but it was not as bad as anticipated.

My heart went faster when the Juno awards were given. Even though the Juno committee just supports the Department to achieve the Champion status it felt like a real reward for all of us when Tracey (Royal Holloway), Irene (York) and Lindsey (Glasgow) collected the awards. After everything was over the committee and the award winners gathered, hugged each other and exchanged congratulations. Let's hope that next time we will have at least three Champions again. It is doable and definitely worth the effort. We need more women in physics.

Susanne Klein, Juno Awards Committee, Hewlett Packard in Bristol

2011 IUPAP Conference

The IUPAP Working Group on Women in Physics

In 1999 at the IUPAP (International Union of Pure and Applied Physics) General Assembly a resolution was passed which set up the Working Group for Women in Physics with a mandate to survey the present situation (regarding women in physics) and report to the Council and the liaison committees and to suggest means to improve the situation. The most visible response of the group was to set up the first international conference of women in physics (ICWIP) in 2002 in Paris. It was such a success that the Working Group has continued to organise these conferences every 3 years, the latest being in South Africa, as you can read about elsewhere in the newsletter.

I was privileged to be invited to sit on the working group in 2010, while chair of WIPG, in recognition of the work that goes on in the UK. There are 12 members covering each continent, with regular changeover of personnel from different countries within each continent. Thus there are two or three working group members looking after a region, which usually means contacting a country's national physical society representative and/or country working group leader to encourage them to attend ICWIP, submit data and generally to participate in women in physics issues. Looking at the information for Europe, some 36 countries have participated in ICWIP, corresponding to 328 different people, with 12 working groups being set up since the first ICWIP (the UK is one of a handful which already had some form of working group in existence before then). The role then of the working group, as I see it, is to encourage countries to set up their own working group, and enable networking and sharing of good practice. It is also there to report to and inform IUPAP, particularly in producing resolutions for the IUPAP General Assembly, which it does after each conference.

The latest resolutions can be found at http://wgwip.df.uba.ar/ICWIP11_resolutions_final.pdf

The working group also instigated the Global Survey of Physicists, the preliminary results of which were presented in Stellenbosch. A staggering 15,000 people from 130 countries responded, which should give some statistically significant and interesting results. We will be disseminating the results as they become available, so look out for them.

At each conference one of the items for discussion for the resolutions is whether there is still a need for the working group to exist and if its mandate has changed. While the last 10 years has seen improvements around the world, progress is still slow and we keep agreeing on the need for the working group, which IUPAP also endorses. I am proud and pleased to sit on the working group but I will also be pleased when the day comes that the group is no longer needed!

Gillian Butcher



This triennial meeting is organized under the auspices of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) and in 2011 was hosted by the South African Institute of Physics (SAIP) and Women in Physics in South Africa (WiPiSA). ICWIP 2011 provided a forum for both scientific presentations and for discussion of issues related to attracting, retaining and improving the status of women in physics.



The three previous conferences were held in Paris (2002), Rio de Janeiro (2005) and Seoul (2008). In 2011, the venue was Stellenbosch, Western Cape, South Africa. At this fantastic event, women physicists from all around the world – literally from Austria to Zambia, were able to meet up and share their experiences of the world of physics. There were over 230 representatives from 50 countries.

The UK and Ireland formed two separate teams, each participating fully in the poster sessions, workshops, discussion groups and the outreach event for school girls. The keynote speakers came from all over the globe – including former IOP President Prof. Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, with a memorable talk on pulsars!

Workshops were run on a variety of topics – including “Attracting girls to physics”, “Leaving and entering a career in Physics” and “Improving the workplace environment for women” – this last chaired by Gillian Butcher, former Chair of WIPG. Another former Chair, Ann Marks, presented to the conference on the activities of EPWS (European Platform for Women Scientists).

The conference ran for four, full, days – full of news, challenges and encouragement. Generally speaking, the UK and Ireland were among the nations who are now actively addressing the situations faced by women in physics, so it was our role to support and advise where we could. That is not to say that there are always things to learn!

Some time was available during the conference for visitors to explore the area! As well as visits to some local laboratories (the iThemba nuclear physics lab, Stellenbosch University’s laser facilities) and the Institute for Maritime Technology in Cape Town, delegates were able to visit the beautiful Cape Town site of the South African Astronomical Observatory and learn how to navigate with the Southern Cross (rather than the northern Pole Star). Not surprisingly, other popular excursions were to Cape Town itself and to a selection of wineries!

After the conference, we were invited to stay on and participate in an outreach event for schoolgirls who travelled substantial distances to join in. The day, with a marvellous range of speakers and topics, and a hall full of enthusiastic girls, made a most appropriate end to the week. Let’s hope the girls took even something away with them, and that the new relationships forged by the rest of the women involved in the whole conference can be out to good use!



UK team, plus Gillian Butcher (from IUPAP working group) and Jocelyn.



The view from our hotel



Garden at SA Astronomical Observatory, Cape Town – no radio telescopes here!

Our Voice in Europe



European Platform of Women Scientists: a structural link - for women scientists and policy makers

The European Platform of Women Scientists is an umbrella organization bringing together networks of women scientists and organizations committed to gender equality in research in all disciplines in Europe 27 and the countries associated to the European Union.

The EPWS aims to:

- Promote networking among women scientists,
- Enhance the understanding and the inclusion of the gender issue in science and research policy in all scientific fields,
- Ensure that women scientists' interests are taken into consideration when setting the political research agenda.

Established in Brussels in November 2005, with EU funding, as an international non-profit association (AISBL), the EPWS has relied upon its members' voluntary efforts to continue since 2008 and has continued to develop. EPWS now has a membership base of networks, associations and individuals from more than 40 different countries. The Board of Administration is international and at present four of its eleven members are physicists. The Women in Physics Group is one of over a hundred member organisations and the EPWS represents more than 12,000 women scientists.

The 2011 General Assembly was held in Budapest in June and was linked to the EU Presidency Conference on "Training, Career and Mobility of Researchers in the Innovation Union", which included a special session on Careers and Mobility of Women Researchers.

At the invitation of MEP Leonidas Donskis, of Lithuania, EPWS held a lunch-debate at the European Parliament in Brussels, on 31st January 2012, entitled "Towards a Gender Balanced Science Culture to Foster Innovation". Speakers included Gilles Laroche, Head of the Unit Gender and Ethics, European Commission DG Research and Innovation who outlined the Commission's Current Policy Regarding Gender in Science. Then there were reports on the European Research Projects: GENDERA, GENISLAB, HELENA, INTEGER, SHEMERA and LYMOS, which are addressing the gender imbalance in science. Finally MEPs, took part in a round table discussion. The event sparked the dialogue between women scientists and policy makers regarding the European Commission's Horizon 2020 proposal. You can find more information about this event on our news pages at www.epws.net.

The EPWS is the voice of women scientists in EU research and provides a valuable network for women in science across Europe. Do visit the newly rebuilt website at www.epws.org and sign up to receive our electronic newsletters.

If you know of any science-related conference, event, calls, funding possibility which or other news which will be of interest to women scientists across Europe, please send an email to communications@epws.org.

Ann Marks
Member of the Board of Administration and newsletter editor
European Platform of Women Scientists

MEET THE ADVISORY PANEL

The WIPG Advisory Panel has continued to play an active role during 2011. We are grateful to those members who took on the role of judges for the Very Early Career Woman Physicist of the Year Award. There was an excellent field of entries consequently it was not an easy task. Additionally, several of the Panel have offered very constructive support and advice, during the year. They are all busy people and the committee would like to take this opportunity to thank the Panel for their interest and support.

Panel Members:

Prof. Dame S Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Past President of the Institute of Physics (2008 to 2010)

Prof. Christine Davies, University of Glasgow and Chair of the Diversity Committee

Dr Dimitra Darambara, Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, (once chair WIPG)

Prof. Dame Athene Donald, University of Cambridge

Prof. Gillian Gehring, University of Sheffield, Team Leader ICWiP 2002, EPWS BoA to 2009

Prof. Judith Glover, University of Roehampton, School of Business and Social Sciences

Prof. Claudine Hermann, Ordre de la Légion d'Honneur (*commandeur*), Vice President EPWS, Ecole Polytechnique, Paris, and Femmes & Sciences, France

Prof. Dame Julie Higgins, Professor of Polymer Science, Department of Chemical Engineering, Imperial College London

Prof. Ruth Lynden-Bell, University of Cambridge

Prof. Averil Macdonald, Professor of Science Communication, University of Reading

Prof. Peter Main, Director of Education and Science, Institute of Physics

Ms Laura Sawyer, Clinical Scientist, Medical Physics and Bioengineering, Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust.

Prof. Elaine Seddon, University of Manchester and Cockcroft Institute Daresbury

Dr Uschi Steigenberger, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory STFC

Dr Allyson Reed, Director, Strategy and Communications at Technology Strategy Board

Dr Helen Walker, Chair, RAS Committee for Women in Astronomy and Geophysics

Dr Elizabeth Whitelegg, Open University, Science Education, IOP Council

Prof. Julia Yeomans, University of Oxford, Team Leader ICWiP 2005, EPWS Council

Join us on Facebook!

We have started our own Facebook page to keep you up to date on the latest goings on in the world of science and the Women in Physics Group.

We would like this page to become a thriving site for sharing information and celebrating women in science. Why not join us at:



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Women-In-Physics-Group-Institute-of-Physics/187850761253201?sk=wall>
or search for "Women in Physics Group Institute of Physics."

Karla-Louise Herpoldt and Heather Williams administer the page, so if you know of events, funding calls or other information that may be of interest to WiPG members that you would like us to advertise, please message them via facebook. Unfortunately we are unable to advertise job vacancies.

Very Early Career Woman Physicist Award 2011

The 2011 Very Early Career Woman Physicist award attracted an increased number of applicants from the UK and Ireland, and culminated on the 4th May with the presentation of the award to Cherry Canovan, for her work on metamaterials at Lancaster and her extensive outreach work. Having made a dramatic change in career direction, re-training as a physicist while starting a family, she will have a lot to share with the women in physics community!

Cherry, plus two of the three runners-up (Arlene O'Neill and Frances Charlwood – the third, Renee Hlozek, could not be there on the day) gave fascinating presentations on their work and outreach, in an afternoon which also featured, as guest speaker, Professor Amanda Cooper Sarkar of Oxford.



Cherry Canovan with Prof. Amanda Cooper Sarkar



VEC runners-up Arlene O'Neill and Frances Charlwood, with WIPG Chair Carol Thompson

The Shell and Institute of Physics Award for the Very Early Career Woman Physicist of the Year

6th annual award - £1000 prize

The Women in Physics Group invites applications from women at the start of their careers in physics who have made a substantial contribution to the subject and have undertaken activities to support and encourage others in the field. The prize is awarded annually to a woman who is within five years of the award of her first degree in physics (Bachelor's or Master's) and is either working as a physicist or is engaged in postgraduate study in physics.

The winner will be presented with £1,000 donated by Shell and an award certificate at a major Institute of Physics Women in Physics event in October 2012. As well as providing recognition of the winner's work, the award will also provide valuable networking opportunities. Applicants must therefore be resident in the UK or Ireland at the time of applying for the award.

The Very Early Career Woman Physicist of the Year Award seeks to recognise the outstanding work of women embarking on a career in physics and to promote the career opportunities open to people with physics qualifications.

All entries must be received by 1st June 2012

Entry forms may be downloaded from www.iop.org/VECA