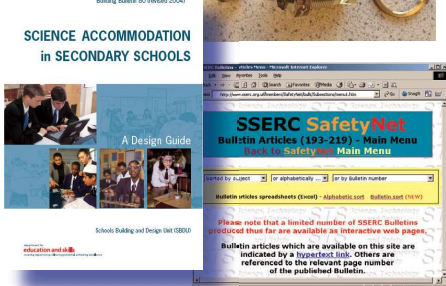
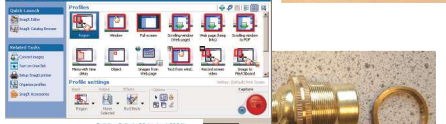
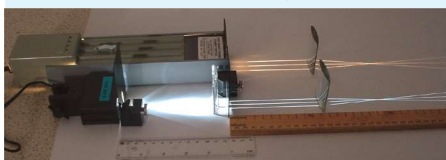


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SSERC Conference: Towards a Science Nation

Keynote address: Professor Anne Glover

Delegates at this year's SSERC Conference were treated to an engaging and inspiring keynote address from Professor Anne Glover, Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland. Professor Glover's passion for science was evident from the start as she enthusiastically described her delight at a hands-on practical for school students she had been shown during a visit to SSERC some weeks earlier. This practical, on 'bioluminescent bacteria as biosensors', was a collaborative development between SAPS, SSERC and the University of Edinburgh, and is based upon work that Professor Glover and her research team at the University of Aberdeen had carried out.



Professor Glover addresses SSERC Conference

Professor Glover highlighted that the creation of the role of Chief Scientific Adviser draws attention to the support for science accorded by the Scottish Executive. She described how an important function of the Chief Scientific Adviser will be to strengthen the science base within Scotland and to help raise the profile of science amongst the people of Scotland. Professor Glover went on to say that her perception of Scotland as a Science Nation was one in which science was accepted and appreciated throughout the whole of society. It was also crucial to use high quality scientific evidence to underpin policy-making decisions and to have a scientifically literate population able to engage in debate over challenging and sometimes controversial issues.

In terms of building a Science Nation, Professor Glover suggested that Scotland already has a good base with Scottish scientists at the forefront in the development of 'green' technologies. Scotland also rated amongst the top performing countries in science education in the developed nations as measured by The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2003. However our challenge is to keep children's natural curiosity alive and stimulate them to remain engaged and fired-up about science, so that a sufficient number study the sciences in 5th and 6th years at school and then at university. Young people are often unaware that qualifications in science subjects can serve to open doors to a wide range of careers, commercial as well as scientific. Professor Glover highlighted the important role that SSERC has in supporting teachers and technical staff in their efforts to make practical science interesting and exciting such that young people are engaged and their curiosity aroused. She then went on to talk about Science Centres saying that in addition to their general appeal, they also have an important role to play alongside schools in supporting the science curricula by providing complementary opportunities to kindle interest and curiosity.

Professor Glover urged that scientists recognise their responsibilities to let society know of the first-rate work that is being carried out and to act as positive role models to young people. This cannot be done without direct communication and scientists must go out and talk about what they actually do.

Drawing her address to a close, Professor Glover stressed that our future economic growth, survival and participation in the global economy will depend upon having well-trained scientists, and that we must have a scientifically literate and informed society that is active in the debate on the use of future technologies. *SSERC would like to thank Professor Glover for such an inspiring, informative and enjoyable presentation and to wish her every success in her new role as Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland.*