



Institute of **Physics**
in Ireland

NEWSLETTER

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Autumn 2001

Welcome from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings! And an official welcome to 'The Institute of Physics in Ireland' as the 'Irish Branch of the Institute of Physics' is now officially known. With our new title has come something of a face lift. For example, I hope that you all like the new crest, shown above, and designed by Peter van der Burgt. You will be seeing more of this at exhibitions, on stationary and next years Spring Weekend Conference.

I would like to thank you for electing me as the Chair of the Institute of Physics in Ireland. I hope to visit as many Universities/Colleges and industrial sites as possible over the coming year or so and look forward to meeting many of you then. I will strive, ably assisted by our new Secretary Peter van der Burgt and Treasurer Jason Greenwood, to approach the level of excellence of service provided by our outgoing Committee. Many thanks to them for all their hard work and a great start.

As a woman, and as one working in industry, my profile and approach may look a little unfamiliar to this role. I will certainly be aiming to expand on the industrial front and increase awareness of the issues associated with women working in physics. I look to my Colleagues on the Committee to ensure the academic excellence! But there are also other groups whose involvement we will be encouraging, including the Young Professionals and retired members.

In the Speakers Programme you will find details of some of the coming year's events. We are fortunate to have an extremely high calibre and diverse Speakers Programme. The Spring Weekend will be held at a scenic venue in the Cork-Kinsale area. The theme this year will be Physics and Health, in the broadest sense.

Other objectives for the coming year are to see erected at Queens University Belfast a Blue Plaque for John Stewart Bell, to follow the lead of other Branches and run a Physics Communication day, and to continue to lobby actively on the funding of Physics research in the Republic.

In the meantime please contact myself or any other Committee member if you would like to express a view, make a suggestion, or otherwise contribute to the Branch's activities.

Dr. Julie Corbett
Chairperson, Institute of Physics in Ireland

Frontiers in Physics

The National Commission for the Teaching of Physics, which is part of the Royal Irish Academy, arranged a one day conference for physics teachers called *Frontiers in Physics* on 22 September at Trinity College Dublin in the Sami Nasr Institute of Advanced Materials. Sixty six physics teachers signed up for the conference.



Dr. Louise Bradley and Professor Eric Finch at the Frontiers in Physics Conference for Physics Teachers.

The Institute of Physics in Ireland sponsored the event through participation in the planning and running of the day and bringing two of last year's teams from the Paperclip Physics competition to present their demonstrations and ideas to the teachers. The Institute's new stand was also on display, presenting a wide selection of books, careers literature and information on physics education. The seminar programme included a review of some of the demonstration ideas from Physics on Stage presented by Dr. Angela Kelly and Dr. Cathal Flynn, and three excellent lectures: *Data Logging in Physics* presented by Anna Walshe, *Solving the Mysteries of Life, The Universe and Everything with Astronomy* by Dr. Lorraine Hanlon, and *Packing from Peas to Pomegranates* by Prof. Denis Weaire.

The seminar day was very well received by the teachers who appreciated the opportunity to communicate and exchange ideas. Many expressed the hope that the seminar day would become a regular event in the future.

Alison Hackett
IOP Representative in Ireland

New crest

In May 2001 the Committee of the IOP in Ireland adopted a new crest designed by Peter van der Burgt for a period of 5 years. The crest has the form of a celtic knot with ribbons in green, dark green, red and purple. A black-and-white version of the crest is displayed on the front of this newsletter.

The new crest replaces the green circular crest with the letters IOP, which has been in use for many years. Motivation for the new crest was that it should symbolise "Physics in Ireland" rather than "The Institute of Physics". In the new crest the two shades of green represent Ireland, and the shape of the celtic knot symbolises the wave-particle duality in physics. The colour red connects with the colour of the word "of" in the Institute of Physics in Ireland logo (the logo is displayed in black-and-white above the word NEWSLETTER in the header on the front of this newsletter).

News from the Colleges

Trinity College Dublin

Sami Nasr Institute of Advanced Materials

The Sami Nasr Institute of Advanced Materials was formally opened by Dr. Micheal Woods TD, Minister for Education and Science; the building includes new teaching and research facilities in Physics. Science Foundation Ireland has appointed Prof. Mike Coey, Dr. Igor Schvets and Prof. John Pethica FRS as Principal Investigators in ICT. Prof Pethica will move to Trinity College from Oxford University.

Staff News

Prof. John Hegarty has begun his term as Provost of the College. Prof. Werner Blau has begun a second term as Head of Department; he was recently elected Member of the Royal Irish Academy. Prof. Ian McAulay has been elected President of the Expert Group that advises the EU on Radiation Protection.

Prof. Vincent McBrierty will retire October 2001; a special symposium on Technology Transfer related to Physics will be held in his honour later in the year.

Dublin Institute of Technology

Staff News

Enda O'Flatharta has retired from the School from Physics in DIT, Kevin Street after a career in serving the Physics community here in Ireland. Enda should be well known to most of members of the IOP in Ireland. For many years he organised a very successful in-service physics laboratory training course for second-level teachers. Enda also served on the IOP Committee, sub-group committees, and on the RIA National Committee for the Teaching of Physics.

The IOP in Ireland would like to wish Enda and his wife Marie a happy retirement. Enda has a reputation of putting to good practical use the laws of physics on the golf course; his opponents are worried that he will now have more time to excel in the practical applications of gravity!

Dr. Siobhan Daly has recently been promoted to the post of Assistant Head of the School of Physics in DIT Kevin Street. Congratulations to Siobhan, and we wish her success in her new post.

New degree course in Clinical Measurement

The DIT has just commenced with a new degree course in Clinical Measurement. This course is a mix of Physics and Physiology. It is designed to train students for a career working in physiological measurement, e.g. ECG, EEG, GI measurements, Pulmonary Function, Vascular Measurements etc. within the health service. Of course graduates from the course can go into many other areas as well. If any schools are interested in finding out about the course they should contact, Dr. Pat Goodman, phone 01-4024782, email: pat.goodman@dit.ie. (The course code is FT229).

Dublin City University

Staff appointment

Dr. Emil Prodanov has joined the staff as Lecturer in physics. He has worked previously in Sofia, Athens and in TCD.

Research Grants

Plasma research groups in the School of Physical Sciences have recently been awarded the following major grants:

1. EU RTD project on "High Performance Negative Ion Sources"
2. EI Advanced Technology Research Programme (ATPR) "Application of Plasma Diagnostics to Dual Frequency Capacitive Plasma Etch Reactors"
3. EU Marie Curie Training Site: "Training in Plasma Science and Technology"

Student Award

Lee Carroll (now a Ph.D. student in TCD) has won the Fryar Medal (DCU) and the Ger Dullea Award of the Instrument Society of America for his final year project. His work on "Auto-compensating interferometer for measuring the refractive index of supercooled water as a function of temperature at 632.8 nm" has been recently accepted for publication in Applied Optics.

Newsletter Publication

This newsletter is published twice a year by the Institute of Physics in Ireland and distributed to all members and affiliated schools. We invite contributions from any member. Contributions should be sent to the editor, if possible by e-mail, or alternatively in hard copy to the following address:

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Further information on the Institute of Physics in Ireland and its activities, including back numbers of this newsletter, are available at <http://www.tcd.ie/IOP/>.