Imperial does the double

Abigail Smith Communications

Dr Diana Shaul receives her medal for her work testing Einstein’s Theory of General Relativity.

MEDALS recognising outstanding contributions to space science have been awarded to two physicists at Imperial.

The Zeldovich Medal, conferred by the Russian Academy of Sciences, is awarded to planetary physicist Marina Galand and astrophysicist physicist Diana Shaul. The medals will be presented at the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) Scientific Assembly in Beijing, which take place from 16–23 July 2006.

Welcoming the double achievement, Sir Peter Knight, Principal of the Faculty of Natural Sciences said: “This is fantastic news and I’m delighted to be able to congratulate both Diana and Marina. It is particularly significant that this has been achieved by two women in what has traditionally been seen as a very male dominated environment. I think this speaks volumes about the strides Imperial has taken to create a supportive atmosphere for female academics.”

The two winners are each recognised for their achievements in different areas of space science. Dr Shaul is currently working on part of the LISA (Laser Interferometer Space Antenna) project, which aims to test Einstein’s Theory of General Relativity. She explained: “Einstein posited that a moving mass produces ripples in the fabric of space-time and it is these ripples, known as gravitational waves, that LISA hopes to detect. My research is related to eliminating noise caused by cosmic ray and solar particles that might confuse LISA’s search. The project is hugely exciting since it has the potential to open a new window on the astrophysical events that shape our universe.”

Dr Shaul says she was taken by surprise at receiving the prestigious award. “Now that the news has settled in, I’m absolutely thrilled. My work forms part of a collaboration and I’m grateful to the first class international team I work with and also my Imperial astrophysics colleagues for their continued support,” she adds.

Imperial’s second winner Marina Galand receives the award for her research on the effect energy sources, such as solar radiation, have on the atmosphere of planets and moons. She is currently reengaging the properties of Saturn’s moon Titan using observations made by NASA’s Cassini spacecraft, which is now orbiting Saturn. She said: “I’m very honoured to have been nominated for the award. At this stage of my career, the medal represents a strong encouragement for continuing my research, and I’m grateful to all those who have encouraged and advised me over the years.”

The Zeldovich Medal, named in memory of astrophysicist Yakov B. Zeldovich, is awarded to up to eight scientists every two years by the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Committee on Space Research. It aims to promote the work of scientists under 36, who are judged to have made an outstanding contribution to space science.

Previous winners of the medal at Imperial include Elizabeth Lucek of the Space and Atmospheric Physics group in 2004 and Michele Doughtery, now Professor of Space Physics, in 1996.

A matter of principal

Laura Gallagher Communications

Professor Dame Julia Higgins has been announced as the next Principal of the Faculty of Engineering.

Dame Julia is currently Professor of Polymer Science in the Department of Chemical Engineering and Chemical Technology and Director of the Graduate School of Engineering and Physical Sciences. She will take up the post of Principal at the beginning of the new academic year in October 2006.

Welcoming her, the Rector said of her appointment: “She is not only a leader in her own field, for which she has been recognised through Fellowships of the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering, she is also a passionate advocate of science and engineering in general and for the raised profile of women in these disciplines in particular.”

Professor King will take up the post of Vice Chancellor at Aston University. Thanking her for her contribution to the College since joining as Faculty Principal in 2004, which includes the last year alone has seen the launch of the EnViron project and the Energy Futures Lab, Sir Richard added: “The Faculty has benefited greatly from her experience and enthusiasm and I am sure her abilities will serve Aston well.”

And now for something completely different

Alex Platt Editor

Catherine Fiason, Tanaka Business School, is given expert advice on jewellery making.

EVEF fancied popping away from work for a spot of relaxing Tai Chi when things get a bit too stressful? Or maybe you’ve already fancied a go at salsa dancing?

These were just two of the many activities on offer at Learning at Work Day last month, with College staff also having the chance to attend taster sessions of several different languages, tackle the Ethos’ climbing wall and take part in historic walks around the South Kensington area, amongst other things.

The purpose of the day is to offer people at work the opportunity to learn something new or develop an area of skill or knowledge that is completely different from their normal job.

Judy Barrett, manager of the Staff Development Unit said: “It is a national event, with hundreds of organisations participating and this is the fourth year that we have armed events to celebrate the day here at Imperial.”

Each year the range and number of events on offer has grown.

continued on page three...

IN BRIEF

Altered estate

David Brooks Wilson has been appointed as College Property Advisor with immediate effect. He will advise the Rector on campus property matters and, in particular, take responsibility for the Wye Project and the delivery of current large construction projects, such as Southside and Burlington Domes. He will be a member of the Portfolio Review Board and the Property Advisory Committee.

Galen Medal

Beverita Professor of Rheumatology, Sir Ravinder Mann, has been awarded the Galen Medal, presented annually by the Society of Apothecaries. Previous recipients include two Nobel Prize winners, Professor Sir Peter Mansfield and Oliver Miller.

Learning tower savour

Emeritus Professor John Burland, CBE, has won the Royal Academy of Engineering’s 2006 Public Engagement prize for his "Learning Tower" project in recognition of his work generating interest in the public and the media. Professor Burland, who helped prevent the Learning Tower of Paul from toppling over, received his medal last week. He was also involved in the extension of London Underground’s Jubilee line, ensuring that the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben were unharmed by the tunneling taking place beneath them.

What a good IDEA

The IDIA, Leeds summer school is still taking bookings for the Biotechnol ogy and Bioengineering Applications in Medicine programme taking place 17-22 September 2006 in Moos, Vercia, Switzerland.

Meet and eat at 58

Looking for somewhere welcoming, elegant and friendly on campus to entertain guests, colleagues or friends? Then give the Garden Room restaurant a try. Located on the ground floor of 38 Princess Gate, the restaurant is open to all members of Imperial, Monday to Friday from 08.30-17.30. Lunches are served from 12.00 until 14.00 with a main course and a drink costing between £10.00-£13.00 per person. In addition to dining, the venue is available for meetings and presentations offering three meeting rooms capable of holding between 18-36 people, with full audio-visual kit available on request. It can be also used for pre-booked functions and events during the evenings. Drop in, call 414 (0)20 7594/0872 or email Maria.Cripa@imperial.ac.uk for details.
Just dropping in

Alex Platt Editor

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Is it a giant washing machine? No, it's a new Philips MRI scanner being delivered through the roof to the Hammersmith Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit last month. This new state-of-the-art scanner upgrades an original prototype neonatal MRI system, and remains the only dedicated neonatal unit MRI in the world. The new scanner will be at the centre of research in neonatal medicine and imaging science. The first project for the new scanner is an MRC-funded study of drugs to prevent brain damage in preterm infants.

Professor of Neonatal Medicine and Consultant Neonatologist David Edwards said: "This is an example of teamwork at its best. Professor [sic] Hjelm's team in the Imaging Sciences Department has produced a fantastic research opportunity for newborn infants, as well as an invaluable clinical tool. The doctors and nurses on the neonatal unit are looking forward to using it to improve the outlook for newborn babies everywhere."

Protecting patient privacy

Tony Stephenson Communications

Researchers at Imperial argue that a system of telephone passwords could be used to protect patient confidentiality.

Writing in the British Journal of General Practice, they believe a password system could be used to protect the confidentiality of patients, stopping any inadvertent disclosure of confidential patient information, particularly for certain groups such as teenagers, celebrities or those suffering from sexually transmitted diseases.

Daniel Sokoll, an ethicist from the College, and one of the authors, said: "Many patients currently use the telephone to obtain test results and other medical information from their GPs. However the current system is open to abuse, as it is possible for non-authorised patients to take advantage of the system to access confidential information."

New Chair in energy materials

Laura Gallagher Communications

A NEW Chair in energy materials is being created at Imperial College London in memory of fuel cell pioneer Professor Brian Steele.

Professor Steele, who worked in the Department of Materials at Imperial for 37 years, was instrumental in the development of solid oxide fuel cells. He was also a founding member of spin-out company Ceres Power, which is commercialising fuel cell technology.

The new Chair, which will be the first named Chair in the Department of Materials, has been made possible thanks to a generous donation to the Department from Professor Steele’s family. The College is now looking for a high profile, internationally-leading researcher to take up the post in October.

The Chair acknowledges Professor Steele’s work on fuel cells, which convert fuels such as natural gas or hydrogen into energy by combining them with oxygen. Where the cells are fuelled by hydrogen, the only products are energy and water, so they have the potential to provide an efficient and environmentally friendly power source. Solid oxide fuel cells, which work at high temperatures, are particularly suited for stationary applications such as providing heat and power for buildings.

Professor Bill Lee, Head of the Department of Materials, said: "This is a really fitting tribute to Professor Steele and his work. Brian Steele was one of the early champions of solid oxide fuel cells and one of the few people in Europe to continue research in this area in the late 80s and early 90s. His work laid the foundations for the current worldwide growth in solid oxide fuel cell research and commercialisation. We’re pleased to have the opportunity to bring someone into the Department to work in energy materials, which is an important area of great current interest."

Professor Steele came to Imperial College in 1957 as a Nuffield investigator, undertaking postgraduate study in solid electrolytes. He joined the academic staff in 1965 after being awarded a doctorate for his work on galvanic cells for thermoelectric studies. He became Professor of Materials Science in 1981 and stayed in the Department of Materials until his retirement in 1994. Professor Steele died in 2003 aged 74.

"This Chair is a very appropriate way to honour Brian and his pioneering work," said Professor of Materials Science, John Kilner, who worked with Professor Steele from 1978 onwards. "Brian was considered to be one of the founding fathers of the field of solid state ionic, an essential element of the study of materials for energy applications for devices such as batteries and fuel cells."

"He was also a great champion of materials science and started the first undergraduate course in the College, going on to inspire a generation of students in this new subject. For his efforts to promote the subject nationally, he was awarded the MBE in 1996," added Professor Kilner.
A change of head for Heart and Lung

As Imperial welcomes Professor Tony Newman Taylor as new head of the NHI, it says goodbye to Professor Malcolm Green, who retired at the end of March. Tony Stephenson, Communications, went to meet Professor Newman Taylor, while Reporter Pete Platt talked to Professor Green about his career, plans for retirement and choice of tie.

ANTHONY Newman Taylor took over as Head of the National Heart and Lung Institute (NHLI) at Imperial College London on 1 April 2006, succeeding Professor Malcolm Green, whom he describes as a "hand act to follow." Professor Newman Taylor, 62, began his career as a consultant physician at the Royal Brompton Hospital, representing the UK’s largest clinical and research department in Europe, investigating the occupational and environmental causes of lung disease, particularly asthma.

Describing the opportunity to lead NHLI as "a great privilege to take over such a successful and highly respected institution with a fantastic reputation to build on," Professor Newman Taylor added: "Imperial provides extraordinary opportunities for multidisciplinary research."

He believes the College can further strengthen the link between basic and translational research, ultimately improving patient care. He cited the development of CT imaging and MRI as examples involving physicists, computer scientists and clinicians, which have led to major improvements in patient care, and translated into, improved patient care.

He believes that research needs to travel from "bench to bed" and back again to enable basic scientists both to provide research for the improvement of patient care and to address clinicians' problems.

Professor Green retires

Malcolm Green began his career at Oxford University followed by St Thomas' Medical School. He was appointed consultant physician in 1975 at St Bartholomew's and Royal Brompton Hospitals and continued at RHB until retirement, with academic credentials including Dean of the NHLI, Head of the British Postgraduate Medical Federation, and a spell as Head of R&D for the NHS. Throughout his career, he has led a research group focusing on respiratory physiology and respiratory muscle function in health and when affected by disease.

On the creation of the Imperial College School of Medicine in 1997, Professor Green was appointed Vice Principal for Postgraduate Medicine and Campus Dean at St Mary's. In what he describes as "challenging times", he saw the pre-clinical school move to South Kensington, leaving St Mary's "bereft". His determination led to major refurbishment of the buildings and academic faculty at St Mary's, driven by his strategic focus on creating a world class research centre for infection and immunity.

Appointed Head of the NHLI in 2001, Professor Green coordinated its research strategies across six campuses, consolidating fundamental science and clinical research. The Institute has grown to the size of a small university with 55 professors, 500 members of staff and an annual turnover of nearly £30 million. He describes the biggest task as: "Getting people to work together across Imperial to maximise the benefits of this incredibly scientific and rich College, while protecting scientists from the ever flowing tide of academic bureaucracy and regulation."

Throughout his career, Professor Greens has become well known at the College for his distinctive choice of tie featuring the red balloons of the British Lung Foundation logo. As founder of the charity in 1985, Chairman of 10 years, then President, he explained: "I do have more than one of the ties. The balloon is the logo of the Foundation and its outline makes "O", which is of course essential to life! I've worn a tie with this design since it was created in 1985."

Despite the "stimulus and excitement of developing and implementing academic strategy and all the wonderful colleagues" he has worked with over the years, Professor Green sees his retirement as a chance for new activities and adventures. He said: "I am discovering a whole new world out there. I'm enjoying having time to pursue my passions for travel, sailing and skiing, and my family. It's refreshing to have the space to take advantage of so many opportunities, but I shall be staying in touch with the medical and academic worlds as well."

Finally, when asked what advice he would give Professor Newman Taylor, Professor Green's top recommendation is to "enjoy." "Medical research is in a very exciting phase and there will be some amazing outcomes over the next ten years. Where better to be involved than in the most stimulating and exciting scientific organisation in the country?" he said.

Blue plaque for Imperial Nobel Laureate

Abigail Smith Communications

A RENOWNED scientist who received the Nobel Prize for his invention of the hologram has been recognised with the unveiling of an English Heritage blue plaque in South Kensington.

Dennis Gabor, a former Professor of Electronic Physics at Imperial, lived at 79 Queen's Gate between 1949 and 1961 while teaching and researching at the College.

He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1971 for his invention and development of the holographic method, which allows both light and sound waves to be recorded and recreated in three dimensions. This technology is now used for a variety of purposes, from incorporation into credit cards as an anti-counterfeiting device to recreating fragile Iron Age artefacts for archaeologists to study.

The unveiling ceremony included speech by Engineer's Julia King and former Rector Sir Eric Ash. Also attending were members of Professor Gabor’s family, including Janet Kitchen, his niece by marriage, who recalled the time she and her husband David spent with "Uncle Dennis".

"He built a villa in Italy with his Nobel Prize money and his favourite form of relaxation there, apart from visits to the beach, was table tennis, which he would play with his guests on the terrace each evening before dinner," she said.

Professor Malcolm Green

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Learning at work day

continued from page one

Catherine Finson, Careers Coordinator at Tanaka Business School, and Sheena McDonagh, Resident, took some time out of work to have a go at jewellery making. Catherine said: "I would like to encourage people who haven’t signed up this time to have a go at something next year. It’s a great chance to try something new for an hour instead of sitting at your desk and it opens so many opportunities to share with staff and friends."

Alison Beadle, a freelance dance trainer, was at South Kensington Campus to give Indian dance and salsa sessions. She said: "My whole ethos is to get people away from their working environment. Exercise is a great way to burn calories and shed stress. Dancing is so creative and a great way to express yourself, as well as something you can do into a lunch break." From Bucknall, who works at the Centre for Quantitative Finance at Tanaka Business School, agreed. She spent some time trying out Indian dancing and said: “The class was great. This is something I would never have tried without today and now I’ll be sure to try it again.”

Media mentions

Laura Gallagher Communications

Torres turns to the left – but only for drivers

The Conservative party is proposing to allow drivers to turn left at red lights in order to speed up traffic and cut pollution, reported Reuters (02.06.06). The idea is borrowed from America where in certain circumstances the light is treated as a ‘stop’ sign. Con

servative spokesman John Redwood denied that this, and other Tory proposals such as widening junctions, would mean that pedestrian and cyclists would lose out. However, Professor of Transport Risk Management

Andrew Evans, Civil and Environmental Engineering, took a different view: “I think more generally it would make the environment for pedestrians a lot less friendly than it is now,” he said.

Chemistry – a risky business?

Stepping into the road might be less risky than stepping into the chemistry lab after the death of a French professor in a laboratory explosion in March served as a reminder of how dangerous research can be. Nature (01.06.06) asked whether chemistry was particularly hazardous compared to other disciplines. Imperial’s Director of Safety Ian Gillett told the journal that although chemistry does generate the most accident reports, that may reveal little about its inherent dangers. Chemistry involves more practical work than other disciplines, chemists may be more vigilant about accidents than others, and in any case it is impossible to gauge how many minor disasters go unreported.

Big Brother in big bother

Big Brother is back on our screens and contestants already find themselves in an unhappy house. Following the early exit of contestant Shahzad Chaudhry, who threatened to leave the show, doctors have expressed concern about the welfare of all the housemates. Among the medical director Daniel Sokol, Medicine, who told BBC News Online (24.05.06): “Quite early on he went to the diary room and said he wanted to leave, but Big Brother said 'no'. That doesn’t seem very ethical to me. Had Shahzad been able to leave at the first opportunity, he wouldn’t have been on suicide watch.

Running on brain power

Universities are the foundation of the knowledge economy and provide the ideas that will ensure the UK can compete on the world stage, according to Rector, Sir Richard Sykes. “The best universities bring together those who think freely, challenge the accepted, deeply understand existing knowledge and think ‘until the brain hurts’ about creating ideas. With this resource, properly utilised, at the very fingertips of the UK, we can win,” he wrote in The Daily Telegraph (26.05.06).

“We are working on the answers to tomorrow’s problems, not just today’s, and that is what will ultimately keep us a step ahead of the game.”
A day in the life of...

Professor of Primary Care, Aceem Majed, arrived at Imperial in February 2004, and holds the position of Head of Department of Primary Care and Social Medicine. Professor Majed is also a part-time general practitioner in the Chiswick area and currently spends one day a week in this capacity. He said: "I get tremendous satisfaction from my work as a GP and it's great that I get to combine it with my time spent at the College."

Reporter's Alex Platt headed to the Charing Cross Hospital campus where Professor Majed is based to find out about a typical day in his working life.

8.30 Professor Majed arrives at his desk and works through email and phone messages. He said: "If I'm attending my GP surgery in Chiswick, I have to drive and be there for 7.45 so it really makes me appreciate the fact that I can walk from my house in Fulham to the Charing Cross. However, I don't escape public transport all week, as I'm often over at the South Kensington and St Mary's Campuses."

9.30 Professor Majed spends time briefing his PA and Departmental Administrator about any issues that may have arisen in the Department. He said: "This time is invaluable. I rely on my PA to keep me organised and my DA to ensure the smooth running of all the essential aspects of the Department. This means that I can spend time on patient care and meetings."

10.00 Meeting with research staff. The support of PhD students, public health trainees and research is a large part of Professor Majed's job. He said: "Today we met about a study into the treatment of diabetes within London. I really value the chance to interact practically with junior staff."

11.00 Professor Majed gives a seminar on research methods in the area of health research. He also gives clinical lectures, usually on medical conditions that are common in general practice, for example, heart disease.

12.30 Lunch in a sandwich at his desk. Professor Majed explained: "I usually have a chance to catch up on my correspondence over lunch."

13.00 Faculty of Medicine meeting at South Kensington. Professor Majed said: "Today's meeting was to discuss our response to a government document about the future of health research strategy. This will have been sent to various organisations for comments. We also discussed the training of junior doctors who would like to become academic clinicians, and how the College can support this effectively. It feels good to be able to make a real difference in national initiatives that I feel strongly about."

15.00 Professor Majed spends some time revising a research grant application to be submitted by one of his staff. He said: "I've done my time as first author of papers and grant applications and it's great to be able to be in the position to support others who are just starting out. I find that even if my own research is squeezed in around management these days, but I will always make space for it, as it's how I started and it's important."

16.30 Professor Majed's last task of the day is to meet with a local Primary Care Trust, which has approached him to ask for advice on a new health centre it is building. He said: "I am working with health professionals to try and configure the best supply of health services for this particular area. Contributing something like this is really rewarding. After all, we're all going to need these services eventually."

17.30 Professor Majed spends the last hour of his day at work dealing with emails.

18.30 Professor Majed leaves for his 25-minute walk home.

Don't try this at home!

POSTGRADUATE students gathered at this year’s Graduate Schools’ Event on 2 June, to watch a fun chemistry demonstration by Dr Hai Soosobawdi, Principal Lecturer, School of Pharmacology and Biomolecular Sciences, University of Brighton, pictured, who carried out experiments, such as: The Methane, Mamba, The Pulverising Reaction, The Hydrogen Rocket and The Eggs Factor. Following the show, there was an evening of live music, a buffet, more demonstrations and an interactive chemistry exhibition in the marquee on Queen’s Lawn.

Further details of Dr Soosobawdi’s show can be found at www.brighton.ac.uk/pharmacy/news/new/chemicalmagicshow.html

Spotlight on Spectrum

House style guidelines

Peter Gillings Communications

HAVE you been wondering whether to co-operate or cooperate? Whether to be computer aided or computer-aided? If you write for College publications or websites, you can now turn to the revised College house style. The 2006 edition of the guidelines is an easy-to-read document that can help you deal with theory in-house, problems to create text consistent with College style. You’ll also find information on:

An appreciation of Professor Martin Blomley

On 3 May, Reporter 164 announced that Martin Blomley, Professor of Radiology in the Division of Clinical Sciences, had died on 11 April 2006. Joint Head of Department and Professor of Imaging Science, his death was a shock to College staff.

MARTIN Blomley passed away peacefully after a long illness earlier this year. He was, and will continue to be, sorely missed by his friends and colleagues at the College and Hammanst-um Hospitals NHS Trust. His dual strengths as a radiologist and a leading researcher, working on critical developments in imaging and therapy delivery, gave him unique knowledge in a field that is increasingly becoming recognised as of pivotal importance. He will be missed, not just for his research leadership, but for his even-cheerful encouragement of others to excel, the lead standard College form for writing telephone numbers, dates and professional titles.

Download a copy of the house style in pdf format from www.imperial.ac.uk/spectrum/images/pdfs/Imperial_house_style.pdf

(by the way, it’s cooperation and computer-aided)

Thursday 22 June 17.00

The Statistical Advisory Service Annual Guest Lecture

Future Pharmacies in Pharmaceuticals (backdrop or pro-political?)
Professor Stephen Senn, Department of Statistics, University of Glasgow.
Room 121/122, Sir Alexander Fleming Building

Saturday 22 June 19.00

Lecture

Science and the Re-enchantment of the World
Dr Ervin Laszlo
Room 308 Huxley Building

Art and music

Wednesday 21 June 11.00

Exhibition Road Market

Institutions and organisations in and around Exhibition Road will be bringing the area alive with music. Barbecue and bar on the Queen’s Lawn 13.00-14.00 and 17.00-18.00.

Visit www.imperial.ac.uk/P7771.htm for further details

Friday 12.00 (until 25 August)

Ignite

Free Friday lunchtime concerts, including Greek, Latin American, Flemenco and Indian music groups

Café Concourse, Royal Albert Hall

Events are at South Kensington Campus unless otherwise stated. Visit www.imperial.ac.uk/events for a full listing of events at Imperial. Email events@imperial.ac.uk to subscribe to the Events E-Bulletin

You shall go to the ball

Imperial College Union’s summer ball takes place this Saturday 17 June and tickets are still available for both staff and students.

This year’s entertainment includes a Marquee on the upper terrace area with an LED wall and the chance to participate in those ‘70s moves on a floating disco dance floor. There’s also a chance to relive your childhood on the dodgems or carousel, and, of course, plenty of special guests to keep you dancing all night.

For more information on buying tickets and what’s available on the night visit www.union.ic.ac.uk/summerball/eventinfo.htm

Noticeboard

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Professor Martin Blomley 1959-2006

he gave young scientists and clinicians alike, and his efforts in building both scientific and personal relationships.