The Physics PG Cohort 2015

On Wednesday 29th July 2015 the graduate school kindly funded the musical accompaniment to the physics postgraduate barbecue. The physics postgraduate cohort has celebrated the summer with an annual barbecue on level 8 for as long as academics can remember: uniting those members of the department who aren’t presenting work halfway across the world in exotic conference locations over grilled meat and chilled beer. 2015 marked the first year that a band were able to perform at the event.

Creativity is key to so many aspects of scientific research: overcoming obstacles or challenges in our experimental design, discussing new ideas for research and coming up with coping mechanisms for the often crazy world of academia. As a department, physics continues to excel based on the phenomenal work of these postgraduate students, turning over almost £30 million annually. The live musical performance not only allowed the musicians to strengthen bonds and gain huge stage confidence, but encouraged other researchers to pick up their instruments, paintbrushes and pens and start to realise their creative potential. The physics PG events bring together researchers from all different research groups the annual barbecue saw high energy physicists engage with researchers at the cutting edge of quantum optics and experimental solid state. Shock physicists danced with theoretical physicists, astrophysicists partied with atmospheric physicists and photonics students got intimate with condensed matter theoreticians. The event provided a platform for honest and open discussion, creating new pathways for exciting projects.

Whilst the band warmed up the crowd, the drinks flowed and the sausages and burgers were in abundance. After the cohort had started to relax, they began to dance and take to the stage! Around 40 postgraduate physicists attended the event (including the live band!).

A survey was carried out after the event, the results of which are detailed below:

- 73% had attended a previous PG BBQ
- 55% had attended another PG cohort building activity this year
- 82% loved the live music (18% thought the band could try harder next year!)
- 46% spoke to people they hadn’t met before
- 5% have already got a new boyfriend / girlfriend in physics!
- 33% have been inspired to pick up their own instruments and join a band!

The majority of comments in the open ‘comments’ section referred to the quality of the beer provided!