



Andrew Miller MP
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There is good news, and there is other news.

At last the longest electoral campaign in British history is over. It has taken three years for Scotland to declare its intentions. Gratifyingly, it broke all records for turnout, so by any standards it was a democratic decision.

Already there has been comment on how the science community in Scotland should access funds from a further devolved Scottish Parliament with tax raising powers. My answer is that it is a matter for the Scottish science community who will quite rightly want to access funds from Holyrood whilst at the same time maintaining the strength of the UK position, especially in the international arena.

Scotland's intellectual history and scientific achievements are without parallel for such a small country – think Watt, Macadam, Dunlop, Kelvin, Simpson, Lister, Fleming, Baird, Bell –

and that is only 150 years worth. Our daily lives would have been greatly impoverished without their inventions. Remind me what Texas, or even Massachusetts, produced during this period! Andrew Carnegie, for a time the world's richest man, was part of the Scottish diaspora.

More recently, its intellectual capacity has shown itself in Scotland's share of UK Government (including the Wellcome Trust) research grants. 8% of the UK population received 15% of UK funding.

We were delighted to note the wonderfully generous gift from David Harding to the Science Museum to promote Mathematics.

Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) for Britain only just got in ahead of him by admitting Mathematics to the competition for the first time in 2014! In this new era of devolution could I also encourage benefactors to think of the Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester and elsewhere in the UK?

Many organisations depend on enthusiastic volunteers to support their work. The P&SC has been fortunate to have had Robert Freer as one of its staunch members for nearly 20 years.

Robert was a Chartered Engineer, and used his contacts to help the P&SC, enormously. He always had ideas both for Discussion topics, as well as articles for Science in Parliament.

He came from a generation which might have used the epithet "a good

egg". He certainly was one. He died suddenly on 11th August.

We shall miss him.

Frogs produce many millions of potential offspring. The P&SC which was itself born only 75 years ago, has now spawned 610 All-Party Parliamentary Groups. We are therefore celebrating both our longevity and our fecundity with a party at Buckingham Palace on 11th November. The Duke of Edinburgh, who has been an Honorary Member for more than 50 years, was our President in 1989, and has addressed our Annual Lunch on no less than three occasions, has kindly agreed to host it.

Finally, to my astonishment, in the same issue of the Evening Standard which announced the Science Museum gift, there was a powerful plea from Rosamund Urwin for more MPs to know and understand science. Of course I and the P&SC totally endorse this, but she used the phrase "anti science bias", which misrepresents the issue. MPs are NOT anti science. They are overwhelmed with data input, and science is often difficult to understand – even if you have a relevant degree. The ball is in the scientists' court – to make it intelligible to intelligent, committed colleagues. My reply was heavily edited by the newspaper. I am very proud to chair an organisation which has played a major role in this. Long may it continue!



The Journal of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee.
The Committee is an Associate Parliamentary Group of members of both Houses of Parliament and British members of the European Parliament, representatives of scientific and technical institutions, industrial organisations and universities.



Science in Parliament has two main objectives:

1. to inform the scientific and industrial communities of activities within Parliament of a scientific nature and of the progress of relevant legislation;
2. to keep Members of Parliament abreast of scientific affairs.

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