



Andrew Miller MP  
Chairman, Parliamentary and Scientific Committee

I am (only) occasionally asked "What is the point of the P&SC?"

First, let us be clear, the P&SC has no political agenda. It exists to promote open discussion and debate between the scientific and political communities, in the expectation that evidence will sometimes (often?) influence policy.

In the spring of 2012, we ran a discussion meeting on HS2. This is still pending, but at least the facts were teased out. It is not the ten minutes reduction in transit time for the suited business community. However the argument for increased capacity of the line to transport people was well put.

Later in 2012, we discussed "Fracking", and were able to hear

from Cuadrilla's CEO about the energy stored beneath Lancashire. It is clear from recent polling that the media coverage of the story fails to reflect public opinion even in areas where pilot wells have been drilled.

More recently Monsanto has followed Syngenta's example and withdrawn from the European debate on GM crops. Some campaigners correctly identify this as a major victory. Yet all of them wear clothes made from GM cotton, and this has contributed to a reduction in the death rate (from organophosphate insecticides) of cotton farmers in India and China. All (or most of them) drink cordials sweetened with High Fructose Corn Syrup. 90% of maize is GM. Many of them eat chicken fattened on GM soya. By campaigning to reduce crop yields, they are, perhaps inadvertently, encouraging the destruction of the Amazon forest to grow more soya.

On the matter of the MMR scandal, rejecting scientific evidence has led to only a few dead children from measles, but Swansea had a very narrow escape.

Earlier this year we discussed the issues arising from the absence of new antibiotics, and heard from the CMO (Dame Sally Davies), as well as from industry about the costs of drug development. The public sector clearly has a role to play, and Parliament needs to define this.

More recently commenting on the Duchess of Cambridge's pregnancy, there has been a silly suggestion that pregnant women should not travel in new cars, and resist from the temptation to paint the new baby's room. (The Duchess perhaps more than most, knows the smell of new cars and freshly painted buildings). Such unfounded scare stories need to be stamped on. Fortunately P&SC is not alone, and we should acknowledge the sterling role played by the Science Media Centre and Sense About Science, both of whom have been fearless in debunking rubbish.

Science may not always have the correct answer today. But the alternatives yield nothing but hunger for billions, the lights going out, and people facing unnecessary risk.



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.

# CONTENTS

<b>LEADING THE WAY: DIVERSITY AT THE ROYAL SOCIETY</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>UK FOOD ENFORCEMENT WANTS MORE MONEY, BUT DOES IT NEED IT?</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>PARLIAMENTARY LINKS DAY: SCIENCE AND DIVERSITY</b>	<b>36</b>
Professor Dame Julia Higgins		Professor Declan Naughton, Professor Andrea Petróczi and G Taylor		<b>SCIENCE AND THE ASSEMBLY 2013</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>ASPA 1986</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>BIRAX REGENERATIVE MEDICINE INITIATIVE</b>	<b>16</b>	Leigh Jeffes	
Ida Barlow		Matthew Gould MBE		<b>OUR LIVING SOLAR SYSTEM</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>SKILLS</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>THE VALUE OF DIAGNOSTICS</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>HOUSE OF COMMONS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY</b>	<b>41</b>
Address to the P&SC by Diana Garnham		Doris-Ann Williams		<b>HOUSE OF LORDS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SELECT COMMITTEE</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>INNOVATION IS GREAT BETWEEN THE UK AND INDIA</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>DRIVING ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT SECTION</b>	<b>44</b>
Tom Wells		Christoph Wiesner and Catherine Condie		<b>PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>ITALY: THE SEA, THE SUN, THE SAINTS AND THE SCIENTISTS</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>RESOLVING THE CRISIS OF ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>SELECTED DEBATES</b>	<b>47</b>
Laura Nuccilli and Alessandra Ferraris		Professor Laura Piddock		<b>SCIENCE DIRECTORY</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>LA MERIDIENNE VERTE</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>ANTIBIOTICS</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>SCIENCE DIARY</b>	<b>56</b>
Professor Alan Malcolm		Addresses to the P&SC by Professor Dame Sally Davies, Dr Nick Brown and Dr Richard Bax			
<b>HOW DO WE INSPIRE OUR FUTURE SCIENTISTS? 12</b>		<b>THE IMPORTANCE OF BEES</b>	<b>30</b>		
Kirsten Bodley		Addresses to the P&SC by Tim Lovett, Dr Lynn Dicks and Don Pendergrast			

