

THE BIG BANG FAIR



Student experiments with orange goo at Ministry of Defence stand. The orange goo is an amazing shock absorbing material called D3o, which attracted a tremendous amount of attention on the day.

**4th – 6th March
2009**

Nearly 5,000 young people from across the country, supported by Parliamentarians and members of the business, engineering and science communities took part in The Big Bang, the UK's first national fair celebrating young people's achievements in science and engineering.



Students modelling a Sellafield biohazard suit

The Big Bang, which took place in Westminster from 4th to 6th March in the run up to National Science and Engineering Week, attracted nearly 6,500 students, teachers, politicians and exhibitors. Also present were the fair's sponsors: The Department for Innovation Universities and Skills (DIUS), The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF),

Lloyd's Register Educational Trust, Shell, BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce and Semta, as well as 46 other organisations from across Government, business, science and engineering.

The Big Bang was an unprecedented partnership of the science and engineering communities to inspire children to choose careers in science,

technology, engineering and maths.

School groups arrived for half-day sessions and had the opportunity to participate in their choice of 33 different theatre shows and workshops. They had the chance to see the many real world applications of science and technology through hands-on investigations and exhibitions. Students participated in a variety of activities, including building their own hydraulically controlled arms, handling dinosaur fossils,



Student amazed at Sellafield stand

recording their own weather news reports, taking infrared photos of themselves, designing their own music venues, and planning, designing and building their own control towers – all in the name of science and engineering.

The Big Bang also included an entire floor dedicated to jobs in science and engineering. The careers hotel was a place where students could drop in and discuss the wide range of science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers available to them.

Over 200 schools from across the UK attended the event. While a majority came from the South East, London and the East of England regions, all English regions and socio-economic backgrounds were represented. There were also schools from Northern Ireland and Scotland that came out for the fair.



Students take part in The Learning Grid K'Nex Challenge

Students attending The Big Bang heard from professional engineers, scientists and celebrities, including Rachel Riley, Ben Fogle, Kate Bellingham, James Cracknell and Steve Leonard, who were on hand to discuss their experiences of working in the sector.

Political figures from all sides of the House were also in attendance, including the Rt Hon John Denham MP, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills; the Rt Hon Lord

Drayson, Minister of State for Science and Innovation; the Rt Hon Baroness Royall of Blaisdon, Leader of the House of Lords; Baroness Morgan of Drefelin, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children, Young People and Families; Adam Afriyie MP, Shadow Minister of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the Innovation, Universities Science and Skills Committee chaired by Phil Willis MP.

The Big Bang also featured the newly established National Science Competition. A number of prizes were awarded during the ceremony hosted by Kate Humble, presenter of BBC's Springwatch, including UK Young Scientist of the Year, Peter Hatfield, and UK Young Technologist of the Year, Chris Jefferies.

While the two top prizes given at The Big Bang were to individuals, many spectacular and substantial prizes were also awarded to teachers, teams and clubs.

One group of students who attended The Big Bang also had the chance to put a group of MPs in the hot seat.

On 4th March pupils from London's Park View Academy science club quizzed members of the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee on the most pressing issues in science and technology in a mock committee session in a committee room of the House of Commons. Questions were put to members of the Committee from across the House – Chairman Phil Willis MP and members Tim Boswell MP, Dr Brian Iddon MP, and Dr Evan Harris MP – about

the future of science funding, the use of human embryonic stem cells, and obesity.

Lord Drayson said that the National Science Competition was an important part of the Government drive to raise the profile of science and engineering.

"It is extremely encouraging to see the number of entrants that have taken part in this competition. It is great to see young scientists and engineers inspired to experiment with

Sir Anthony Cleaver, Co-patron of The Big Bang, and Chairman of the Engineering and Technology Board said: "The Big Bang lived up to its name. To have been able to give 5,000 young people the opportunity to look at science and engineering with fresh eyes and explore the exciting opportunities on offer in the sector, is a tremendous achievement. I thank the nearly fifty organisations from the public and private sectors for coming together to give so many young people a boost



Young Engineers Challenge

ideas and apply science and technology to real life scenarios. I really want to bust the myth that science is boring and geeky – it is far from it. This competition has highlighted the reality of science today, it's exciting, fascinating and shapes all our lives. Young scientists today will shape our future tomorrow – which is why competitions like this are so important to celebrate young British talent."

towards something that might just change their lives."

The Big Bang will be an annual event and plans are under way for 2010. The Big Bang 2010 will take place in Manchester from 11th-13th March 2010.

Details of The Big Bang 2010 will be available soon at www.thebigbangfair.co.uk



UK Young Technologist of the Year, Chris Jefferies from Pershore High School, Worcestershire.



UK Young Scientist of the Year, Peter Hatfield from Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys in Canterbury, Kent.

