

Royal Society of Biology News

Gearing up for our fifth annual Biology Week



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(Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Biology)

The RSB is currently buzzing in preparation for Biology Week, which takes place from 8–16 October. This will be the fifth annual celebration of the biosciences around the UK and beyond. Biology Week started in 2012 and has been growing year on year; showcasing the important world of the biosciences, and getting everyone from children to professional biologists involved in life science activities.

The week brings together schools, universities, museums, labs, wildlife sanctuaries, charities and everyone in between in an increasingly diverse collection of events.

This year we are excited to once again be holding a debate in partnership with the Biochemical Society at the Royal Institution – we have also partnered with Cancer Research UK and the topic will be: ‘The DNA revolution: Can we predict people’s chance of getting cancer? Should we?’



The Heart and the Head – an evening of storytelling and music, Biology Week 2015. Image: University of Oxford

Other Society events during the week will include our annual awards ceremony, where we will announce the winners of our photography, books and science communication awards, and a Parliamentary Reception in the House of Commons for our members, representatives of our Member Organisations, and parliamentarians to share experiences and discuss science policy issues.

Hundreds of schools and universities around the country will take part in biology events and activities, many of which we developed in partnership with the Biochemical Society, including the Biology Week quiz and the 21st Century BioChallenges Activity Kits; tackling issues around antimicrobial resistance and genetic modification.

We want everyone everywhere to have a chance to be involved with the life sciences and celebrate Biology Week with our community. There is a chance for all to get involved online through games, competitions, interactive resources, articles, social media and citizen science.

The RSB is continuing to work closely with all our Member Organisations, individual members, committees and advisory groups to ensure we fully engage policy makers and politicians on the implication of Brexit for bioscience. Working closely with colleagues in the chemical and physical sciences, we are also seeking to ensure common messaging across the sciences, as we have done for the TEF consultation.

For anyone interested in biology teaching at all levels, I would encourage you to take a look at our recently launched free online ‘virtual special issue’ of the Journal of Biological Education to celebrate its 50th birthday and highlight some of the incredible research it has published.

Editor Professor Ian Kinchin CBiol FRSB put together the issue which includes 40 of some of the most cited and downloaded articles including: ‘Learning difficulties in biology’, ‘The effect of eco-schools on children’s environmental value and behaviour’, ‘The epidemiology of a zombie apocalypse’, and ‘Using role play to debate animal testing’. These articles will be free to everyone until the end of 2016.

The JBE is uniquely broad in its reach; it’s a really accessible journal for people who teach the biosciences across the spectrum. Looking to the next 50 years of the JBE, I’m excited to see more research into the interface between school and universities. ■