



## TEACHING FELLOWS

### Report for Second Year, 2009-2010 v2

J Mellerio  
Hon Secretary

Ben Craven gave 18 talks in nine schools in and around Glasgow. At one booked school the talk was postponed but is to be delivered next session as part of the 2009/2010 contract. His audience totalled 600 school pupils. Feedback from teachers was favourable and Ben has made several useful comments and suggestions for improving the planning of the talks to make them more relevant and acceptable to schools.

	number of talks	number of pupils
Balfron High School	1	20
St Columba's School, Kilmalcolm	1	40
Maclaren High School, Callander	2	45
Schools careers event at Grangemouth	3	80
St Mungo's, Falkirk	1	60
Larbert High School	3	90
Bellahouston Academy, Glasgow	1	20
Hillpark Secondary School, Glasgow	2	125
Wallace Hall Academy, Dumfries+G	4	20
Springburn Academy, Glasgow	Postponed	

As the contract is for around ten presentations, the Group has had value for money from Ben this year.

Ben described one session where some fifty questions were asked, and he commented: "Obviously, it thoroughly disrupted the schedule of the talk, but they were all interesting and pertinent questions, so I just let it all flow. It was wonderful!"

Ben provided several feedback comments from pupils and teachers. In some cases teachers also used their own feedback forms and a summary of those from one careers event is shown here:

pupil enjoyment, suitability and relevance to curriculum  
rated by pupils and averaged

72% excellent

26% good

2% poor

how did event compare with expectations for teachers

86% exceeded

14% met

Ben has agreed to continue for another year in the first instance with a modified programme, as agreed at the AGM in May 2010.

Ron Douglas spoke to eight schools and the Wrexham Science festival. His audience totalled 503 school pupils and 85 adults in the equivalent of 13 sessions.

	number of talks	number of pupils	adults
Stewards School, Harlow *	4	12	12
Newport Grammar, Newport (Essex)	1	27	5
St Joan of Arc School, Rickmansworth *	1	42	5
Sir Fred Osborne School, Welwyn Garden City *	2	113	5
Sherborne School, Dorset	1	14	3
Sele School, Hatfield *	1	73	4
Janveh College, Borehamwood *	1	65	6
Roundwood Park School, Harpenden *	1	57	5
Wrexham Science Festival	1	-	40

\* indicates the sessions were organised by Setpoint: so six out of the nine locations were down to Setpoint. This reflects the difficulties Ron had getting venues.

Ron provided feedback in the form of comments - his teachers did not use, or pass on the data from, feedback forms. Typical were the comments;

Thought Professor Douglas was funny. I liked the remote voting system because it got us involved

Best lecture ever ('arts' 6th form pupil)

Ron contributed thought the scheme should definitely continue but with some improvements and changes which he has passed on. He was prepared to continue the programme with suitable changes.

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Overall the scheme for 2009-2010 must be judged worthwhile. It has come in on budget and on schedule with some 1200 students and adults participating. Both Fellows would be prepared to continue if the programme was made more useful to schools and some way to help recruiting schools could be found as both Fellows had difficulties with this. It was agreed to have a meeting of the Fellows, the Chairman and Vice Chairman and secretary during the summer to discuss changes and improved ways of delivering the programme.

## APPENDIX

Comments from:

Ben Craven

Areas for improvement:

- It would be helpful if activities came with suggested content/Level not always right
- Ran out of time never had a chance to discuss careers

Yes, I would be happy to continue for another year. On ideas, I think that the current model of making individual arrangements with schools is not necessarily the best. Arranging schools is hard for Ron and me (or at least, it's hard for me, maybe Ron is better at that sort of thing), and for the schools, small one-off events aren't always easy to fit into their schedules. It might be better for all concerned if we tried to run the talks as part of larger events.

For example, there are all sorts of careers days that go on in schools. They often involve pupils travelling from nearby schools. These days typically have a number of events in them, of which the colour talk (presented 3-4 times) could be one. Doing the talk in a context like this might be more effective than doing individual schools, if the aim is to encourage people to think about jobs in colour.

And then there's the science festivals. Some festivals run a schools programme, where pupils come to the festival for a day and take part in a range of activities. The festivals would be glad for some content that is externally funded.

Either of these options is much easier for us, because the talks all take place at the same venue, and (in the case of science festivals) are all in a block, which makes scheduling them easier. We are also making use of existing mechanisms of publicity and booking. And finally, you could reach a higher number of pupils. The reason is that when you pay me to do a talk at a single school, it wipes out the best part of a day, because of the travel, setup etc. If instead of doing 10 days at different schools, I did 10 days at larger events, doing 3 or maybe even 4 talks a day, you're getting a lot more bums on seats for your money.

If you took this route, you'd need to open the talks up to younger age groups, which leads me on to another point: that the specification that the talks are for 6th formers is a pain, and pointless anyway. It's a constant battle (which I don't always win) persuading schools not to book younger groups in. The demand from teachers is definitely at a younger age group, and they are the ones that know. They want the input \*before\* pupils have chosen their subjects for Higher, not afterwards. My talk definitely works (with the same demos, but adjusted commentary) right down to primary age.

Another possibility, which might suit Ron, is this: the Royal Institution is in a dire financial position, and has shut down its outreach program for the time being. It's just possible that they might be interested in some externally-funded talks. This might suit the Colour Group, because you can take advantage of the RI's existing schools contacts and system, and it also adds a bit of prestige to the talks themselves.

Ron Douglas

Difficulties

The biggest problem that I encountered was organising the visits. I wrote to perhaps 20 schools unannounced and only got 3 replies (2 from schools where I had lectured previously). Thus, in my experience schools do not respond to 'cold calling'. Last year most of my visits were arranged by the Darwin Centre in Haverfordwest. This year most were organised by Setpoint in Hertfordshire. There is a Setpoint equivalent in all counties (although many have now changed their name). Their involvement is crucial. Several of the lectures

were given during national science week in March

Future

I am firmly of the opinion that the Colour Group should continue with the fellowship programme.

The knowledge of science subjects in the general population is lamentable and the more scientific bodies such as the Colour Group put into rectifying the situation the better.

Having talked to a lot of the pupils and teachers on the receiving end of my lectures I think the lectures have enthused a lot of children about science in general and vision/colour specifically.

Several schools have indicated a wish for me to return in future years. I am perfectly happy to undertake this task in the name of the colour group on an ad hoc basis. However, I think it may be best if someone else takes over the long term role of Colour Group Teaching fellow and injects some new blood into the system, perhaps covering a new geographical area.

Cost

I realise that the cost of the fellowship (about £300 a lecture) perhaps seems a lot. However, most lectures involve at least a day when one takes into account preparation, travel and time spent arranging lectures. Seen in this light the rate is actually a long way below what my University suggests we charge for a days 'consultancy'.