

Science Festival Launch 2011 Programme

✘ The Edinburgh International Science Festival launched a programme today at The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh which is packed with goodies for the Easter holidays.

The organisers promise that at the 23rd Festival visitors will be able to travel from outer space to the deepest oceans, join in a Guinness World Record Attempt and experience hands-on chemistry. The BBC will get in on the act with their Big Bang Theory Roadshow and you will be able to meet a real live space-walking astronaut.

There are new venues this year. So, apart from the City Art Centre ,which forms the focus of the family programme where all seven floors are jam-packed with activities, The Scottish Storytelling Centre will present a series of events for young people to showcase some of the children's science authors including Professor Lord Robert Winston and Paul Collicutt. There will also be interactive storytelling sessions.

At the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh a variety of walks, activities and exhibitions will take place. Discover Science takes place at the National Museum and Adam House on Chambers Street and there will be a range of events for all the family. Other venues include Edinburgh Zoo, the Scottish Seabird Centre, Our Dynamic Earth and The Royal Observatory.

The Filmhouse is showing a number of underwater films including Luc Besson's The Big Blue and also for classic film buffs 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea starring Kirk Douglas. At the Informatics Centre meanwhile Life in the Deepest Places on Earth sounds a bit creepy to us so best not to go on your own!

In St Andrew Square Garden there is now an exhibition in place to show off photographs curated by Steve and Kathy Bloom which

feature spectacular images by some of the world's best underwater photographers. (We think this is much the same as last year – but possibly they have some new images by now?)

At the launch event this morning, Professor Stephen Blackmore CBE FRSE, Regius Keeper, offered us all a warm welcome – and made a big plug for the beautiful John Hope Gateway. He said:- “This festival has huge importance to Scotland because engaging people with science is an ever more important task for all of us. The world is changing more rapidly than at any time in human history in so many different ways in every walk of life, and as far as our organisation is concerned there are hard challenging things to understand. We need a scientifically literate opulence to be able to engage properly with those challenges.

For me this festival does that. It is one of the world's greatest science festivals. It is great to welcome you all to our John Hope Gateway. We built this as a place to do exactly what we will be doing this April – reaching out and communicating with people. We are very open to sharing this venue with any organisation to come here and make use of it. We have a responsibility to the government to do that as they help fund the garden.”

Dr Simon Gage Director of the Edinburgh International Science Festival introduced this year's programme:- “This is a magical time of year when the ink is dry on the programme, the organising is done and the programme is ready. To all of you who have supported us financially thank you. I think that there are some really magical events in this year's Festival. There are more than 200 events this year.

The Deep Sea is a big programming theme this year and as we speak the exhibition is being put up in St Andrew Square. This film carries on througout the festival. There are some great

films at the Filmhouse and people who spend their whole careers looking for sea monsters are coming to speak.

Chemistry is a big theme. This is the International Year of Chemistry and we are going to celebrate it party style mainly in the Royal Botanic Garden. Big project called Atomise funded through the Scottish Government's Expo fund. We have a beautiful exhibition of things called ferro fluids which perform all sorts of beautiful dances when you put magnets near them.

Our local hero Tom Pringle, aka Dr Bunhead, will be playing at The Usher Hall and we will try to create the world's largest glowing necklace on the opening weekend. A new venue for us at the Storytelling Centre where we feature stories about science and books about it.

There is great variety in our programme. Bubbles are great family entertainment and The Roslin Institute have bred pigs with noses that glow in the dark for very good reasons....come along and find out more!"

One of the interesting features of this year's Festival is that there is to be a guest director in the shape of Professor Richard Wiseman. He explained that he had great fun in introducing the subject of the Psychology of Dog Training to the programme.... SO something for everyone, and this year that includes adults who are catered for in a variety of ways – anyone game to try the sleepover at the Zoo?

The Festival runs from 9th to 22nd April 2011 at a variety of venues around the city. To buy tickets or get full details then visit the [Science Festival website](#) or call the Box Office on 0131 553 0322