

Edinburgh Medal for Professor Peter Higgs and CERN



PROFESSOR PETER HIGGS AND CERN AWARDED THE PRESTIGIOUS EDINBURGH MEDAL AT EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL

For the first time in its 25 year history, the prestigious Edinburgh Medal is being awarded, at a ceremony in Edinburgh's Signet Library this evening, jointly to an inspirational and world renowned scientist, Edinburgh's own Professor Peter Higgs, and to the world-class organisation, CERN, in celebration of the spirit of collaboration in modern scientific endeavour.

In 2012 the world awoke to the news that CERN's Large Hadron Collider had detected the existence of an elusive, sub atomic particle consistent with the long-sought Higgs boson. Professor Peter Higgs, the Edinburgh scientist, was one of the first to suggest the existence of the particle that now bears his name. Since it was first proposed in 1964, the search for confirmation of the particle has been the collaborative work of countless scientists and in acknowledgement of the fact that science is a collective endeavour and in celebration of the spirit of collaboration, the Edinburgh Medal has been awarded to both Professor Higgs and CERN, the world class organisation who led the quest.

CERN, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, was established in 1954 to organise and sponsor international co-operation in research, promoting contacts between scientists and interchange with other laboratories and institutes. CERN's main area of research is particle physics, the study of the fundamental constituents of matter and the forces acting between them. The endeavour of science brings nations

together in a common goal and many of CERN's experiments are international collaborations.

Professor Peter Higgs is a theoretical physicist and emeritus Professor at Edinburgh University. In 1964 [Higgs predicted the existence of a force-carrying particle](#), part of an invisible energy field that filled the vacuum throughout the observable universe. [Without the field, or something like it, we would not be here](#). The search for the Higgs boson has become a major objective of experimental particle physics.

The Edinburgh Medal is a prestigious award given each year to men and women of science and technology whose professional achievements are judged to have made a significant contribution to the understanding and well-being of humanity. The Medal, awarded at the Edinburgh International Science Festival, is supported by the City of Edinburgh Council. Previous recipients have included three Nobel Prize winners.

Dr Simon Gage, Director of the Edinburgh International Science Festival, said:- "The 25th anniversary of both the Edinburgh Medal and the Edinburgh International Science Festival seemed a fitting year to celebrate the importance of scientific collaboration. The endeavours of scientists are commonly focused on global if not universal phenomena. Collaboration is the natural way to progress quickly, and when it comes to such momentous efforts as those undertaken by CERN, it is the only way."

Donald Wilson, Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, said:- "I've been a great supporter of the Edinburgh Medal for many years, both in my previous role as Chair of the EISF and now as Lord Provost. Professor Peter Higgs' postulation of the existence of the Higgs boson has not only made him an international success, but has also significantly advanced the study of particle physics. His work with the University of Edinburgh has put our city on the international stage and this latest honour is further evidence of the high esteem in which

he is deservedly held.”

Professor Higgs said:- “It is a pleasure to be awarded, jointly with CERN, the 25th Edinburgh Medal. The first medal, in 1989, was awarded to Abdus Salam, in whose group I was a research fellow 55 years ago and whose Nobel-winning theory a decade later made use of the ideas which had been proposed in 1964 independently by groups in Brussels and London and by myself in Edinburgh. Thus the fields of research for which the Medal has been awarded have come full circle.”

Professor Heuer said:- “It’s an honour for me to accept the Edinburgh Medal on behalf of the whole CERN community, and to share it with so eminent a colleague as Peter Higgs. Postulating the boson back in the 1960s was an intellectual tour de force. Finding it has been a real community effort involving literally thousands of people from around the world working together for many years. The discovery is of vital importance to science, and is a major step in understanding the universe we live in.”

The first Edinburgh Medallist in 1989 was the theoretical physicist and Nobel Prize winner Abdus Salam; of the subsequent twenty four Medallists, three have gone on to be awarded the Nobel Prize. A selection of previous Edinburgh Medal recipients are returning to the Science Festival this year, including neurobiologist Professor Colin Blakemore and UCL’s Professor of Climate Science, Chris Rapley, to share their dangerous ideas in a rare chance to hear from some of the most provocative minds in science.

The Edinburgh International Science Festival creates and presents over two hundred events for adults, children and families across the city over the next two weeks. Celebrating 25 years of introducing audiences of all ages to innovative and entertaining science, in 2013 the Science Festival looks to the future of the world around us offering talks, workshops, experiments, activities, performances and events on

such diverse themes as food, cities, medicine, play and nature. The Science Festival runs until Sunday 7 April. Full details of the programme and tickets for all events can be found at www.sciencefestival.co.uk.