

## TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS



Stephen Oppenheimer and Richard Fortey  
The Beginning of Everything  
10-11 pm/Drawing Room

Robert Winston and Bryan Appleyard  
Remaining Human  
3.15-4.15 pm/The Arena

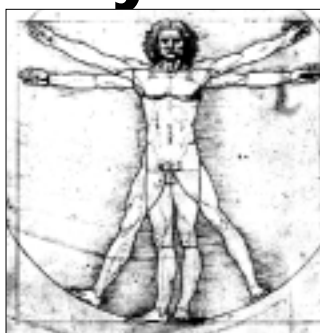
Audience with an Astronaut:  
Mark Kelly  
5.30-6.30 pm/Pillar Room

# Science finds friendship for airy-fairy artist types

by Chris Cundy

Sian Ede whipped through her talk at lightning speed, asking the rather worrying question: "Is science the new art?" Subsequently it seemed that this could also be read as: "Is art the new science?"

The Gulbenkian Foundation has established itself as a positive force to unite artists and scientists and Ede, its artistic director, is keen to celebrate their unique aspects. "The two cultures are very different and that's not a problem," she proclaimed, adding: "Science can be more horrific than art." To highlight this point she gave the striking example of a laboratory mouse that has the cartilage of a human ear growing on its back. This is a shocking image precisely because



Art and science united in discovery.

it lacks mystery and irony and there can be no comparison with art – it is what it is and science has forced us to accept the utterly monstrous. Scientists have an infuriating tendency to distance themselves from the emotional. "You cannot feel a dou-

ble helix!" she protests, adding that "artists should stop using them".

As images of science become more prevalent in our everyday lives, and in the media surrounding us, does art become contrived by assimilation? We're all familiar with Damian Hirst's specimen art. Is art rendered superfluous by its assertion that any found object is valid, as in Marcel Duchamp's urinal or John Cage's claim that all he needs to do to hear music is open a window?

Ede spoke of a fragile relationship between art and science that shouldn't be over-intellectualised. A photo of a cancer cell was alarmingly labelled "beautiful" by a Wellcome Trust prize winner recently. Surely it's dangerous to assume that science simply supersedes art.

# Moore to the good life than meets the eye

by Brenda Read-Brown

Is Marcus Moore mad or inspirational? His plan to live for two years, two months and two days in a shed – with no money – stemmed from a combination of moral impulses and his hero-worship of Henry David Thoreau. Moore hopes that the project will serve as an example to many.

Jacinta MacDermot of the Centre for Alternative Technology and Pauline Pears, champion of organic food growing, offered tips and encouragement – a polytunnel, pedal-power and good batteries seem vital. In between cultivating his garden and scavenging for wood for the stove, Marcus will get pleasure from non-materialistic activities, such as writing, walking, thinking and hearing his daughter play the piano – the one luxury that



Shed a tear for the onion growers.

will accompany him to his self-imposed "desert island" exile.

Marcus admits that his plan will require heavy initial investment, and will rely to some extent on the infrastructures of current society. His justification for this irony is that his aim is to set off ripples on his own, and the world's, Walden Pond.

# Time to face the AIDS time bomb

by Emma Brennan

A panel of three leading experts, Andrew McMichael from the MRC, Gill Samuels from Pfizer and Lisa Power from the Terence Higgins Trust, discussed the impact of HIV in the UK and globally. All three speakers highlighted the current blasé attitude and stigma that is associated with such sexually transmitted infections.

McMichael guided us through the process of infection and the subsequent progression of the virus to the disease acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). He highlighted the main issue hindering the formulation of the vaccine; that the virus mutates. HIV is currently ranked fourth in the WHO list of global killers. The virus is "preventable and treatable, but not curable at this moment in time," explained Sanders.



AIDS: the epidemic continues.

The 102 medicines on the market help to slow down the progression of the virus to AIDS, but at a price. The body can build up a resistance making the medication ineffective and there are also many side-effects linked to the drugs. Patients enter the vicious cycle of taking pills to combat the side-effects of the medication, and more to combat the side-effects of these additional pills.

Power believes that "the government does not think that HIV is a critical problem in the UK". But with 50 000 people affected in the UK and rising, if it isn't a "critical problem" now it soon will be.

## Now I'm a believer



Why don't aliens abduct scientists?

by Adam Horovitz

Last night's debate, UFO – Fact or Fiction?, was a good-natured affair that took in everything from Foo Fighters to crop circles, radioactive rabbits to weather balloons. Debating the issue were Nick Pope, who ran the Ministry of Defence's UFO project which was set up in the 1950s, and astronomer Ian Morison, who works for Jodrell Bank and runs the SETI project there.

Neither is precisely pro-UFO. Pope – the nearest to a believer of the two – told us that he was only interested in the 5% of sightings that were genuinely inexplicable, such as an American military sighting in Rendlesham Forest in 1980, where – amongst other things – triangular marks registering 10 times the normal amount of radiation were recorded. "Sceptics," he told us, "suggest that these were made by rabbits. They must have been highly radioactive rabbits."

Morison brought in Einstein's Theory of Relativity to fight his corner, as well as the Drake equation, which suggests that the galaxy might only support a few dozen civilisations. Why, he asked, do alien abductors never take scientists – who might at least have something interesting to talk about? "Could someone come and abduct me?" he begged. "Please!"

Questions from the floor ranged from the politely bewildered to the deliberately arcane; this is a subject that will never be put to bed until someone – or indeed, some *thing* – comes up with decent proof.

"We are constrained by what we believe," said Morison, but in this debate it seems that there are considerably more beliefs than planets capable of supporting complex life in the galaxy.

# Why boys' toys give girls no joy

by Andy Mountford

Simon Baron-Cohen (professor of psychology at Cambridge University, no less) gave a fascinating talk to a full, mixed (both male and female), and transfixed audience on the subject of his recently published book, *The Essential Difference*. We're all aware that there appear to be differences between the way in which men's and women's brains actually "work", and Baron-Cohen added some well-presented experimental data to the debate in an attempt to get to the biological bottom of this contentious issue.

It's fairly obvious from an early age that we like different things. Children nearly always make distinct spontaneous toy choices – boys tend to choose toy cars, and girls like playing with dolls. I now also know that undergraduate mathematics departments typically have a male to female ratio of 13:1; and that 1.8% of maths undergraduates at Cambridge have autism (10 times the population average). This all points to the same thing: men are



Simon Baron-Cohen: is the extreme brain a men-only phenomenon?

better at "systemising" (analysing or building systems) and women are better at "empathising" – identifying a person's thoughts and feelings, and responding with an appropriate emotion. This essential difference is ultimately down to the quantity of foetal testosterone available to us in the womb. Boys get more than girls, and autism sufferers get more again – hence their "extreme" (obsessive) maleness.

So, it would seem, boys will be boys and girls will be girls, and now – perhaps – we know why.

## The big world on the small screen

by Lucy Farrar

Wildlife documentaries have been evolving. The techniques used for capturing animal behaviour may be relatively familiar – such as thermal, infrared and time-lapse imaging – but the footage captured is finding revolutionary new uses.

At yesterday's Animal Magic event the BBC Natural History Unit's Mark Jacobs and Luke Barnett described how the archives have been raided so that film gathered on location can be incorporated into computer games and 3D simulations of life in various habitats, for use in the classroom.

These days, most of that filming takes place in designated nature reserves, partly because so many unprotected regions are disappearing. "The sad thing is that the natural world is shrinking fast," said Jacobs. Even so, documentary makers are forbidden from intervening if their subject comes under threat. This can be tough, said Barnett: "You always find yourself getting a little bit involved."

As Mark Jacobs summed up: "It [the BBC] is a unique institution worldwide... we are lucky to have it." Even without Johnny Morris.



**SLAM SCI-POETRY:** The Pillar Room played host to the third annual Slam the Atom poetry contest yesterday. An eclectic mix of 15 versifiers locked literary horns, including festival director and slam virgin Frank Burnet – a creditable semi-finalist. In gladiatorial fashion there could be only one winner and Rachel Pantechon (above) came through in true style, beating Brenda Read-Brown in the final. Rachel will be performing in tonight's Sci at Night Cabaret. RC

## THE DROID

"I don't think a landscape could be humorous unless the hills look like body parts." Richard Gregory explaining his singularly developed sense of humour.

Nick Pope, ex-MOD UFO hunter: "Things that look like conspiracy more often than not turn out to be bureaucracy." Lost a few files then, Nick?

"They're going to start throwing fruit in a minute." Luke Barnett as the visuals failed during a demo of the latest BBC photography equipment.