

## From the Chair



**Steve Busby** (Chair of the Executive Committee)

Let me begin with a confession: my very first thought about 'Biochemistry on the Screen' was about downloading papers off the web. I guess this means that I need to get out a bit more! Since I heard gene editing mentioned on *The Archers* last week, I will leave screen matters to others. Instead I want to write about 'getting out' and the need for us to communicate our science to the proverbial 'man on the street'. I don't think this used to be such a pressing need, and I recall distinctly, during my PhD days, that it was considered an optional add-on that interrupted valuable time in the pub (I mean lab). These days, quite rightly, it's a must for all of us to make the effort to fly our flag. The usual reason given for all this is to raise our profile and to show that our research is worth funding. As I write, with this week's *Nature* predicting uncertainty for UK science, ahead of the government's spending review (see the 11 November issue, vol, 527 pp144–145), it can never have been timelier for us to articulate the benefits of molecular bioscience in just about every aspect of life, not to mention its potential benefits to the economy. I know it can be tiring to do, but believe me it is necessary. I guess the key is to find novel ways to present

our stories, and whilst everyone can't be Brian Cox, everyone can contribute, and note that our Society does have a scheme for supporting your ideas and initiatives in this area (<http://www.biochemistry.org/Grants/ScientificOutreachGrants.aspx>). Of course, the great thing is that there are now so many different ways to communicate, by means of the web, printed media, or 'on the screen', or via lectures, exhibits, or innovative formats such as 'café scientifique' and 'pint of science'! And, just as the arrival of the printing press proved a vehicle for change some 550 years ago, likewise, the worldwide web has opened up unprecedented horizons for us to get our message across instantly and on a bigger scale. But remember don't rule out the old-fashioned communication method of just talking to people (yes, talking!).

On this note, I wish you all a great end-of-year with plenty of sparkle! Many of us will be benefitting from the break for a bit of 'down time', but please remember that, whilst you are relaxing, your biochemistry will be working overtime. Maybe it's not such a bad thing that it all just comes once a year then. So, I finish by offering all of you my best wishes for a great 2016. ■

## People in white coats

By **Benoît Leblanc**  
(<http://peopleinwhitecoats.blogspot.co.uk>)



Don't you hate it when Hollywood comes across a new word?