

Schools Membership costs only £10 a year. For this, a named teacher representative will receive *Microbiology Today* each quarter, advance notification and copies of new microbiology teaching resources, and discounted fees for attendance on SGM training courses and workshops. Application forms are available at www.sgm.ac.uk

Over to you . . .

Contributions are welcome from teachers who have interesting microbiology material to share, such as novel investigations, useful tips, or good sources of information. A copy of the post-16 resource *Practical Fermentation* (worth £15) will be sent to any school whose submission is published. The editors of *Microbiology Today* reserve the right to edit any material.

Enquiries

email
education@sgm.ac.uk

SGM now has well over 200 School Members and with this issue they will receive the following free resources:

- **Basic Practical Microbiology: A Manual** – the detailed notes that accompany our training course, further copies of which can be downloaded from www.microbiologyonline.org.uk
- **Rhizobium & Root Nodules** – our latest FactFile. This includes an investigation *Isolation of Rhizobium, a nitrogen-fixing bacterium*. An extension activity to accompany this investigation can be downloaded from www.microbiologyonline.org.uk

A booking form for our Summer School (see below) is also enclosed.

Basic practical microbiology courses

September 2001 saw the launch of the Society's new one-day accredited training courses for teachers and technicians. Delivered by Dr John Grainger (MISAC Chairman) and Dr John Schollar (NCBE Deputy Director), they are being held at venues around the country over the next 3 years. The courses aim to instill confidence and to support teachers and technicians in carrying out all aspects of practical microbiology safely and at the appropriate level.

The two remaining courses this academic year are:

- Institute of Education, University of London, 2 July (fully booked).
- Institute of Education, University of Warwick, 5 July (limited places only).

All the courses so far have been well attended by both technicians as well as teachers, with many schools sending one of each. It is hoped that this partnership approach will increase the likelihood of practical microbiology being taught in schools.

The course is split into three main sessions.

The basics. A series of short presentations and practical activities on basic microbiology techniques, including preparation of workspace and media, aseptic technique, and the safe disposal of microbiological materials.

Application of techniques. A series of practical exercises using techniques necessary for the maintenance and culture of micro-organisms in schools. The session concludes with some basic microscopy work and a simple and exciting investigation, *Testing sensitivity to antibacterial substances*, which links directly to the examining bodies' specifications.

Exam for certification. A practical and theory (20 short questions) examination is followed by a debrief and evaluation.

Course fee

The course costs £25 (£20 to School Members), which covers course materials, certification, lunch and refreshments. Schools are offered a £100 flat sum per teacher per day to assist with supply cover.

Feedback

This has been extremely positive with comments such as 'great help for a new module to be tackled in the spring', 'very useful especially as it was for teachers and technicians' and 'thoroughly enjoyed the course even though it was a very long day'.

New practicals resource

Many of the participants also commented that they would like suggestions for practical investigations, which would fit coursework criteria. *Practical Microbiology for Secondary Schools*, a resource for key stages 3, 4 & post-16 and the equivalent Scottish qualifications, a pack of 22 safe practical investigations, will soon be available. It will cost £5 – see the May issue of *Microbiology Today* for further information.

Post-16 microbiology summer school

School of Food Biosciences, University of Reading
15–19 July 2002

The programme of the SGM residential summer school for post-16 biology teachers has been carefully designed to reflect the microbiology content of the current post-16 examining body specifications, but it aims to go beyond the basics by covering the latest research findings in each topic, put into context. There is a mixture of talks by experts, who are also proven communicators, workshops and practical sessions which will cover basic microbiology techniques, some more traditional experiments and new SGM molecular microbiology investigations. All the practical work will adhere strictly to current schools' safety guidelines. There will be a visit to the BBSRC Institute for Animal Health, Compton which includes a tour of the laboratories and farm and talks on *E. coli* O157 and BSE by scientists from the Institute. Ethical issues will be considered throughout the course and a session will explore in more detail how to tackle these in the classroom. The summer school will conclude with an open questions and answers session.

The summer school is open to all teachers of post-16 biology and will cost £95 (£75 for SGM School Members) including en-suite accommodation (in the halls of residence), all meals and evening social events.

The course is limited to 30 participants, so early booking is advisable. For more information and a booking form see the flyer or www.microbiologyonline.org.uk

Microbiology goes online

There were celebrations at the SGM offices in January, which lifted the winter gloom, as www.microbiologyonline.org.uk went live. The Society's new dedicated education website has been launched to help meet the microbiology needs of teachers. We are in the process of developing our FAQs page, so if you have any microbiology queries, submit them now! If they appear on our website you will receive one of our very cute microbiologyonline teddies! Contact Dariel Burdass (Tel. 01 18 988 1835, email education@sgm.ac.uk).