

Norah Boyce Science Lectures - Science for Everyone: Autumn term 2026

These weekly lectures will take place on Tuesdays at 4.30 pm online via Zoom.

The lectures are open to members only. The link for each lecture is on the Norah Boyce Lectures page of the website (you will need to log in to access this) and will be included in the weekly Bulletin during the week prior to the lecture and also emailed to Bulletin recipients on the morning of the Lecture.

Any last-minute changes to the programme will be publicised in the weekly Bulletin.

6 October Brain development and brain repair - two sides of the same coin or different currencies?

Speaker: Charles Ffrench-Constant (Norwich Medical School)

The brain is the most complex organ in the body, and damage or disease can have major personal and societal impacts. This lecture explores brain repair by examining how lessons from brain development can support regeneration, alongside new approaches unique to regenerative medicine. It will highlight emerging discoveries, treatments, and delivery methods that are beginning to make brain repair a reality.

20 October The Divided Mind

Speaker: Ed Bullmore Regius Professor of Psychiatry at King's College London. Fellow of the Royal Society and the Academy of Medical Sciences

I will review the twisted history of how our understanding of schizophrenia has evolved since the work of 20th century pioneers like Kraepelin and Freud. I will summarise some of the 21st century research in genetics, imaging and immunology which is pointing to a clearer concept of schizophrenia as a disorder of brain network development, with potential implications for prediction and prevention in future.

3 November Space photovoltaics

Speaker: Professor Louise Hirst, Dept. of Physics/Dept. of Materials Science and Metallurgy, University of Cambridge

More details to follow.

17 November Is forestry an art or a science?

Speaker: Hilary Anderson (Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs, & Northants)

Foresters rely on a blend of creativity, sound judgement and good science in order to design forests for an uncertain future. This talk will explore how forestry sits at the intersection of multiple scientific disciplines from climatology and plant epidemiology to genetics and ecology, and the evidence for why the protection and restoration of forests are crucial to human health and wellbeing.

1 December Did life on earth originate in the clouds of Jupiter?

Speaker: Dr. Ben Jeffries (retired from Schlumberger)

Any discussion of how and when life on earth originated is necessarily speculative as little physical evidence remains, and everything living today is the result of billions of years of evolution. Occam's Razor might lead us to assume that life started on earth itself, but if that were the case, there are puzzling aspects both as to the timescale and the subsequent development of primitive life. Locations such as Mars, Jupiter's moons and other solar systems have all been suggested as its original source.

In this talk I shall show how Jupiter's clouds provided an original environment consistent with both the timescale and the nature of early life, how transfer to the earth might have taken place and also how this extra-terrestrial source provides an explanation for other features of today's fundamental biochemistry.