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News Release

21.00, 7th October 2005 **Award Winners Announced**

The winners of the Syngenta ABSW Science Writers' Awards were announced this evening at a ceremony at The Royal Society, London, hosted by Peter Wrobel, Vice-Chair of the Association of British Science Writers and Michael Pragnell, Chief Executive Officer of Syngenta, the main sponsor of the awards. Lawrence McGinty, Health & Science Editor, *ITN News*, introduced the shortlisted entrants before the winners were announced. The prizes were due to have been presented at a ceremony on 8th July, but the event was postponed following the London bombings the previous day.

The Science Writers' Awards, which are judged by an independent panel and seek to set standards of excellence in science journalism, were sponsored for the first time this year by Syngenta, a world-leading agri-business. Prizes of £2,000 each were presented to the journalists and broadcasters who were judged to have set the highest standards of science writing in 2004 and reported important scientific issues with accuracy, insight and flair.

Peter Wrobel said, 'The Syngenta ABSW awards reward the writers and broadcasters who set the highest standards across seven categories. We received some outstanding entries for the 2004 awards, which engaged the judges engaged in lively debate in several categories. In some cases it was extremely close, but we believe the winning entries reflect the qualities that we should aim towards. As science journalists, it is our responsibility to challenge and push the boundaries of accurate and innovative science journalism, so let's see even more entries doing this next year.'

A new prize for the *Young Broadcaster of the Year*, in conjunction with *BBC Radio Science*, was presented for the first time tonight. Open to non-professional broadcasters under the age of 25, the ABSW and *BBC Radio Science* hopes that this award will encourage science journalists at the beginning of their broadcast careers to strive for the qualities valued by the science writing community.

Presenting the new award, Andrew Caspari, Commissioning Editor, *BBC Radio 4* said 'We were looking for a young broadcaster who showed flair, innovation and technical potential – someone who could make a science story into a good science programme.'

The ABSW also made a special award to Tim Radford, who recently retired as Science Editor of *The Guardian*. Announcing the Lifetime Achievement Award for Services to Science Journalism, Peter Wrobel said, 'A great story-teller and an example to us all, Tim's love of science and his ability to communicate it so eloquently makes some of us feel clumsy by comparison. His enlightened writing,

his commitment to clear communication, his ability to get to the bottom of a good story and his refusal to have science marginalised, will make him a popular winner of this Lifetime Achievement Award.'

Entry forms for the Syngenta ABSW Science Writers' Awards for 2005 will be sent to ABSW members in November, and will also be available at www.sciencewritersawards.org.uk. Work (excluding books) broadcast or published during 2005 is eligible.

The Awards for the period 1st January - 31st December 2004 were presented as follows:

- **The best feature on a science subject in a national or regional newspaper, awarded jointly to:**
Oliver Gillie for "Sunny D" published in *The Independent On Sunday* on 25th January 2004
&
Tim Radford for "Touching the Void" published in *The Guardian* on 22nd July 2004
- **The best feature on a science subject in a specialist periodical:**
Peter Aldhous for "Borneo is burning" published in *Nature* on 11th November 2004
- **The best investigative journalism on a science subject:**
Ian Sample & Rob Evans for "Wired awake. Provigil is a drug able to keep Pilots and Combat Troops awake for days" published in *The Guardian* on 29th July 2004
- **The best scripted/edited radio programme on a science subject:**
Martin Redfern for "The New Space Race 3: Humans in Space" broadcast on *BBC World Service* on 7th July 2004 and subsequently on *BBC Radio 4*
- **The best television programme on a science subject:**
No award was made in this category
- **The best science writing on the world wide web:**
Jo Marchant and the team at news@nature.com for "Flores Man" published at www.nature.com on 27th October 2004
- **The best communication of science in a non-science context:**
Adrian Washbourne for "Acoustic Shadows" broadcast on *BBC Radio 4* on 14th September 2004

The Judging Panel for the 2004 Awards was as follows:

Steve Connor - *The Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*
David Dugan - Windfall Films
Dr Robin Lovell-Badge FRS- MRC National Institute for Medical Research
Andrew Luck-Baker - *BBC Radio Science*
Dr Averil Macdonald - University of Reading
Gareth Mitchell - Presenter *Go Digital* & Lecturer in Science Communication, Imperial College London
Dr James Randerson - *New Scientist*
Prof Nancy Rothwell FRS- University of Manchester

For further information about the Syngenta ABSW Science Writers' Awards and photos of tonight's event please go to the dedicated awards website www.sciencewritersawards.org.uk, or contact:

Notes:

The ABSW, which has a membership approaching 1,000, exists to improve the standard of science journalism in the UK, and to help those who write about or broadcast science and technology stories. It organises briefings with prominent scientists and policymakers, arranges visits and has an extensive social calendar. Forms for membership can be downloaded from www.absw.org.uk

Syngenta is the main sponsor of the Science Writers' Awards. A world-leading agri-business committed to sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology, the company is a leader in crop protection, and ranks third in the high-value commercial seeds market. Sales in 2004 were approximately \$7.3 billion. Syngenta employs some 19,000 people in over 90 countries. Syngenta is listed on the Swiss stock exchange (SYNN) and in New York (SYT). Further information is available at www.syngenta.com.

Syngenta has nearly 3,000 employees based in the UK, working at ten separate locations. Among the business areas represented in the UK are research and technology, global supply chain, crop protection, seeds and Bioline. Further information is available at www.syngenta.co.uk

Additional support for the awards comes from:

The Medical Research Council (MRC) is a national organisation funded by the UK tax-payer. Its business is medical research aimed at improving human health. The research it supports and the scientists it trains meet the needs of the health services, the pharmaceutical and other health-related industries and the academic world. MRC has funded work which has led to some of the most significant discoveries and achievements in medicine in the UK. About half of the MRC's expenditure of £430 million is invested in its Institutes, Units and Centres. The remaining half goes in the form of grant support and training awards to individuals and teams in universities and medical schools. www.mrc.ac.uk

The Royal Society is the UK's national academy of science. It was founded in 1660 and is the oldest national science academy in the world. It has a Fellowship of the best scientists and engineers from the UK and the Commonwealth. The Society serves the scientific community by funding more than 400 post-doctoral fellowships and professorships, conference and equipment grants and international exchanges, as well as scientific discussion meetings and lectures. It publishes six internationally respected journals, including the world's longest-running scientific periodical, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. It holds meetings, lectures and exhibitions for the public and provides independent advice on science and education issues to policy-makers in the UK and abroad. www.royalsociety.ac.uk