



Boer. Petra and Dafne ran an excellent workshop about enzymes, ranging from easy experiments to more difficult ones. As well as bringing along a great deal of apparatus, they also gave out a handbook, in English, with the details of the experiments and notes for technicians.

Ton gave a short speech on the Friday and we hope to continue the relationship between NVON and ASE technicians in the future. We were pleased to return the hospitality that they had shown Julia, Simon and Michelle last November in Leiden.

On the subject of hospitality, the facilities and food provided at the National Science Learning Centre were very good, as were the laboratory facilities – thanks are due to the NSLC staff. The exhibitors filled the atrium with informative stands and demonstrations, and also ran competitions with prizes. The ASE Technicians' Committee hope that all delegates enjoyed the Conference as much as we did and we look forward to going through the feedback, so that we can start to prepare for the next Conference in summer 2013.

### Gratnells Award winners at the National Technicians' Conference

Leading manufacturer of tray storage systems, Gratnells, announced the winners of their Science Technician of the Year Award (2011) to a packed audience of delegates at the National Technicians' Conference at the NSLC in York.

The ceremony, now in its third year, took place at the start of the two-day conference and followed the speech by Professor Kathy Sykes on the subject of 'The importance of engaging with the public about science'. Following her speech, Kathy Sykes, with Murray Hudson (Managing Director of Gratnells), presented the three winners of the 2011 Gratnells Science Technician of the Year with their awards and prizes.

The winner for the 2011 Gratnells Science Technician of the Year Award was Eileen Edwards from Saints Peter & Paul Catholic College, Widnes. Nominated by her Head of Science, Darren Forbes, Eileen is the third winner of these prestigious Awards.

The other winners of the 2011 Awards were: Margaret Fillery (2nd place), Senior Science Technician, Bethany School, Curtisden Green, Kent; and Madeleine Buck (3rd place), Head Technician at

Varndean College, Brighton.

Of the Awards, Kathy Sykes said: 'It's a privilege to once again be involved with these Gratnells Awards, which acknowledge just how vital the role of the science technician is in the teaching and learning of the subject in our schools and colleges across the UK'.

Murray Hudson said: 'We are delighted that Kathy Sykes has been able to highlight the important role science technicians – sometimes called "the forgotten heroes of science" – fulfil in our schools. And this year's winners have not only been of an exceptional standard, but also the volume of nominations received show that more and more schools are acknowledging the vital role science technicians play in the teaching of the subject.'

If you are – or know of – a science technician who you think should be nominated for the 2012 Awards, then please download a nomination form from [www.gratnells.com](http://www.gratnells.com). There is no entry fee – but the winners will walk away with a range of generous prizes for themselves and their science department. (The closing date for the Gratnells Science Technician of the Year 2012 is 31st December 2012.)

Professor Kathy Sykes at the Gratnells Award presentation.



Please send your contributions for The Prep Room to **Wilson Agnew** on [wagnew737@pc.portadown.ni.sch.uk](mailto:wagnew737@pc.portadown.ni.sch.uk) or **Julia Bostock** on [j.bostock@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:j.bostock@mmu.ac.uk)