

Are you aged 7 to 19 or are you a parent or teacher with kids that love space? Well, get them to enter our great competition and they could...

WIN a trip to space

Remember when you were at school? Science lessons weren't exactly exciting, were they?

Double science usually involved staring sleepily at Mr Jenkins as he waved his chalk-encrusted hands while extolling the virtues of cellular osmosis.

Practical lessons, involving dimly glowing gherkins and brightly flaring magnesium ribbon, inspired only marginally more interest.

Very little seems to have changed since those dim and distant days, with surveys regularly finding that more than 40 per cent of students find science lessons boring and at least 60 per cent feel they are irrelevant to their future careers.

Well, MetroCosm wants to help rectify this so we have teamed up with the British National Space Centre, Space Camp Turkey and space tourist

Richard Garriott to give young people the chance to win a galaxy of prizes that WILL make science come to life.

The competition is open to all seven to 19-year-olds in Britain.

Among the 'out of this world' prizes (sorry), is the chance to spend a week at Space Camp Turkey and see an experiment they design performed by Richard Garriott on board the International Space Station – that's actually in outer space you know!

■ WARNING: ENDORSEMENT BY A POLITICIAN COMING UP!

'I am delighted to see this work to engage young people using Richard Garriott's mission to the International Space Station,' says MP Ian Pearson, minister for Science and Innovation.

'Space exploration provides a wonderful context for applying science and learning about international collaboration.'

Yes, indeed it does.

THE PRIZES (AND HOW TO WIN THEM)

AGES 7-11

Richard Garriott needs your help. He is inviting you to create an experiment for him to perform aboard the International Space Station. The ISS is a research centre, out in space. It is 340km above the Earth and travels at 27,700kph (17,210 mph), orbiting the Earth 15.77 times a day.

You can use words, pictures and diagrams to describe your idea. If it is chosen, your experiment will take place in zero gravity, so you can be really imaginative. Richard is happy to consider experiments that use his body, or items from his astronaut kit bag. For a list of kit you can use see

www.richardinspace.com/metro

YOUR PRIZE

As well as getting the chance to see your experiment performed in space, **20 winners** will be invited to a VIP day at the National Space Centre, Leicester. You will get the chance to meet Richard Garriott and receive a copy of George's Secret Key to the Universe and the Space Tourist's Handbook

SPACE CAMP TURKEY

Winners will spend a week at Space Camp Turkey (July 26 to August 1, 2009). Students will get to:

- Take part in simulated space shuttle missions
- Train in astronaut training simulators
- Design a Mars colony and compete for prizes
- Construct and launch model rockets
- Conduct experiments
- Explore the Moon with the centre's own observatory... and much, much more

The camp is located in Izmir, a vibrant Mediterranean city on the western coast of Turkey. All flights, food and accommodation are included in the prize

For information visit www.spacecampTurkey.com

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COMPETITION FLASHBACK

LAST year's MetroCosm competition sent the next generation of budding rocket scientists to Space Camp in Leicester.

The 19 teenagers – aged 13 to 15 – spent the week scuba diving, building rockets and learning astronomy during Space School's annual camp at the University of Leicester.

They were all winners of the MetroCosm competition, which challenged them to come up with an invention to rescue moonbase scientists struck down with flu.

The winners were fired up by their experience. Cyrus Mwangi, 14, from west London, said: 'This

Over the moon about our space camp prize



week has made me determined to fulfil my dream of becoming a scientist.'

Dhan-Shan Rana, 14, from Leicester, said: 'I've learned more in

this past week than all my time at school. I've always loved reading the MetroCosm page. If Dad hadn't brought Metro home I wouldn't have known Space School existed.' Dr Tracey Parker, head of Space School, said: 'This school gives children from any background the opportunity to let their enthusiasm grow. If we don't inspire the children of today, space exploration has no future.'

MINI COSM

SCIENCE & DISCOVERY IN BRIEF

● BERRY BONUS: Sea buckthorn berries are even better for us than previously thought. Their leaves could help ward off liver disease, Indian scientists believe. The berries, which are indigenous to the mountainous regions of China and Russia, are already famed for their cholesterol-busting properties. An extract from the leaf helped protect rats' livers when they were exposed to an agent designed to damage the organ, the researchers discovered.

● FAST FOOD: Travellers may be able to beat jet lag after a food-related clock was discovered in the brain. But they will have to fast for 16 hours first to make it kick in and supersede the light-based master clock that serves as the body's primary timekeeper, US

researchers said. The food clock developed originally so animals could switch sleeping patterns to maximise their opportunities of finding food when it was scarce, they said.

● FLAKEY SCIENCE: If you want to keep your cornflakes fresh – just add a dash of oregano. Oregano oil works as well as synthetic insecticides to tackle common beetle pests found in stored cereals, Algerian scientists have found. The herb, more commonly used on pizzas, inhibits egg laying and larval development and has long been renowned as a natural insecticide. In the current eco-trend towards natural alternatives it is a potential solution to synthetic insecticides – and has little environmental impact.

NO ST SHERLOCK!**
Press release from the department of the bleeding obvious

Quitting smoking will improve your social life (you don't smell as bad)
New England Journal of Medicine

● HYDRO PHONE: A hydrogen fuel cell that can be used as a back-up power supply for mobile phones has been invented. The miniature cell uses a cartridge filled with hydrogen about the size of a small lighter and can be worn in a belt pouch. It is designed to be part of a hybrid system whereby the phone initially relies on a battery for power before tapping into the hydrogen cell. Swiss-based company STMicroelectronics says the cell will hit the market in 2010 but did not say how much it will cost.

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