

Press Release: 16th July 2009

Double accolade for Plymouth School



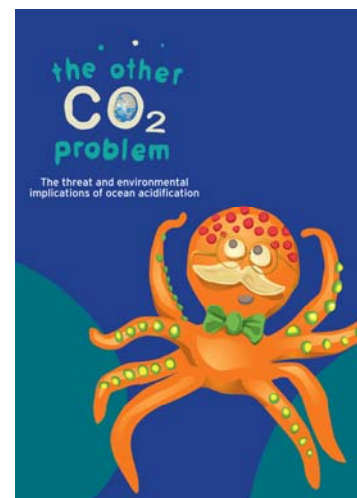
A group of students from Ridgeway School in Plymouth have received two more accolades for a DVD animated film they made to highlight the spectre of ocean acidification.

Fifteen of the students, accompanied by their Deputy Head, were presented with certificates at an international conference held in the City this week. Before the presentation Deputy Head Teacher, Kevin Harper, announced that the school had received notification that they had won the Royal Society of Chemistry Bill Bryson Prize for Science Communication, against the strongest of competition and in a year that witnessed the highest ever number of entries at 500.

So a second cause for celebration as ocean scientists from across the world applauded the students after the film was shown at the First Annual Meeting of the European Project on Ocean Acidification (EPOCA). Attending the meeting and watching the short film were many world experts who are studying how the ocean is changing because of human activities, most notably the continued emission of CO₂ into the atmosphere. Around a third of the CO₂ generated by humans in the last few hundred years has been absorbed into the ocean where it combines to form carbonic acid; the extent of this change is quite staggering with the oceans being 30% more acidic than before the human generated contribution. Early studies are showing that changing the acidity of the seas is starting to impact upon marine life, and many shell and skeleton bearing animals are likely to be affected.

The short film, made with help from Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML) scientists and advice from local animators at SunDog Media, has now been shown at a number of international scientific gatherings and is being translated into other languages. PML's Dr Carol Turley reported that interest in the film was snowballing with a number of conference delegates committed to try and help fund and distribute thousands of copies throughout Europe and into the USA.

One of the first scientists to congratulate the students and to pledge his support was Dr Gerald Ganssen, the Vice President of the European Geosciences Union, who is convinced that film is powerful: *"When I watched the film I was touched, it is simple and has a strong message. It is the perfect vehicle for telling the world about ocean acidification"*.



Kevin Harper is in no doubt that the whole process has been a very positive one for the students involved: *“The fifteen students here today are the core of the project, back at school are quite a few more who were involved and they all gained from the experience. Making this film really caught their imaginations, they are already aware of environmental concerns but this project enabled them to use skills and share understanding; the result not only educated them but enabled them to educate others. We are all really proud of them, they picked up the ball and ran with it, and most importantly they enjoyed it and contributed to an international debate. They have been empowered to speak not only to their generation but also to the older generation and to generations still to come.”*

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518 words

Note to Editors

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The Royal Society of Chemistry, Bill Bryson Prize is awarded for excellent science communication and was judged by Bill Bryson, RSC President Professor C David Garner and an Editor from RSC Publishing. The awards ceremony will take place in London in October.

The film can be viewed at:

www.ridgeway.plymouth.sch.uk/gt_animwkshp09_C02.htm

www.youtube.com/watch?v=55D8TGRsl4k

Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML)

www.pml.ac.uk

PML is an independent, impartial provider of scientific research, contract services and advice for the marine environment, with a focus on understanding how marine ecosystems function and reducing uncertainty about the complex processes and structures that sustain life in the seas and their role in the Earth system.

As one of the world's first truly multidisciplinary marine research centres, PML delivers highly innovative research and solutions for national and international marine and coastal programmes. The research at PML is timely and highly relevant to UK and international societal needs and its research, development and training programmes have at their core the mission to contribute to issues concerned with understanding **global change** and **the health** and **sustainability** of marine ecosystems.

European Project on Ocean Acidification (EPOCA)

<http://epoca-project.eu>

The EU Framework 7 Collaborative Project EPOCA is run by a consortium of 27 partners across 9 countries involving many of the leading oceanographic institutions across Europe and more than 100 permanent scientists. The budget of this 4 year project is 16.5 M€ with a contribution from the European Commission of 6.5 M€.

Plymouth Marine Sciences Partnership (PMSP)

www.pmsp.org.uk

PML is a founding member of PMSP. The partnership consists of seven organisations; Plymouth Marine Laboratory, University of Plymouth, Marine Biological Association of the UK, National Marine Aquarium, Sir Alister Hardy Foundation for Ocean Science, Diving Diseases Research Centre and the Flag Officer Sea Training: Hydrographic, Meteorological & Oceanographic Training Group. The partners work closely, and often collectively, to deliver world class marine research, education, conservation and technological innovations.