

# THE ADSTOCK SCIENCE CLUB



2011 ended on a high, TASC was privileged to have Dr Suzie Sheehy from the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL) in Didcot come over and give us a talk in November entitled "Accelerated Dreams". This included some very interesting demonstrations (see pics) and was about the history and development of atomic particle accelerators.



Her main interest while working at the RAL is the development of particle accelerators for use in medical environments. She is also researching the production of electricity by using Thorium as the main fuel source within nuclear power plants, as this is seen as a much safer and cleaner alternative to Uranium. There are of course a number of hurdles which she is trying to surmount before this alternative becomes practically and economically viable and hopes to have these



cracked before she reaches 28 later this year; well at least that's her dream – Good Luck Dr Suzie! By the way that's not a whip she is holding in the right hand picture but a coil of wire used in one of the demonstrations!

December saw the more experienced TASC members experimenting with varying amounts of alcohol, though some members thought this could prove rather dangerous and decided to desist. No major problems or explosions were experienced and everyone seemed to leave happy and in possession of the same number of limbs with which they arrived – definitely a success!



We had another interesting talk, in January 2012. This time instead of getting someone over at great expense, we had a Skype link set up to a UK company called Reaction Engines Limited (REL) and in particular with a Mr Mark Hemsell, who is their Future Programmes Director.

REL is involved with the design and development of the Skylon space plane and hopes to have a working prototype by 2018. This is probably a bit ambitious but who knows, maybe they'll succeed. Once again the talk or in this case discussion went extremely well and everyone learnt a good deal about the trials and tribulations of space plane design, some of the history and when we can expect Ryan Air to be selling cheap day returns to Australia.

Looking forward to the rest of this year, at our next meeting on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February, I will be showing a recording of "A night with the stars", a talk given by Heartthrob Prof Brian Cox about Quantum Mechanics; very interesting and worth watching, also it is not as daunting as it sounds.

Later this year I will be trying to arrange some more speakers to visit as well as some day trips to places of scientific interest, all ideas welcome.