

VIEWPOINT SURVEY RESULTS

SEPTEMBER 2010

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

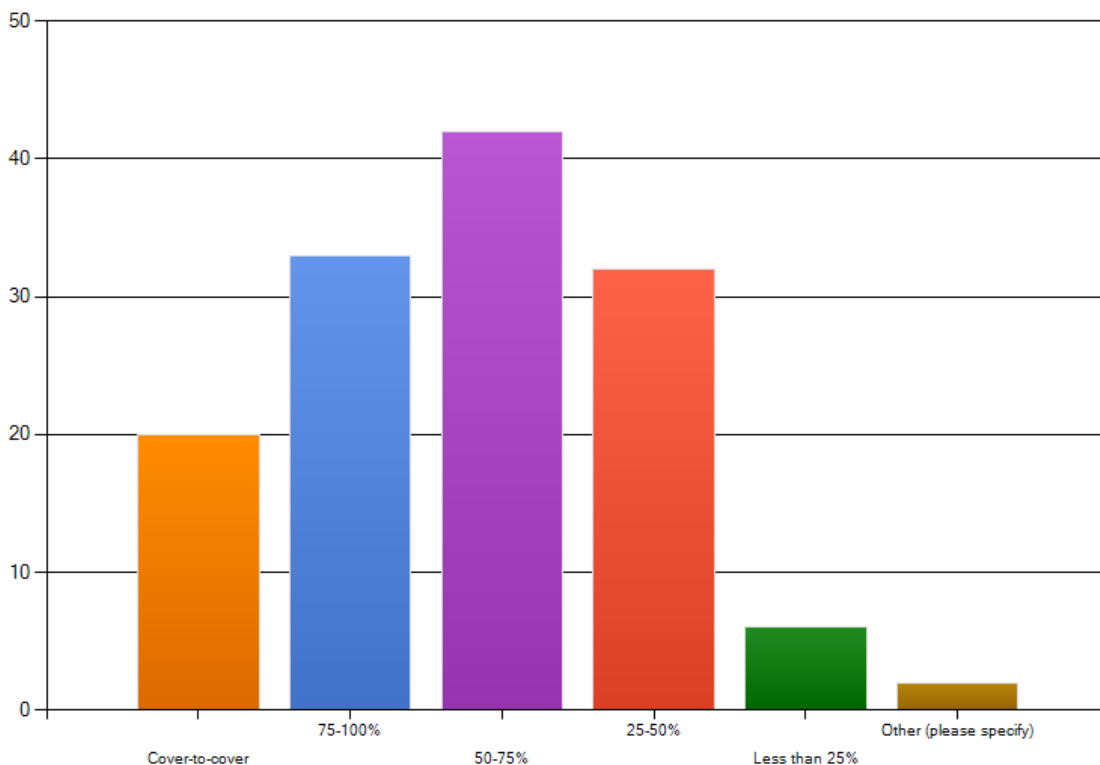
- The survey was hosted on SurveyMonkey from May to September 2010 at a cost of £79.80.
- The survey was intended to gather information from readers of the newsletter as to their current habits and preferences, and suggestions for contributions or future directions for *Viewpoint*.
- 136 people completed the survey. Most answered within a few days of the original email announcement.
- A summary of the responses is detailed below, for discussion at the CCC meeting on 23rd September. Graphs are those generated by the hosting website. I have included all comments made but, for confidentiality reasons, have removed all email addresses offered by potential contributors.

DETAILS OF RESPONSES

1. DO YOU READ VIEWPOINT, THE BSHS NEWSLETTER

- Yes - 98.5%
- No - 1.5%

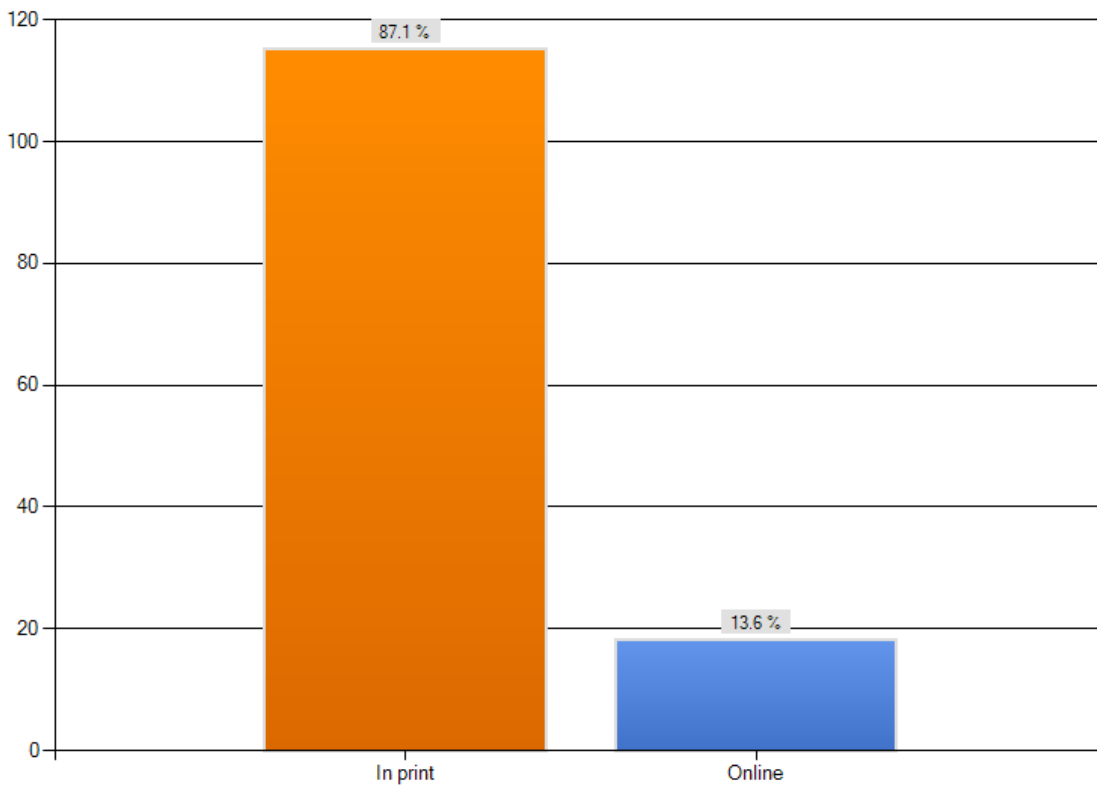
2. IF YES, HOW MUCH OF A TYPICAL VIEWPOINT ISSUE DO YOU READ?



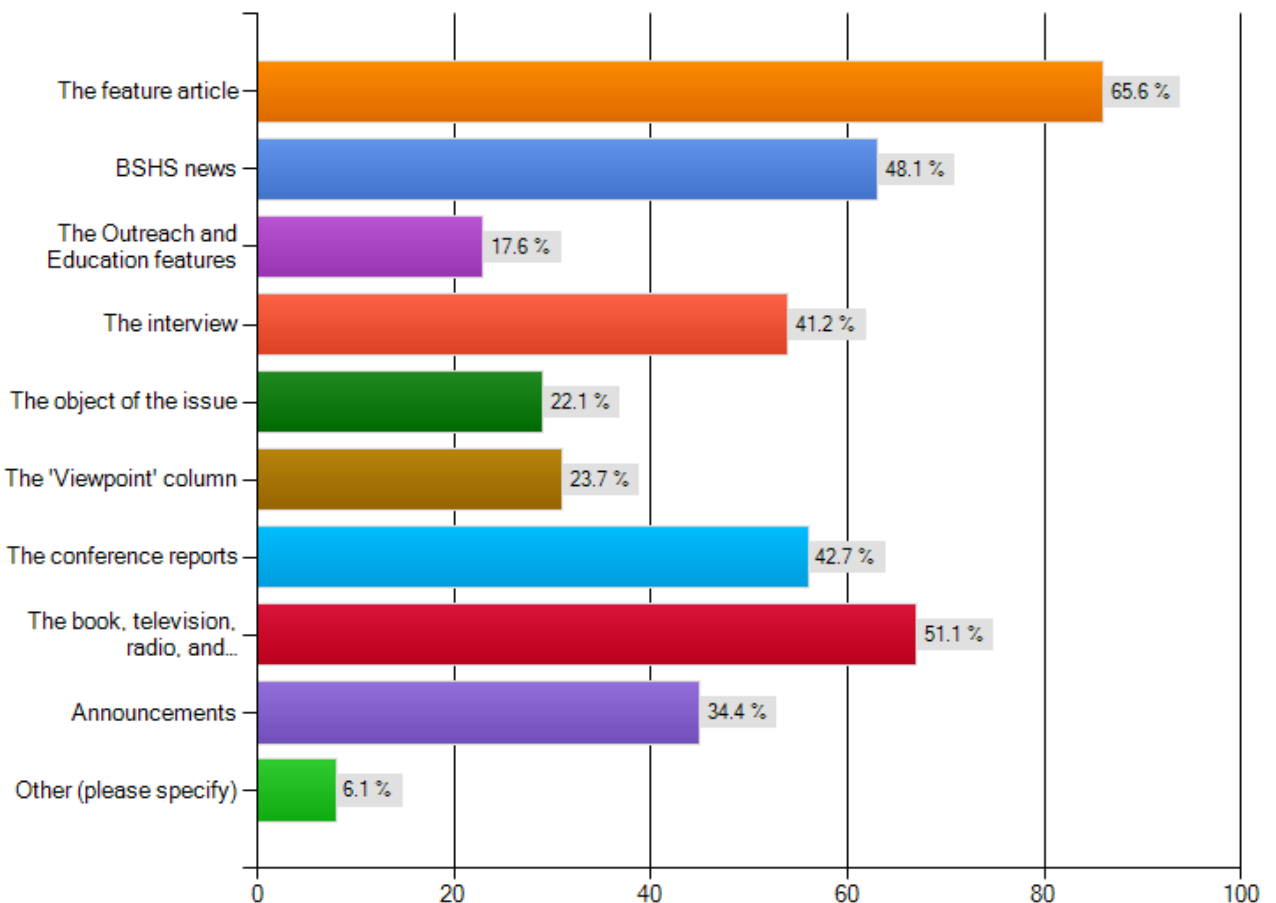
Responses:

- scan for items of particular interest
- depends on contents - usually skim through

3. HOW WOULD YOU PREFER TO READ VIEWPOINT?



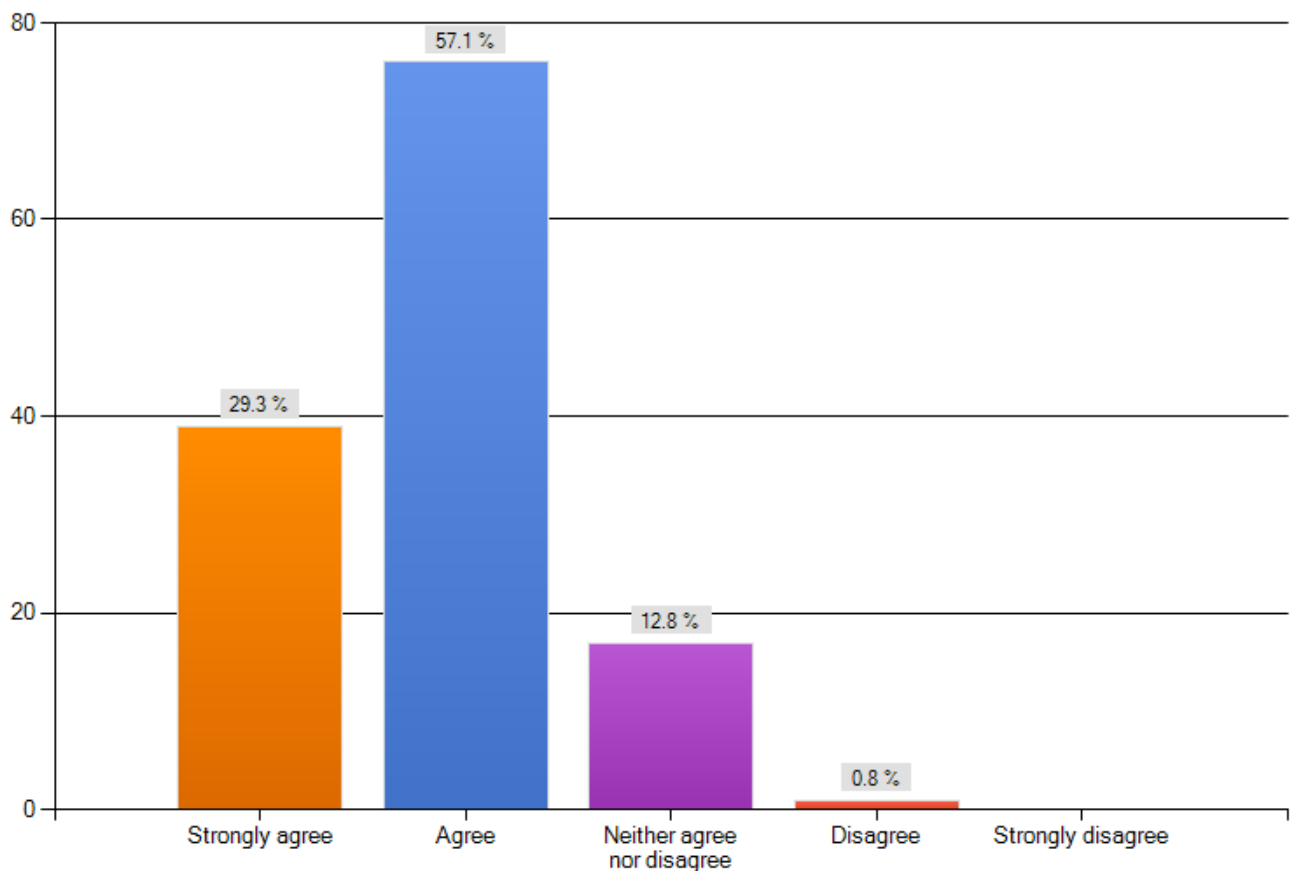
4. WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF VIEWPOINT? (YOU MAY MARK MORE THAN ONE ANSWER)



Responses:

- I like it all!
- varies according to content of particular items
- No part is particularly a 'favourite'.
- very best bit is when the forthcoming anniversaries are listed
- no favourite
- I flip and chose what looks most interesting to me, no favourites
- Depends on the content
- In-depth discussions of science history matters.

5. DO YOU THINK VIEWPOINT PROVIDES A GOOD BALANCE OF BSHS NEWS, NEWS OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE COMMUNITY, OUTREACH AND EDUCATION WORK, CONFERENCE REPORTS, REVIEWS, AND FEATURES?



6. HOW COULD THIS BALANCE BE IMPROVED?

Responses:

- I think the balance is great -- I wouldn't change a thing.
- Rather more attention to work of teachers in schools using HS in science and history teaching
- More information about academic posts and post docs
- Lots of postgraduate/post doc activity. Would like to see more columns from established members of the profession.
- I tend not to look closely at the announcements because the BSHS web pages provide such a comprehensive list of forthcoming events etc.
- seems fine as it is; might make it a forum for more CfPs or items of professional interest, or see whether it's possible to promote more outreach opportunities, as particularly the latter can be hard to discover unassisted.
- no opinion

- It doesn't matter how balanced it is, I only pick up Viewpoint to skim to the bits most interesting to my work. As long as there's an easy-to-read index to help me do this, I think you are doing a great job!
- It would be useful to have short articles highlighting the different HSTM departments and projects being undertaken. Also articles on archive collections that may not be widely known about, and sites that are worth visiting.
- Less about outreach and education!
- Have not yet formed an opinion - I am too new a member
- It's fine.
- Drop interview
- More on book, television, radio, and exhibition reviews
- I am too new a member to comment
- More announcements?
- More about the history of science in the wider world
- I think that the first mission should be to make news of the BSHS available first. Book reviews are for the Journal. Conference report can also be included in the Journal (if they are made as seriously as in Technology and Culture, for example). The newsletter is for perishable professional news such as positions, fellowships, political and teaching issues, etc.
- I would like the rationale by which books are selected for review to be made more obvious--I worry that this section undermines the very valuable function of reviews in BJHS. This applies also to box 8 in which the inclusion of book reviews in Viewpoint makes the possibility of adverts more feasible--which will take income away from BJHS.
- I am utterly unsure
- More comprehensive coverage
- More about what goes on outside Britain
- I should enjoy reading one one-page article on the life of an important scientist/mathematician in each issue, along the lines of what is published monthly in the Newsletter of the American Physical Society ("This Month in History").
- I don't actually think the conference reports are that interesting, though I know they're a traditional feature. How could they be livened up?!
- no opinion
- There could be more emphasis on news about the community (various depts?) etc and less space given to BSHS news, since this is usually already known or too late to act on by the time of publication.
- I'd prefer a newsletter to a mini-journal.

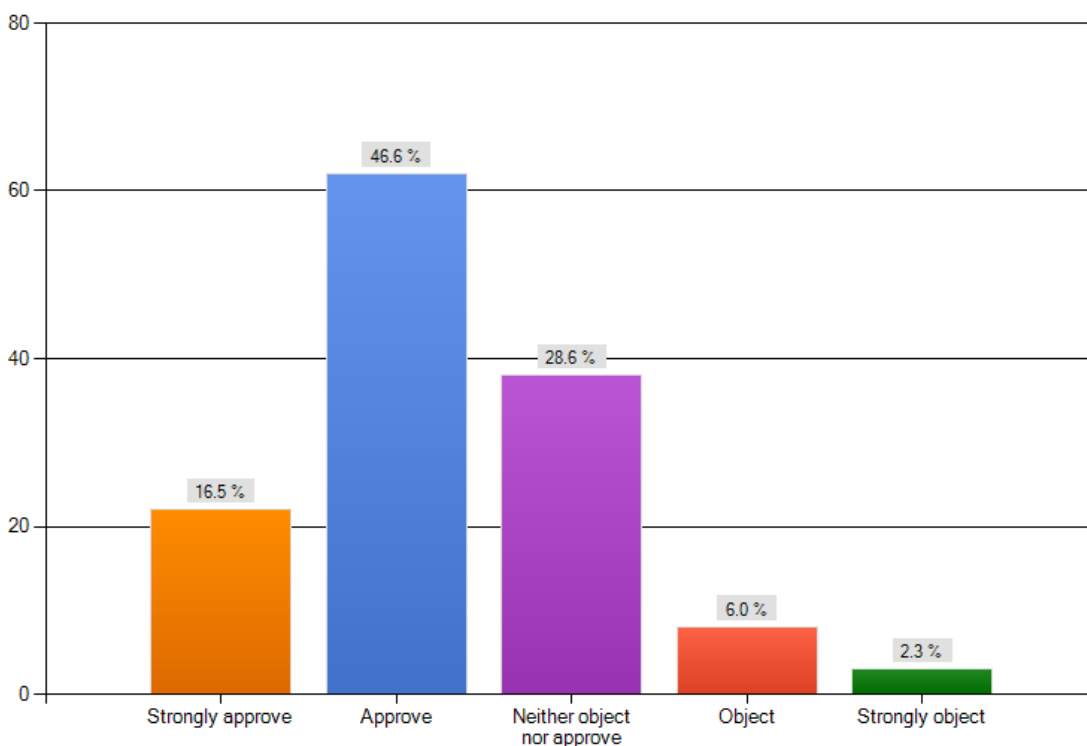
7. NEW ISSUES OF VIEWPOINT WILL INCLUDE SEVERAL ARTICLES ON A PARTICULAR THEME. DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR THEMES?

Responses:

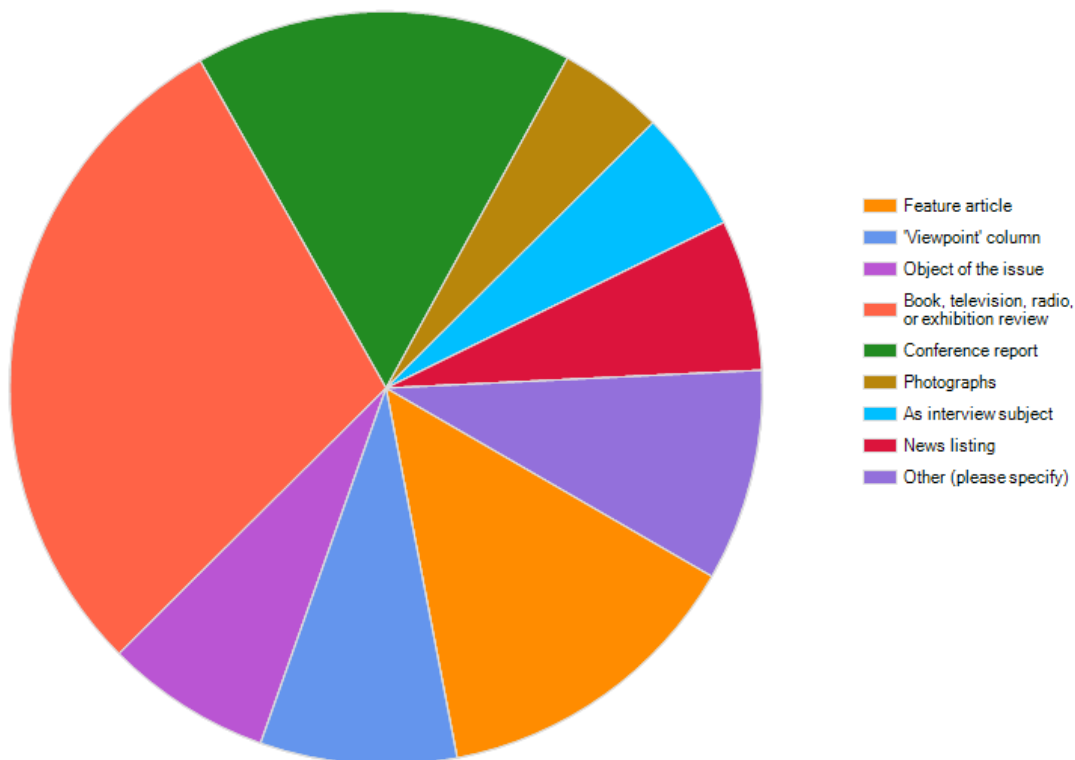
- A 2013 issue a year or so in advance of the International Congress might be useful
- No.
- radioactivity (viz Curie in 2011)
- "history of chemistry, unknown museums/collections in the history of science, new online resources in history of science"
- How the 'human sciences' (esp. Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology) fit into History of Science
- Humour and the history of science
- is there something distinctive about "British" history of science? is there such a thing?
- Collecting, entertainment, museums, travel, education,
- Historians v Scientists in History of Science
- no suggestion
- Contribution of ethnic minorities
- So many possibilities! By period, by discipline, by themes such as science and religion... Personally I would be interested in wider news - how history of science is doing across the world - the Middle East, the US, Eastern Europe, Japan, Australia & NZ, etc. - by people who are working there, or maybe who've worked there recently, or have colleagues/friends there, or even have just been to conferences there. I think in the UK we can be a bit anglophone sometimes.

- Please let's move beyond simplistic themes of 'race' or 'gender'!
- Types of Institutions eg. Museums ...
- As (6) Also, articles demonstrating the links between HSTM and other academic communities.
- engineering/applied technology
- "The interplay between history of science and history of medicine. 'Neglected' areas of history of science. Applied science"
- not yet - see answer 6
- scientific apparatus perhaps?
- I'd be interested in a theme that engages some part of the modern scientific community as well as historians of science.
- Evolution; planetary science
- No, as I have barely time to read the Journal I am not looking forward for further information.
- Less on Darwin would be appreciated.
- events in the publishing industry, museum sector, and everywhere students need to look for jobs
- Big picture, where is next big theme coming from...
- It would be interesting to promote stronger dialogue between historians of science and practising scientists. While I strongly believe that all practising scientists would benefit from a better knowledge of the history of science, and the historical development of the scientific method, I am also aware that a large proportion appear to have no interest whatever in history, whether scientific or any other kind. I believe that the Society could perform an important service by extending Outreach not only to the young, but to the professional scientific community.
- the role of science in the whole range of issues under the broad heading of ecological security
- Historiography and philosophy of history
- recent publications on natural history, or medieval science, or the decline of Moslem science, or astronomy, or religion and science - especially recent changes in attitude (if any) among opponents of evolution....
- No
- velociraptors

8. WOULD YOU OBJECT TO THE INCLUSION OF RELEVANT ADVERTISEMENTS IN VIEWPOINT? (THIS COULD BE A VALUABLE INCOME STREAM FOR THE BSHS, BUT WOULD TAKE UP SPACE IN THE PRINT PUBLICATION.)



9. WHAT/HOW WOULD YOU BE PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE TO VIEWPOINT? (YOU MAY MARK MORE THAN ONE ANSWER.)



Responses:

- Any of the above.
- Any of the above if/when I have appropriate material
- any of the above I often go to specialist conferences
- Might be interested in contributing something if the suggested theme mentioned above were tackled.
- I would feel comfortable emailing the editor if I come up with something that might be appropriate
- let me know what you'd like. i owe you a piece. sad.
- would have to give this some thought, but would be interested in principle.
- I would be happy to give views a new member perspective on BSHS
- History of Science in Secondary Education
- Since am an American I usually do this for HSS but have published in the Newsletter in the past during Frank's editorship.
- Sorry, insufficient time
- Now I know you might be interested, I'll email you if something comes to mind!
- I would have to think about this.
- I'm easy

10. ANY FURTHER COMMENTS? ADDITIONALLY, PLEASE LEAVE A CONTACT EMAIL ADDRESS IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO VIEWPOINT.

Responses:

- Thanks for all the hard work!
- Keep up the great work! The last issue was really outstanding.
- Can issues be expanded?
- Viewpoint is among the best newsletters I receive - keep up the good work!
- yay for Melanie!

- As a young scholar, I appreciate in particular all the suggestions related to scholarships and funding opportunities, career tips and creative ideas about how to make a living with the history of science.
- While I enjoy reading Viewpoint, I do feel it has a rather old-fashioned appearance. Pages of densely spaced text, with few images, text captions or anything else to break it up. It isn't very eye-catching in these days of intense competition for my attention.
- I am very conscious of how things have moved on since I was active. All I could really offer is reminiscences or stories of how things were.
- I thought the ""Turning PhD to book"" article in the latest issue was great - other similar things might be good, e.g. writing a paper for the BJHS (maybe Jon Agar would do that?), writing for popular audiences, presenting at history/science festivals, talking to school groups, PhD supervision from the supervisor's perspective (that could be useful for students - what does your supervisor really mean when s/he says...). Basically, techniques and audiences that some people are good at, and others are scared to try.
- I enjoy reading Viewpoint and often pass it on to others
- A general point but especially in relation to Q7: I don't think it a good idea to expand its length very much (if at all).
- A good, well-balanced publication.
- I think it unfortunate that the BSHS splits its publishing effort between a lively and colourful newsletter and a dull-as-ditchwater journal. I'd prefer to see the two publications combined and a livelier journal result which also included an element of news (i.e. analytical news stories of potentially lasting interest, not ephemeral announcements of the sort that can be made by email). In both publications I'd like to see a greater acknowledgement that the history of science 'community' is not confined to the university sector.
- As I develop as a member I would expect to be able to contribute more fully.
- I am also a member of the History of Science Society, and I no longer read their newsletter regularly now that it's exclusively on-line.
- This is the best designed and produced newsletter that I receive.
- Some of the photos are terrible!
- Keep on with the good typo and graphical presentation!
- "The contribution I was offering above relates to book reviews (in Physics/Astrophysics). However, I should mention here that while, my profession is that of a University physicist, I am a mere 'amateur' in the field of the History of Science (an omnivorously browsing amateur). For the type of books which you would wish to have reviewed, I am certain that you would be able to call on (historically) better qualified reviewers!
- I still think that Viewpoint is a newsletter for BSHS to be proud of. So much better than the old one, and far more interesting than the HSS one. I think it's a shame you didn't put a question on this survey about WHO the readers are (e.g. is Viewpoint at all performing its original ambitious role in reaching out beyond BSHS members?)
- Older members usually have fairly large book collections of which they do not always want some of the books - younger members are often looking for books at a reasonable price - could some way of linking these be found with some commision going to the Society.
- Some features of old Newsletter; e.g. I have many Hist Sci books and back issues of journals, including BJHS, which I no longer need and could be of interest to other members. You could provide valuable means of communication.

MELANIE KEENE, VIEWPOINT EDITOR, 8/9/10