

Science festival draws the crowds

By Rachel Conner-Hill
Staff Reporter

THOUSANDS of people have been learning about the human body, virtual reality and outer space at a science festival.

Durham University held the event during the half-term holiday to give people of all ages the chance to have a go at experiments and find out more about the world we live in while inspiring them to love science.

More than 6,000 science enthusiasts attended the event, which was held in a marquee on Palace Green from October 29 to 31.

Children took part in a range of experiments and activities which were aimed at helping people get to grips with science, from finding out more about black holes to how to make slime.

There was also the opportunity to do things like identify skulls, let people test their own strength, design a moon village, make a hydraulic crane and learn more about patterns in physics.

Among the highlights were the university's planetarium and a sun dome, inside which families could learn about the power of the sun and fusion energy.

Dr Pete Edwards, director of science outreach at Durham University, said: "Celebrate Science is an opportunity for kids to see first-hand the inspiring science we do at Durham University and realise that science is not just about being a teacher



One young visitor at Durham University's Celebrate Science creating their vision of a Moon village with artist Helen Schell
Picture: GAVIN DUTHIE

or a dentist – there are many careers that scientists have and one of those could be for them.

"This year's event has been a huge success. We're grateful to everyone who visited or helped make the festival possible and we look forward to seeing many of the visitors at some of our other science outreach events and programmes throughout

the year ahead." There were activities organised by the university's departments of chemistry, physics, psychology and mathematics, as well

as a team from pathology at the University Hospital of North Durham.

Paul Bowe, from East Rainton, between Durham and Sunderland, visited with his four daughters: Marley, ten; Macey, seven; Molly, six; and Milly, four.

Mr Bowe said: "I'm interested in science and it's fantastic to be able to bring the kids to something like this.

"They're naturally inquisitive and the way the stalls are set up really gets them engaged. It's a great event."

Marley added: "Science is my favourite subject at school. Celebrate Science is really fun – to do experiments with lots of different things. I really like the planetarium."

The Celebrate Science programme has been running for ten years, attracting al-



A maths student making shapes at Celebrate Science



Visitors to Durham University's Celebrate Science making slime with the Procter and Gamble Team
Picture: GAVIN DUTHIE



Making bubbles was one of the activities on offer at Durham University's celebrate science event



A visitor to Durham University's Celebrate Science creating their vision of a moon village



Durham University's department of psychology gave visitors the chance to explore virtual realities
Picture: GAVIN DUTHIE

most 60,000 visitors. It is part of the university's science outreach programme, which also includes a schools' science festivals, which takes place each spring, a programme which gets undergraduate students to help teach science in local schools and a professional development programme for teachers.



A visitor to Durham University's Celebrate Science exploring light with the quantum light and matter team