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COLLEGE OPENS ITS LABORATORIES FOR CAMBRIDGE SCIENCE FESTIVAL

22 February 2010

Students at Cambridge Regional College have been polishing up their fingerprinting and forensic analysis skills in preparation for the University of Cambridge Science Festival.



The body in the laboratory: Forensic Science students Barney King, Robbie Barrett, Hannah Jones (the 'victim') and Rachel Smith practice their skills.

The College, which is taking part in the festival for the first time this year, is opening the doors of its science labs to offer hands-on sessions in finger-printing, fibre analysis, chemistry and biology – all essential skills for would-be sleuths.

Forensic Science is a rapidly growing area of study, thanks to the success of TV dramas such as “CSI” and “Silent Witness”, but the reality can be very different from the all-action programmes. The Science Festival event will illustrate the work that goes on behind the scenes during a murder investigation.

“We’re delighted to be taking part in the Science Festival this year, and to be able to give visitors the chance to unlock the mysteries of Forensic Science and show them the realities of crime investigation,” said Dr Helen West, from CRC’s Science department.

“Forensic Science is popular initially because people have seen programmes like CSI. But the students quickly appreciate that the course is about developing key analytical skills in subjects like chemistry and also being able to learn important skills such as simple fibre analysis, taking fingerprints and being able to record information taken at scenes of crime.”

The event, on Tuesday, 9 March, will be followed by talks at the College later that evening from leading scientists working in two highly-topical fields: stem cell research and genetics.

Dr Kate Quinlan, from Cambridge University’s Laboratory for Regenerative Medicine, will talk on stem cell research, while Dr Susan Gurney, of the University’s Institute of Continuing Education, will speak on ‘Genetics and Forensic Science’.

Later in the Festival, CRC Art students will be exhibiting at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in a multi-media exploration of identity and body image, “Bodies exposed – Identity and the Image.”

For more details on these and other events in the festival, and to book practical sessions, see www.cambridgescience.org or telephone 01223 766766.

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

For more information, please contact Lynn O'Shea, PR & Events Co-ordinator, on 01223 418773 or email loshea@camre.ac.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

Cambridge Regional College is the second largest provider of full-time education for 16 to 19 year-olds in the Eastern Region. The College has around 3,500 full-time and around 6,000 part-time students. Students come in from a 40-mile radius, covering Cambridge and its surrounding villages, eastern Bedfordshire, northern Essex and western Suffolk.

Over 80 per cent of full-time students are aged 16 to 18 years old and come to the College after secondary school; the rest are mature students, studying on a range of Access to Higher Education and vocational programmes. The College offers the largest and most comprehensive range of vocational courses in Cambridgeshire, and has one of the largest Train to Gain contracts in the Eastern Region.