

Rank Prize Fund

The Rank Prize Funds (www.rankprize.org) were established in 1972 by the late Lord J Arthur Rank, shortly before his death. Under his will, the objective of the funds is the advancement and promotion of a number of aspects of science for the public benefit of knowledge, education and learning. One of the bequests provided funds in support of optoelectronics. The Fund has two committees of eminent scientists who advise the Trustees.

The aim of the scheme was to make both learning and teaching science in the classroom more exciting, up to date and attractive to both teachers and pupils. As a result, it was hoped that this would increase the number of pupils choosing science subjects and make the quality of their education world leading. In turn, this should improve the prospects for many industries and professions in the UK.

The activities focussed on three schemes:

Solar cells in action

Colour vision and displays

Illumination and communication

The UK & Ireland Chapter was originally approached by the chairman of the optoelectronics committee, Professor Cyril Hilsum CBE FRS FREng, to consider supporting the scheme. Professor Hilsum has recently retired as chairman after 25 years and more than 32 years on the committee. He has been replaced as chairman by Professor Donal Bradley CBE FRS.

The UK & Ireland Chapter donated £1,200 to support 'colour vision and displays' tools and teaching. The scheme, organised by the Optoelectronics College (OEC), is a project to support the classroom teaching of optoelectronics in secondary school science to pupils in the 11-13 age group. Objectives include communicating the excitement of involvement in optoelectronics and encouraging pupils to consider careers in science, engineering and technology.