

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council for funding research in the area of science communication, and Professor Nolan and the departmental staff for the support of such work. I am hugely grateful (now it is all over!) to Dr Dominic Dickson, my supervisor, for talking me into doing this PhD in the first place. Seriously, though, without his vision and all those diagrams involving three circles I would not have had the opportunity to conduct this research. Thank-you.

My co-supervisor, Dr Martin Stanisstreet, has been enormously patient in teaching me what social science research is all about. Thanks so much for all the help and encouragement.

Thanks also go to the Graphic Science Unit at the University of the West of England: to Professor Frank Burnet for allowing me to evaluate Science in the Fast Lane and Cheltenham Festival of Science, although to be fair my consultancy rates were very reasonable at the time! Thanks also go to Ben Johnson with whom I collaborated while writing the final chapter of this thesis, and hope to continue to work with in the future. But most importantly I should thank Dr Karen Bultitude, who was not only star proofreader but has also become one of my closest friends and partners in crime.

Gareth James at the National Space Centre and Chris Warrick at Culham Science Centre allowed me to use their activities in my research. Cheers!

Working in the SCU would not have been the same without the SCU girls – Siân and Katie. We have laughed, we have cried, we have... let's leave it there. You're both top birds!

I'd also like to thank all the other patrons of Staff House and the Cambridge, especially Si, Gallagher and Angie. May we enjoy many more meals involving mackerel and fruit curry.

Thanks to the other members of 'team physics', Matt, Stu, Gary, Mark, Mary, Sue and Anant. Having usurped Matt as the highest qualified clique member (for now) I will be exercising my right to feel smug...

Cheers also to the girls from down south, especially Adela, for your support and general greatness.

Special thanks go to my boyfriend, Ashley, who always seems to make all the stress disappear. I love you.

Finally, thanks to my family: Dave and Jackie, the parental units, and my brothers Ian and Ali R. Couldn't have done it without you!