

# runninghot!

**Name** Kathy Sykes

**Born** 1966

**Nationality** British

**Current Employment**

- ✿ Physicist
- ✿ Collier Chair For Public Engagement In Science And Engineering at the University of Bristol
- ✿ Freelance science communicator
- ✿ Co-Director of the Cheltenham Festival of Science
- ✿ Trustee of the National Museum of Science and Industry
- ✿ Trainer in communication and media skills
- ✿ Chairs the 'Sciencewise' advisory group
- ✿ Member of the Council for Science and Technology (CST), UK government's top level advisory body on science and technology policy issues



**Education** PhD Bristol (Physics) with an interest in biodegradable plastics

**Work History**

- ✿ Head of Science for Explore@Bristol
- ✿ VSO - teaching Maths and Physics A-level in Zimbabwe (3 years)
- ✿ Researcher on 'Tomorrow's World'

**Key Career Highlights**

- ✿ Frequent appearances on British television and radio
  - Open University/BBC Two challenge show Rough Science
  - BBC Four's puzzle panel game,
  - Mind Games
  - Ever Wondered... About Food
  - Alternative Medicine: The Evidence
- ✿ Built the hands-on science centre in Bristol '@Bristol',
- ✿ Judge for the 2002 Gulbenian Prize for Museums and Galleries
- ✿ Youngest university professor in her field (at age 34)
- ✿ Wellcome Trust's Public Engagement Strategic Advisory Group
- ✿ Trustee of the NMSI
- ✿ Helped to establish Famelab - a national competition where new talent is found and nurtured in science engagement.

## Awards

- 2006 Royal Society Kohn Award for Excellence in Engaging the Public with Science (<http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/page.asp?id=1839>)
- Awarded an Institute of Physics prize for physics communication in 2000
- Chosen as one of six women to feature in a photographic collection opening on International Women's Day
- The Guardian labelled her one of Britain's 50 "women to watch"
- The Daily Mail describe her as one of 2004 wonder women
- Eve magazine name her among Britain's 20 smartest women
- 19 magazine crown her one of Britain's top 19 women of influence

## People say

- Professor Sykes is like the science version of Carol Vorderman without the over-riding desire to make money at every single opportunity by advertising anything that asks her - Richard Herring
- What could be sexier than a woman who can make a protractor out of some bark and a frog's tongue - Richard Herring
- Kathy's work is mostly aimed at changing cultures to help scientists and policy-makers find better ways of listening to other people's perspectives. — Bristol University
- Kathy Sykes is one of the youngest professors in the country – and an inspiration to young scientists everywhere – Noise
- Above all, she is an ideal role model for all young scientists - Women of Outstanding Achievement in SET
- she has the perfect ingredients, warmth and knowledge, to be the new face of science and he said her appeal lies in the fact that she's just a normal person who happens to know a lot more about science than the rest of us – Martin Wilson
- She's in tune with people's concerns and anxieties - Mike Ungersma

## Quotes

- Science is not about truth, but is about trying to get closer to the truth
- I hope to make science engagement here more strategic and cohesive.
- As well as holding delights in them-selves, these subjects are fantastic passports to lots of interesting things to do with your life... some of which can help make things here on the planet a bit better -if you choose well.
- Scientists need humanising: It is almost as though scientists are like aliens, beyond most people's values, but whose decisions affect every single person.
- I was first turned on by science when I realised it could be magical

## Quirky facts

- A self-declared incurable optimist
- Her first job in Florence was an assistant to a temperamental Iranian magician, having swords thrust through her head
- Climbs mountains in her spare time
- Historical figure she most identifies with is Queen Elizabeth I - a strong woman, learning to live in a very male world.
- Always having champagne in the flat, so I can celebrate at any time.
- Other interests are scuba diving, singing, skiing, drawing and salsa dancing.

## Family

Her mother taught English as a foreign language; her father is a physicist