



Press release: for immediate release

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Professor Peter Higgs awarded Royal Society of Edinburgh medal

Peter Higgs, the retired Edinburgh professor whose work has changed physics, has received a unique honour from Scotland's national academy, the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

At the annual statutory meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh yesterday evening, Professor Higgs FRS FRSE was awarded a specially-commissioned medal in recognition of his outstanding work that led to the recent announcement by scientists working on the Large Hadron Collider at CERN of the discovery of a Higgs-like boson.

Professor Higgs, based at the University of Edinburgh from 1960 until his retirement in 1996, has had an enormous impact on the world of physics. In 1964 he proposed a mechanism through which the fundamental particles, the building blocks of all matter, attain their mass, predicting the existence of the 'Higgs field' and consequently of a particle with particular properties and behaviours that underpins the physical fabric of the universe: the Higgs boson.

Findings of the international team of scientists at CERN, announced in July 2012, have now confirmed the discovery of a previously unknown boson whose behaviour so far has been consistent with a Higgs boson.

Professor Sir John Arbuthnott, President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, said "Professor Higgs' theoretical work has long been recognised as a crucial step towards a unified theory of the forces of Nature and for this he was one of the first recipients of the Royal Medal – the RSE's highest honour – in 2000. I am delighted that twelve years later, in light of the work being carried out at CERN to confirm his theories, the Society is once again able to give its congratulations and recognition to Professor Higgs with this commemorative medal. Professor Higgs' achievements have shaped Man's understanding of Nature at the most fundamental level."

Alan Walker, of the Particle Physics Experiments Group at Edinburgh's School of Physics and Astronomy, commented on the significance of Professor Higgs' work, "If the particle seen at the Large Hadron Collider is confirmed as expected to be a Higgs boson, then this will rank as one of the greatest discoveries of all time, and will shape our investigation of the existing open questions in this fundamental area."

The RSE, in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh's School of Physics and Astronomy, has created an exhibition that celebrates the recent discovery at CERN. Housed at the RSE's historic premises on George Street, Edinburgh, '*From Maxwell to Higgs*' emphasises the crucial role Peter Higgs has played, whilst also highlighting the historic discoveries and theories that have influenced current thinking about the

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existence of such a particle. The exhibition was opened by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh on 26 September 2012.

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An image of Professor Higgs receiving his medal, with RSE President Professor Sir John Arbuthnott, is attached.

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