

What do scientists really do?

Dr Liz Sockett is Senior Lecturer in the Institute of Genetics at Nottingham University. She runs a science lab that investigates questions about genes. She also teaches science students at the University. Dr.Sockett's own research looks at the genetics and genetic engineering of bacteria. She is particularly interested in how bacteria swim through liquids. She studies the genes that control tiny engines in the bacteria which act as outboard motors, and is finding out how they work. She says:



" I was born in Newcastle and went to school there. At school I did GCSEs in English, foreign languages, sciences, maths & geography followed by A levels in Biology Chemistry & Physics. I did just well enough to get a place at Leeds University, where I studied Biochemistry & Microbiology for a B.Sc degree.

At university I began to feel like a scientist, so after Leeds I went to University College London to do a PhD in microbiology. While in London I decided that I would like to learn some genetic engineering skills. I was lucky enough to be offered a 2 year job in Professor Sam Kaplan's lab at the University of Illinois near Chicago, USA. I made a lot of good friends in the USA, and learned a lot of science. I came back to the UK to work with Professor Judy Armitage at Oxford University (where I was able to enjoy all those Inspector Morse settings!)

I stayed at Oxford for 3 years setting up some genetics work on bacteria and then I moved to Nottingham University where I have been working ever since. My husband Andy is a civil engineer and we both live in Nottingham, so I can beat the traffic and bike to work every day."

Want to ask Dr. Sockett a question?

You can email her during the Science Year 'Who am I?' theme at the Science Year website.

All the answers Dr. Sockett sends out will be shown on the website at www.scienceyear.com/chalkface/index.html, so check there first to see if she's already answered your question. Her email address is at the bottom of that page. We'll feature some of the best questions on the ASE website www.ase.org.uk