The Royal Society is an independent academy promoting the natural and applied sciences. Founded in 1663, the Society has three roles, as the UK academy of science, as a learned Society, and as a funding agency. It responds to individual demand with selection by merit, not by field. The Society’s objectives are to:

- strengthen UK science by providing support to excellent individuals
- fund excellent research to push back the frontiers of knowledge
- attract and retain the best scientists
- ensure the UK engages with the best science around the world
- support science communication and education; and communicate and encourage dialogue with the public
- provide the best independent advice nationally and internationally
- promote scholarship and encourage research into the history of science

For further information on the Society’s activities, please contact the following departments on the extensions listed by dialing +44 (0)20 7839 5561, or visit the Society’s Web site (www.royalsoc.ac.uk).

Research Support (UK grants and fellowships)
Research appointments: 2547
Research grants: 2339
Conference grants: 2540

Science Advice
General enquiries: 2585

Science Communication
General enquiries: 2572

International Exchanges (for grants enabling research visits between the UK and most other countries (except the USA)

Library and Information Services
Library/archive enquiries: 2606

Inset cover images relate to papers in this issue. Top: a worker of the paper wasp, Polistes dominulus, with wings spread laying an egg near the non-aggressive foundress (marked with a red spot) (see pages 1339–1344; photograph, Juergen Liebig). Middle: genetic and field data suggest that basking in natural populations, which will include, among others, the following papers:

- Theoretical models of selection and mutation on quantitative traits
- Artificial selection and maintenance of genetic variance in the global dairy cow population
- Drosophila bristle tips and the nature of quantitative genetic variation

Selection in backcross programmes
F. Hospital
Regression-based quantitative trait loci mapping: robust, efficient and effective
S. W. Scott

The estimation of genetic relationships using molecular markers and their efficiency in estimating heritability in natural populations
S. C. Thomas