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20 NEWS

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INTERESTING RIDE: Dr Stephen Warren-Smith, an expert in optical fibre sensors, mixes laboratory work with a love of the great outdoors which led to him being named SA Adventurer of the Year. Picture: CALUM ROBERTSON

Adventurer in and out of science lab

BRAD CROUCH

SWASHBUCKLING "super" scientist Dr Stephen Warren-Smith, 29, could well be the pin-up boy for efforts to mix laboratory work with the great outdoors.

The list of academic prizes he has won is impressive, from major prizes in physics and the University of Adelaide's University Medal as well as University Doctoral Research Medal, through to the State Government's SA Science Excellence Award and last year's Channel 9 SA Young Achiever Award in science.

The expert in optical fibre sensing loves the outdoors as much as the laboratory.

He won a grant from the Australian Geographic Society to support his plan to ride a recumbent tricycle the length of Africa en route to the 22nd World Scout Jamboree in Sweden in 2011 to promote adventure and responsible risk-taking to Scouts and youth.

Over nine months he and a friend rode from Adelaide to Perth, from Cape Town to Ethiopia, then Turkey to Sweden, and for his efforts he was named SA Adventurer of the

Sunday Mail **FACES OF THE FUTURE** SUPPORTED BY Bicentennial Foundation




Year by the Outdoor Educators Association SA.

Dr Warren-Smith is now the Australian Research Council Super Science Fellow at Adelaide University's Institute for Photonics and Advanced Sensing, investigating advanced

sure temperatures at the Port Pirie smelter, which can exceed 1000C.

"Sensors can have a wide range of applications," he said. "The work we are now doing at Port Pirie measures temperatures at multiple



sensing. His work with sensors covers a broad area - from optic fibres which pick up proteins in the uterus showing when a woman is most fertile, to sensors detecting corrosion in aircraft.

His present project is using pure glass fibre sensors to mea-

points along the furnace. They can give more information than traditional sensors which is important because you lose money if you are running the furnace at the wrong temperature."

The pure glass fibres are made at the University and

while the present work is a research project it has future commercial potential.

When he is not in the laboratory or using sensors in anything from uteri to smelters, the former Xavier College student from Gawler is likely to be bushwalking.

"I've been involved in Scouts as an adult for about 10 years and love getting outside bushwalking," he said.

"I've met some great people and they do good work, so it is really win-win."

He may need a new backpack for future bushwalks - Dr Warren-Smith married his accountant wife Rong earlier this year and their first child is on the way.

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