

## Electronic canary is a lifesaver

**STUDENTS** from a Scottish university have developed a revolutionary electronic 'canary' that can sniff out dangerous chemicals.

Like the birds once used by miners, the 'biosensor' warns of contamination before it is serious enough to harm people or the environment.

Created at Glasgow University, it uses specially-modified microbes that react to toxic substances by releasing a certain chemical. This in turn reacts with other compounds in a 'fuel cell' to generate an electrical charge which can power a warning signal.

Researchers say the cheap, simple device has thousands of uses.

Student Scott Ramsay, who worked on the device, said: 'The technology could be further developed to detect pesticide levels, for example in baby food or toxins in drinking water.'

The university is now looking to secure funding to develop the sensor.

