

RSA

South West Region

Autumn 2008

Welcome to our new look newsletter



Welcome to the first edition of our new look newsletter. We have changed from a boring and, frankly, very dense email format to something that we hope you will find more interesting and easier to read. We hope it will be a better vehicle to keep SW Fellows up to date with events and networks development. More importantly, we want you to use the newsletter as a vehicle to promote Fellow to Fellow communication. Send us your ideas or news of interesting projects you may be working on, or have heard about that will be of interest to other Fellows – about 200 words will be good. Perhaps you want to find other like-minded Fellows to develop an idea into a project, or develop a local RSA social network. We can help you achieve that through this newsletter. Initially, we will publish quarterly and if there is sufficient support from Fellows we hope to make this a monthly newsletter. In this issue, we bring you up to date with current events and

network activity, project development, and news of a new appointment of an Outreach Co-ordinator for the South West, Chris Luffingham.

Please send us your views on how we can shape future editions of the newsletter, and we hope you enjoy and find it a useful vehicle for keeping informed about what is happening in the RSA SW Region.

We are looking for someone to help with network development in Somerset. We estimate the time commitment to be around half a day a week. Please contact me if this is of interest to you.

Best wishes

Ian Hosker, Chair RSA South West, ian@quasarconsultancy.biz, Tel: 01 17 385 0541

Who's who in the RSA South West

Chair: Ian Hosker FRSA
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Deputy Chair (Plymouth and Cornwall contact): Robin Tatam FRSA
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Secretary (Devon and Exeter Contact): Kevin Cahill FRSA
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Somerset Representative: Position Vacant

RSA Outreach Co-ordinator (South West):
Chris Luffingham
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New Outreach Co-ordinator for the South West

On 1st August, Chris Luffingham took up his post as full-time Outreach Coordinator for the RSA in the South West. His role will involve working closely with Fellows to create regional and topical networks, which will serve to develop the project and programme areas of the RSA's activities to identify and tackle barriers to social progress across the South West. Throughout the next few months, Chris will be travelling throughout the region to facilitate meetings with individual Fellows, lead discussion groups, support events and connect Fellows with each other for the creation of relevant networks. He will also be responsible for supporting and implementing locally-based RSA projects and encouraging Fellow-led project development.

The RSA wants to tap into, build and nurture the talent and innovation that already exists within the RSA Fellowship in the South West. The Outreach Coordinator intends to form a stronger, cohesive link between the RSA and the Fellowship and enhance engagement and communication throughout the UK. In the near future Chris will be developing a regular programme of 'drop in' sessions across the region. The sessions will be designed to provide a regular focal point for Fellows. There will not be a set agenda for these sessions, rather it will be an opportunity to share ideas and discuss with Fellows and the Outreach Coordinator possible future projects. **If you would like further information about these meetings then please get in touch with Chris.**

Chris Luffingham, Outreach Coordinator, South West Email: chris.luffingham@rsa.org.uk, Mobile: 07500 885474



The SW Regional Programme (2009).

1. The Devon County Show. We are planning to repeat the hugely successful and popular lunch and show tour on Saturday May 23rd 2009
2. Jurassic Coast Cruise. This was stormed off this year – force 9-10 is not to every one's taste – but we have re-planned it for Saturday July 25th this year, in company with the Royal Geographical Society and the British Computer Society.
3. Lunch at the House of Lords. We made a very successful expedition to this threatened part of the British Constitution this year and hope to do the same in 2009. Two special reasons for a visit. The Constitutional reforms as proposed will see the House of Lords and 700 years of history shut down and replaced by a mainly elected Senate. Secondly, your secretary is responsible for an Irish heritage project called the Boyne Foundation and the Chair of the Foundation, Lord Laird of Artigarvan will look to host the lunch for all those interested in Devon's connection to William of Orange.
4. Visit to Highgrove. A number of fellows have asked if this could be arranged. Steps are under way to try and get a day trip organised during 2009.

Kevin Cahill, Secretary RSA South West
Email: ros@globalnet.co.uk

Exeter Local Events Group. Normally at the Devon and Exeter Institution (2009)

1. The Credit crisis and the West Country. We have asked Ben Bradshaw MP, the Government minister for the South West to address us on this matter. It will probably be on Friday evening with supper and a discussion. This will probably be in Nov 2008
2. The Wildscreen Film Festival. Harriet Nimmo is the Chief Executive of this biannual event and an RSA Fellow. Wildscreen is the Oscar event in the world of wildlife filming and is situated at Bristol. Nov/Dec 2008
3. The Colour Indigo. Dr. Jenny Balfour Paul and author of this best selling book on Indigo Dye and its history will talk to us about her work. Dec 2008
4. Rebuilding the Scillies. Robin Tatam, our former chairman will tell us about his adventures as he rebuilt the jetties on most of the Scilly isles. Jan 2009.

The remainder of the programme will be published later in the year.

Kevin Cahill, Secretary RSA South West
Email: ros@globalnet.co.uk

Reducing Youth Re-Offending Open Workshop

In May, RSA South West hosted an open workshop at Exeter College to explore the issue of youth offending, and especially re-offending.

The workshop was attended by a number of RSA Fellows and representatives from a range of organisations that work with vulnerable young people, including: Connexions Cornwall and Devon, Youth Justice Board, Devon Probation Service, and a number of community organisations.

Four themes to be followed up were identified and the report of the workshop will be published before Christmas. This will include a summary of the evidence presented, background statistical data and proposed actions for further work by RSA South West. Watch this space!

Ian Hosker FRSA, Chair RSA South West
Email: ian@quasarconsultancy.biz

Beer Quarry Caves

This extraordinary network of underground caves, the site of human limestone quarrying activity since around 47 AD, are now known to most of the SW Fellowship. The caves got a good outing in the media this year too. Last year we made the caves, located behind the village of Beer one of our projects with the aim of making the caves better known nationally. In part we succeeded, with 6 minutes on ITV, and pieces in the WMN and Devon Life. But we did not get our London lecture for the cave's curator, John Scott FRSA, but we hope to have another try next year. Our documentary, made almost entirely by RSA Fellows remains in rough cut stage, but we are now circulating it to the broadcasters in London. Following a private viewing of the documentary, the curator has been invited to make an application to have the caves made a separate world heritage site, in parallel with the Jurassic Coast, which is already a world heritage site and in which the caves are set. The 75 acres of caves remain largely unmapped but a special high tech survey was conducted this year by the Camborne School of Mining. With 18 entrances that remain inaccessible and perhaps another 70 acres of caverns to locate, the outcome of the survey is eagerly awaited.

Kevin Cahill, Secretary RSA South West
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Public Participation in Health and Social Care Network

With the abolition of the Commission on Public and Patient Involvement in Health (CPPIH) and the PPI Forums from the end of March 2008 and the commencement of Local Involvement Networks (LINks) from 1 April 2008, a new era of potential public participation in these two sectors has opened up. Unlike the PPI Forums, which were concerned solely with the health sector, the new LINks system will cover both health and social care.

In the South West region and as part of the national 'Darzi' review, the draft strategic framework for Improving Health in the South West 2008/9 to 2010/11 is now available and the Strategic Health Authority is seeking the Public's views. The NHS Constitution is to be put out to consultation, in what has been described as the most important development in the history of the NHS.

More locally, Devon PCT has published its strategic framework for health and social care and the Devon children and young people's plan for the next three years has been published.

Also in April 2008 basic changes were announced in the Care Services Improvement Partnership, which has become a partnership of four core national improvement programmes, delivered regionally through eight Regional Development Centres: social care, mental health; children and young people; and, health and social care in criminal justice.

In July 2008, the House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee published its Report on the 'third sector', "Public Services and the Third Sector: Rhetoric and Reality", which dealt among other things with the issue of commissioning.

In spite of Government protestations to the contrary, the above multi-strand transition will almost inevitably involve a damaging gap in the monitoring of services and some loss (perhaps considerable loss)

Exeter Youth Council

A little over two years ago (as part of the 2006 Coffee House Challenge), a group of young people and RSA Fellows met in Starbucks in Exeter to discuss the question: why are so many young people not participating in democratic processes for local, national and international representation, and how can we redress this?

Some of the answers came as no surprise, but a key theme that did emerge was that young people are as passionate as anyone and these tend to be issues based – e.g. environment. The problem lay with the conventional representative institutions: they were a mystery to many young people who found it very difficult to find an independent voice for the issues that mattered to them. They also recognised that there are some significant skills required to become effective as a 'voice' and they were generally lacking in young people.

The young people came up with a solution of their own: a Youth Council that was not the product of 'adults' wishing to determine a model of consultation. They wanted a vehicle that was self-determining and was focused on the priorities they felt were important rather than those that adults think are important to them. They also welcomed the idea of the RSA in the South West supporting the EYC formation and to consult the RSA on how best to develop their influencing skills.

Two year's on, the first meeting of the EYC will take place at Clyst Vale Community College, Broadclyst, Devon. Representatives from many of Exeter's secondary schools will meet and formally establish the EYC.

The RSA South West wishes to acknowledge the support of Exeter school teachers and Student Councils in achieving this landmark, and especially Dr Kevin Bawn (Principal of Clyst Vale Community College) for hosting and supporting this initiative, and Adam Gardiner (Clyst Vale student) who has been a significant driving force in working with his peers and the RSA to bring the ideas of two year's ago to fruition. Watch this space!

For more information, contact Ian Hosker FRSA, Chair RSA South West

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of expertise in civic engagement, monitoring, inspection and report-writing. Although the administrative support organizations (Hosts) for the LINks have been established in most areas in the South West, it is likely that the LINK itself will take several months to establish in each case and many more months before it can function effectively and hold providers to account.

A recent Kings Fund report has pointed out that Public expertise in such critical areas as commissioning is sadly lacking and surveys of health service staff seem to confirm this gap. Understanding the 'commissioning cycle' is one of the most difficult aspects of health scrutiny to understand, not least for those with little or no prior experience of the NHS or social care. There is a need for members of the Public to learn about and subsequently be able to examine 'the commissioning cycle', understand what 'strategic commissioning' is and where accountability and scrutiny fits. Unless provision is made

for this, it is likely that, as the BMA has suggested, members of the public will be outthought and out-manoeuvred in their efforts to make health and social care more accountable and sensitive to Public needs.

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An RSA South West network has been established and has met twice already. The group has begun to form terms of reference to focus in on key issues, and has identified potential research partner organisations which are in the process of being approached.

The next issue of the newsletter will bring you up to date with the group's work. In the meantime, if you are interested in contributing to the work of the group, contact James Lynch or Ian Hosker.

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