

RSA

Scotland

Spring 2010 Newsletter

21st Century Enlightenment. Health to Wealth. New Networks Manager. Sustainable Model of Citizenship.

Meetings, meetings, meetings ... and it's all going strongly in the right direction

RSA Scotland continues to lead the way in active engagement with Fellows and wider societal change. We welcome Jamie, our new Networks Manager and Matthew Taylor becomes *Dearth Vader* in Edinburgh

Refocus for the Committee

It is good to reflect on where we are and what we are doing. To do just that, the Scottish Committee held an away day in January to examine what we have achieved over the last 3+ years and where we should be focusing attention as things move forward.

It is hardly surprising that we considered the Scotland vs John Adam Street debate. Just what support should we expect from the centre and how does what we do fit into the wider whole? Actually the answers were surprisingly good once we got past the emotional aspects of "is Scotland a Region or a Country?"!

As can be seen from the Ideas Exchange with Matthew Taylor - what RSA Scotland is delivering is active Fellowship and functional networking that is having positive results in many areas. Contrast this with the larger programme of public lectures delivered in London and we get a very complementary set of activities. London delivers the RSA presence nationally - and hence our prestige and edge. Locally however we are using that to great advantage in leveraging change for the benefit of the communities we live amongst.

We looked at a number of Themes that we can use to inform future engagements as follows:-

Common Themes:

- Apolitical political connections / Policy influence
- Connecting communities
- Network Development, connecting Fellows
- Challenging UK (societal) values
- Influence / be a catalyst for social change
- Ethics

RSA London Themes:

- Be visible, attract big names
- Global connection / influence

RSA Scotland Themes:

- Determine place of Scotland in UK
- Appreciate Scottish cultural component
- Encourage / support Fellowship and grassroots civil action
- Fellows-driven influence on Scottish policy, Parliament connections
- Connect with Scottish Fellows



Pat Armstrong - Chair of RSA Scotland and Matthew Taylor - CEO of the RSA engaging with Fellows at the Ideas Exchange on 29th March (see page 2)

We also considered the reasons why Fellows had joined the Society and looked at how these link to the current project themes of Climate Change; Diet and Health; Lifelong Learning; Enterprise; Creativity; Drugs and Alcohol; and Food for the Future.

There's plenty to keep us all busy for some time yet...

Recent Events

WWF - RSA Event

Values, Sustainability and the Citizen: Making the Cultural Shift Took place on 10 February at the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh.

- What current values do we share as the basis for humanity's relationship with the Earth?
- What are the implications of these dominant values for meeting our global challenges?
- Where do these values originate and how are they reinforced?
- How do we engage with values as a route towards a more sustainable future?
- How can real commitment to sustainability be fostered?
- What role can opinion leaders and those in public life play to bring about the shift in social values that are needed to meet the challenges we face?

Louise MacDonald, Chief Executive Young Scot, (Chair) set the tone by asking if we can tackle climate change just by government intervention or if encouraging attitude and behaviour change is needed too. She talked about the disappointment of the Copenhagen COP15 conference and the question it threw up as to whether the political will to tackle climate change exists.

Tom Crompton - Change Strategist, WWF-UK opened by mentioning the film Avatar and how it was about a deep connection with nature which we have lost. He then set out the findings from Meeting Environmental Challenges: The Role of Human Identity 2009, [Kasser and Crompton]. Intrinsic values such as our connections to friends, family, community and nature are the best motivators for sustained pro-environmental behaviour change, rather than extrinsic values such as social status and financial reward. The integrity of our values and the values that our organisations promote through their activities are therefore very important, for example advertising a car by appealing to our social aspirations, eg a pretty girl selling a 'green'

car - does not reflect the intrinsic values needed for long term pro-environmental behaviour change.

The main discussion points that emerged were:

- There is a need for organisations to be more open about their values, making sure that there is a consistency between marketing, communications with different groups and core values.
- There was a question about whether our intrinsic connections with nature are widespread and present in us all? Can love of nature realised during escapism and fantasy (eg while watching Avatar) be turned into concern and brought to the fore while suppressing other values? Natural Change has been piloted as a way to achieve this with small groups.
- The importance of organisations dealing with feelings as well as strategies, outcomes and targets was mentioned.
- In a discussion about whether transformation could be achieved without cost it was acknowledged that the changes which will be needed to combat climate change will be painful. The current discourse in the environment movement is to look at the economic need and environmental imperative together (eg Green Growth) but is this going deep enough?

Ideas Exchange with Matthew Taylor

Held at the offices of Morton Fraser on Quartermile in Edinburgh on 29th March. This was an interactive session with a good number of Fellows engaging in debate about what we do, how we do it and what we could all try and do better.

Matthew gave a brief overview of his experience as Chief Executive and what this has meant for the RSA Journey. He commented *"I am thinking a lot and writing a lot about the Enlightenment at the moment - it's good being here..."* (Apparently David Hume, whose statue is in the city, is an inspiration.)

The essence seems to be that modernising the RSA has been central to the development of 21st Century Enlightenment. We are a Society that will deliver through being seen as the place to go for general help to facilitate change (rather in the way that we trust the RAC or Green Flag to be there when we need them) without Fellows having to actively do things all the time. However there is a rising expectation that there is an effective contract between Fellows who *"expect to get a phone call occasionally asking for (their) help."*

a decade of dearth...



L to R: Matthew Taylor (Dearth Vader?); Andrea Jones; Colin Campbell; and Lauren Amazeen at the Ideas Exchange

Overall we need to satisfy the desire of Fellows to be involved in interesting networks. However Matthew also commented that we are seemingly entering a Decade of Dearth or put more simply belt-tightening as a result of the economic state of the nation. Pat Armstrong added that this gives opportunities - *"don't waste a good crisis."*

The expectation is that in 3 years the RSA will be unrecognisable from where it was 3 years ago. More importantly, when asked what we in Scotland could do to help, the response was to *"keep doing what you are doing."*

Various Fellows introduced other topics:-

Andrea Jones talked about community involvement in Girvan in Ayrshire and also how her garden photography might help the Organic Growers of Bothwell (a Venture Fund Project).

Lauren Amazeen spoke about the Drumchapel Community Garden project that was helped by the Venture Fund. The RSA's support has been key in allowing the group to meet and to properly engage with the issues their community faces.

Networks

The Glasgow and Edinburgh Networks are shortly to be joined by other cities now that we have a Networks Manager in place once more. If you are in Dundee or Aberdeen and want more information or - better still - are prepared to help, please contact the Committee

The **Glasgow** Fellows Network meets upstairs at **Café Gandolfi** in Albion Street on the second Tuesday of each month. Next meeting is on 13 April 2010 from 5.30 - 7.00pm. Occasional(!) email reminders are sent out to Fellows but given the variety of different postcodes in the Greater Glasgow area that is not an exact science. If you want to make sure your name is included please let us know.

Network contact is Rob Wherrett robw@zymolysis.biz

Edinburgh Fellows Network meets on the Last Thursday of the Month, from 5pm till 8pm, the venue is currently **Le Monde** in George Street, though suggestions for more congenial surroundings are welcome. Email reminders are sent out to Fellows with an EH postcode, but please let us know if you would like to be added to that list. Fellows are encouraged to drop in to have a glass of wine and share their ideas.

Network contact is June Edgar june17@fsmail.net

The RSA Fellows' **Media, Creative Industries, Culture & Heritage Network** (an RSA Board approved grouping open to all RSA Fellows, irrespective of location) has two events planned for Scotland and others in the pipeline.

Enquiries to annpackard_pppt@onetel.com - Forthcoming events in Scotland, details of which recently issued by London are:

21 April 2010: Digital Economy Bill: Professors Simon Frith and Lilian Edwards (Universities of Edinburgh and Sheffield) will address issues of copyright, plus "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly", including abnegation of due process, "three strikes and you are out", site blocking and EU issues, net censorship and so on. Lillian Edwards is also known for her blog "Pangloss".

Payment: £10 per head by crossed cheques in favour of "RSA Fellows' MCICH Network" to Ann Packard, 81 Cumberland Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6RD.

12 May 2010: Creative Scotland: Andrew Dixon, the CEO of Scotland has kindly agreed to meet with RSA Fellows shortly after his appointment. Given the level of interest any Fellows wishing to have their name entered in the ballot for places should contact Ann Packard by e-mail. If successful payment will be requested, and if unsuccessful names will be put on a waiting list.

Events must be pre-paid: no refunds after 1700 Saturday 17 April re 21 April and, if relevant after 1700 Saturday 8 May re 12 May.

Events start 6pm at Anderson Strathern LLP, Edinburgh, with thanks for their support and use of their offices in Rutland Court, Rutland Square, Edinburgh.

There was also a plaudit for the RSA's involvement with Fulbright Scholars and an expression of hope that this approach might be widened to include other forms of international scholarship within Europe. A full audio download of the meeting is being provided for the website so keep your eyes/ears peeled if you want to hear more.

Go to <http://www.thersa.org/fellowship/fellowship-activity/regions-and-worldwide/scotland> to find out more about what is going on with the RSA in Scotland.

RSA Scotland Venture Fund

Fellows who have projects for consideration are reminded that the next closing date for bids is 21st May 2010. Application forms are available from the Chairman of the Panel, Dugdale Bradley dugdalebradley@btinternet.com

Coming Events

Barnardos Ideas Symposium

This has now been deferred until September with involvement from the Scotland Futures Forum alongside RSA. We will be working with the team to put together the panel of 15 speakers at this event - each of whom is expected to speak for 15 minutes on an idea that will make Scotland a Better Place.

Word Festival

We still hope to participate in the Aberdeen Word Festival which takes place on the University of Aberdeen campus in May.

Looking ahead ...

We previously mentioned a forthcoming lecture from Benjamin Bauer, an expert in eco-horticulture at the University of Witzenhausen. So for the German speakers amongst you he is in this clip from a German news site looking at aspects of guerrilla gardening in Berlin! http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/video/sendungsbeitrag44706_res.html Maybe there is a lesson for communities over here and we look forward to hearing more.

Bilingualism Matters

A debate on this fascinating topic is being planned for later in the years. Details nearer the time.

Scottish Fellows' Conference

This is now taking shape for the Autumn and will be looking at issues that connect Health to Wealth. The planning is being led by Jane Kille from the Scottish Committee. Her contact details are jkfrsa@gmail.com Further news as plans progress.

Snippets

A Fellow going places ...

Following a piece he read in the RSA newsletter, Simon Watson has been successful in being selected for the British Council Transatlantic Network 2020.



This is a network of approx. 100 people from 21 countries aged 25-35. As part of the network Simon will be attending the TN2020 global summit in Chicago this year and then the next two summits in 2011 and 2012. The network has essentially been formed to build future influencing relationships between the USA and Europe. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/tn2020.htm>

He says he would not have known about this were it not for the RSA – and hopes his membership means he can give something back to the RSA network in Scotland.

Picture: Simon Watson - Head of Developments for Barnardos, Scotland

Just saying...

We've moved to network and hope! (a comment from MT on how we are operating these days...)

Bob Porrer - the former Chair of RSA in Scotland is moving south to Cambridge very soon, to be nearer to family. We wish him and Sheila well in their retirement.

And finally some (cryptic) words from Judith Friedman - erstwhile Networks Manager about life in Peru...

10,000+ feet	Flat Tires
Coast	Bureaucracy
Caballitos de Titora	Donkeys
Surf	Sheep
Sun	Windburn
Ceviche	Shantytowns
Cipro	Sand
Dust	Dust
Rural Health Posts	Urban hospitals
Broken Down Buses	

She wishes us all the best of the best of the best!

Saying Hello

The RSA has recently appointed Jamie Cooke as the new Fellowship Networks Manager for Scotland, NE England and Ireland.

Prior to the RSA, Jamie was the lead officer on the Inclusive Democracy Project (IDP) which CEMVO Scotland ran in conjunction with the Electoral Commission. The IDP worked with over 1,900 people from ethnic minority communities across the length and breadth of Scotland, using educational outreach events to raise awareness of civic, democratic and electoral processes; and from this to promote greater participation. Alongside the events designed to raise political literacy, Jamie undertook and wrote a research report into the barriers which ethnic minority communities encountered with suggestions for moving forward – this is about to be published.

From Electoral Reform to the RSA ...

Jamie came to CEMVO Scotland from the Electoral Reform Society, having run a voter education project in Shettleston constituency in the East End of Glasgow, focussed on the introduction of the STV system for the 2007 Scottish Local Government elections. This marked a departure from his previous employment managing some of Glasgow's biggest entertainment venues, but was a welcome move into the political field which motivates and interests him so much. Jamie studied Education at the University of Glasgow, having spent two years studying Philosophy in Rome after leaving school.

He lives in Riddrie in Glasgow with his wife, son and fierce cat. His hobbies include sport (virtually each and every kind!), politics, reading, good food and even better wine. He is looking forward to meeting the Fellows in Scotland and is excited about the possibilities which are offered by the wide range of skills and experience they possess.



Cupola on the old Edinburgh Royal Infirmary
Photo © Reroq Publishing

RSA Scotland Committee 2009-2010

Chair: **Patricia Armstrong** pat.armstrong@acosvo.org.uk
Deputy Chair: **Frances Gallagher** fcag2001@hotmail.com
Secretary: **Sue Hunter** sue.hunter@morton-fraser.com
Treasurer: **Tom O'Connell** t.oconnell@frenhduncan.co.uk

Members: **Steve Baldry, William Cairns, June Edgar, Jane Kille, David MacLehose, Andrew Milligan, Ben Spencer, Kathleen Stewart, Rob Wherrett**

RSA Networks Manager: **Jamie Cooke** jamie.cooke@rsa.org.uk



Old Man of Storr - Loch Leathann, Skye - Photo © Brian A Jackson



Jamie Cooke - the new Networks Manager for Scotland, NE England and Ireland

Fellowship Council

The Fellowship Councillors from Scotland (Charles Millar, Ann Packard, Bob Porrer and Frances Gallagher) joined the Scottish Committee to discuss the impacts of direction on the Fellowship in Scotland with Matthew Taylor before the Ideas Exchange with Fellows.

Venture Fund

Panel Chair: **Dugdale Bradley** dugdalebradley@btinternet.com
Panel Deputy Chair: **Rob Wherrett** robw@zymolysis.biz
Panel Members: Frances Gallagher and A N Other tba

Bright idea for what we do next? Then get in touch, via Jamie

Using our resources wisely ...

One Fellow recently complained bitterly to London about the lack of a formal meeting place for Fellows in Scotland, pointing out that it *"would only cost around £35k pa to fund a coffee shop in Edinburgh where Fellows could drop in..."*

Factual maybe but not a lot of use to the other 1,000 Fellows who aren't in Edinburgh. We continue to investigate ways of networking the Fellowship from Dumfries to Dunnet Head (and beyond).

Pleasing that Matthew Taylor is also interested in seeing how the RSA in general can make better use of technology to improve connections. Obviously podcasts and web material continue to improve and apparently we can look forward soon to live streaming of video from John Adam Street, with Fellows able to pose questions live to the speaker.