



Opportunities for Fellowship

The recent success of the local event groups (LEGs) in organising a larger number of events in each part of the Region is providing Fellows with even greater access to events.

Groups, including ones in Portsmouth and Chichester, Southampton and Thames Valley, have developed programmes of visits and lectures for their local Fellows which are also open to all Fellows in the Region. This method of event organisation is favoured by your Regional Committee as a way of enabling a larger number of events, maintaining our regional identity and offering locally initiated events. We seek to encourage the growth of local groups which can help reinforce and develop the sense of fellowship in local areas.

Going forward, we are planning a combination of chargeable events together with local meeting opportunities to enable Fellows to connect locally. The latter may start with a meeting (usually with some form of presentation) hosted by a Regional Committee member. Consequently, we hope to encourage local Fellows to become better acquainted and build local networks around common themes. These may be based on local interest activities, as with the Salisbury initiative (see page 4). The Regional Committee is willing to consider seed corn funding support where appropriate, such as covering meeting costs to enable the first local meeting to take place. If you are interested in helping develop a local network, please send us your suggestions.

We are also looking to improve communications with Fellows in the Region. One example is this improved format of the newsletter – we hope you like it. We are also looking at how we can be in contact with all Fellows - including those not on email.

Lastly, given the range of activities within the Region, we are looking for Fellows willing to participate in their organisation – either in the local groups or in the Regional Committee. If you would like to offer your support please contact the Committee.

Chairman Tony Hoskins and Secretary Greg Slay

We are looking for images depicting our region to use on the top of the front page of our new style newsletter. These need to be in a digital format, high resolution and ideally 300 dpi and suitable to use when converted to black and white. Please send contributions to the Editor marked 'Newsletter photos' (email details on back page). This edition features Southampton Docks at night (© Ian Wyllie 2009)

What's On at a glance

All events below have an evening start time, unless specified

- 21 Jan - 'Event in a Tent': Discussion evening on a proposed community opera - Chichester
- 26 Jan - Faith and Football - Portsmouth
- 27 Jan - Visit to Transport Research Laboratory - Crowthorne
- 10 Feb - European Medium Weather Forecasting Centre - Reading
- 11 Feb - Discussion evening on Leadership - Oxford
- 12 Feb - Visit to The Rowans Hospice - Purbrook
- 23 Feb - Visit to Prodrive - Banbury
- 26 Feb - Visit to Theatre Royal, Portsmouth (talk, meal and performance of Richard III)
- 17 Mar - 'Energy from the Oceans' - Nightingale Building, Southampton University. Professor Abubakr Bahaj
- 19 Mar - 'The discovery and development of Penicillin' - William Dunn Centre of Pathology - Oxford (afternoon)
- 30 Mar - Discussion evening on city growth - Portsmouth
- 1 Apr - Winchester College Tour (morning)
- 24 Apr - Regional Dinner, Salisbury Cathedral Refectory, 6.30 pm arrivals. More on pg2

As event plans are finalised, full details and booking forms are posted at the South Central Region web pages:
www.thersa.org/fellowship/regions-and-world-wide/South-Central

Hilary Carrington reflects on the Region's AGM 2008

The AGM was held at the Living Rainforest in Hampstead Norreys near Newbury, where we were guests of Director Karl Hansen FRSA. We chose the one fine day of the summer, miraculously!

Karl talked to us about the pleasures and problems of running such a venture, with the emphasis on sustainability. There is currently a project to sink boreholes under the glasshouses, to optimise energy efficiency and store summer heat for winter use. Although a large proportion of the projected costs has been obtained from Brussels, there is still a shortfall of some £800,000. It is of great importance that the project goes ahead. Our meeting was held in the Human Impact Building which was constructed to demonstrate green building methods as an education centre.

The glasshouses are full of densely growing tropical plants, including the world's largest Amazon lily leaf, many species of aroids, banana trees and free-growing orchids. Around our feet and above our heads were exotic birds such as turacoos,

Edward's pheasants, green doves and fantastic blue butterflies. Brilliantly coloured poison dart frogs, tiny velvet-coated goeldi monkeys and pygmy marmosets were visible safely behind glass.

The AGM meeting itself was interesting, and provoked some discussion, particularly about communication between Fellows and the desirability of local events. Full minutes of the AGM are available on the RSA website or from Hilary Carrington on 02380 265092 or via email hilary.carrington@googlemail.com.

The 2009 AGM will be held on 4 July 2009 in Oxfordshire.

The venue is to be confirmed. Further details will be sent out in the next newsletter and by email to Fellows. Details will also be published on the Regional web pages (page 1 for address). We look forward to meeting you at the AGM and the range of other regional events. As event details are finalised they will appear on the website. If you would like to be added to the RSA's e-mailing list for regional events email: fellowship@rsa.org.uk

Duncan Hanner reports on TV and truth

Television documentary making was the subject of an absorbing talk and discussion in October, organised by Women in Management Hampshire & West Sussex and the RSA's Portsmouth and Chichester Local Events Group.

The speaker was Nicola Phipps, an independent television producer with a long track record in the industry, including spells at the BBC, ITV and ITN before running her own company, Plus3 Productions. She looked at the evolution of documentaries from Paul Watson's original 'The Family' fly on the wall series to the recent proliferation of 'blue light' emergency service programmes.

Nicola then provided some food for thought in an interactive exercise. The audience was invited to put together a half hour programme running order based on a selection of clips from more than 200 hours of filming a police response car crew. It was soon obvious that the choice of incidents could end up representing the police in many different ways depending on the clips selected, both positive and negative. The resulting programmes could range from the deadly boring to the impossibly adrenaline fuelled stuff of Hollywood fiction. This led to a consideration of editorial responsibility and the ethics of 'reality' TV, when balancing the truth with the demands of commissioning editors for constantly exciting televisual experiences in pursuit of viewer ratings.

Abha Thakor, Chair of the Hampshire WiM Network and Deputy Chair of CMI Solent, also spoke of her experience as a corporate Director of Communications of an organisation whose members have regularly been involved in television documentaries. She encouraged documentary subjects to build an effective working relationship with filmmakers and check details of how material was to be filmed and edited.

A question and answer session followed, chaired by Duncan Hanner. Audience questions concerned the blurring of boundaries between factual representation and entertainment values, how the choice of voice over artist can flavour the programme and whether subjects react in a heightened fashion when on camera.

Greg Slay reports on de-mystifying the EU as Fellows visit the European Commission

A number of Fellows from South Central recently visited Brussels to develop their understanding of the European Commission and Parliament, and to find out what the RSA is doing to promote its message to a wider European audience. The trip was organised by the RSA Bristol Centre. Those attending came from a variety of professional backgrounds including authors, social entrepreneurs and management consultants; architects, publishers and Fellows working in the charity sector and in local government.

We enjoyed a series of high-level briefings within the Commission and were introduced to the machinations of policy making across the 27 EU member states. Our briefings also covered issues related to the accession arrangements for future EU member countries.

We also were delighted to meet with the RSA Fellows who live and work in and around Brussels. With them, we explored the advantages of the RSA opening up some form of Brussels office in order to lobby the European Commission and Parliament (thus adding to the 15,000 plus lobbyists already in the city). A follow up visit to the Parliament buildings in Strasbourg is being considered.

Book now for this year's annual dinner

The Regional Annual Dinner for Fellows and guests will be held on Friday 24 April at The Cloisters, Salisbury Cathedral.

Commencing at 6.30pm, a drinks reception will be followed by a formal, black tie dinner in the Refectory. Tickets are £40 per head. Choral Evensong will take place at 5.30pm in the Cathedral for anyone wishing to attend.

Before dinner is served, Chairman of RSA South Central region Tony Hoskins will formally welcome all those attending. John Potter will then speak briefly on the work currently being undertaken by RSA Fellows in the Salisbury area (pg 4).

For bookings contact Greg Slay, RSA South Central, 7 Dolphin Close, Fishbourne, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 3QP. Tel: 078 4303 4204; greg.slay@westsussex.gov.uk

Hilary Carrington reviews the visit to Salisbury Cathedral

This medieval Cathedral's history and modern day working provided an absorbing visit for 30 Fellows and guests in October. Guide David Sharratt led the tour of the Cathedral, focusing on major highlights such as the Mompesson tomb, the Trinity Chapel, the moving Prisoners of Conscience window created by Gabriel Loire in 1980, and the stunning new font, created by leading British sculptor William Pye. It is a green patinated bronze vessel, cruciform in shape, three metres wide and filled to the brim with water which continuously overflows and circulates through a bronze grating. The Cathedral was built in the remarkably short time of 38 years and completed in 1220. David amusingly included many details of the quirks of the Bishops through the years despite the not so welcome accompaniment of the organ, which was being tuned!

We concluded the visit in the Chapter House, which contains the original Magna Carta. The Dean, the Very Revd June Osborne, is the Senior member of the Chapter. Appointed in 2004, she was the first woman Dean of a medieval cathedral. She is responsible for overseeing the day to day running of the Cathedral, chairing each of the many committees which deal with the fabric of the building, its treasures, the choirs, and other musical activities, education, fundraising and the 600 volunteers who work hard to support the Cathedral in all manner of ways. The Cathedral costs about £5million a year to run, which would be impossible to fund without donations from those visiting the building.

The Earl of Radnor

Following the death of the 8th Earl of Radnor in August 2008, the Regional Committee would like to express its appreciation for the support that he gave to the RSA and the Region. Members of the Regional Committee represented the Fellowship at the Memorial Service for Lord Radnor at Salisbury Cathedral. It was a splendid and moving occasion attended by more than 1,000 people and led by the Dean, with superb music from the choir and the organist - a wonderful tribute to an exceptional and well loved man, who contributed a great deal to the RSA. Lord Radnor's ancestor, the 1st Viscount Folkestone, was a founder member and first President of the RSA, to whom the Folkestone Room in the House is dedicated.

Art and Spirituality

If you step into any church or cathedral across the world, it is likely that you will find at least one work of art that provides a basis for spiritual reflection. Chichester Cathedral is no exception to this, and last November, 60 Fellows and guests were guided through its rich artistic heritage for an event exploring the link between art and spirituality. The treasures of the Cathedral include many works of art, sculpture, tapestry and music commissioned over the past 50 years.

Choral Evensong was followed by a reception and dinner in the nearby Grade I listed Vicars' Hall, after which the Dean of Chichester, the Very Revd Nicholas Frayling, gave an illustrated lecture on the link between art and spirituality. The Dean highlighted that the Cathedral is neither an art gallery nor a museum, but a living place of Christian worship. The works of

art in the Cathedral were commissioned with the latter purpose in mind. Many of those works were perceived as very modern - even controversial - at the time of their commission.

In the subsequent question and answer session, the Dean fielded a wide range of detailed questions, ending with the 'Doomsday scenario' - and which one piece of art he would rescue. The Dean selected Graham Sutherland's 1960 painting 'Noli me tangere', which hangs in the Chapel of St Mary Magdalene at the Cathedral.

At the end of the evening, Fellows were asked to complete a brief evaluation form. A key outcome for many had been the inspiration of the setting and the programme alongside the opportunity to meet informally and socially with other Fellows.

Greg Slay

Exploring Waddesdon Manor

Some 40 Fellows and guests gathered at Waddesdon Manor in June to discover the French chateau style 19th century mansion, built for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild between 1874 - 89 and which remained in the family until its transfer to the National Trust in 1957. Baron James de Rothschild died in 1957 but left a substantial legacy toward the upkeep of the house.

The estate is now administered as the Waddesdon Manor Alice Trust in memory of Alice de Rothschild who inherited in 1897 and did so much to preserve the house and contents until her death in 1922. A tour of the ground floor rooms preceded the public opening. A fascinating and opulent collection of artifacts and furnishings are displayed as used by the family in the 19th century including a number of Savonnerie royal carpets ordered by Louis XIV of France, in 1665, for the Louvre Palace, which were never delivered due to the move of the French Court to Versailles. Sèvres china urns, tureens and crockery abound as well as a number of unique and priceless French clocks which, together with the outstanding collection of paintings and 18th century furniture, make this mansion worthy of a special visit.

The first floor contains more modern items including gifts by more recent members of the family. In the Water Garden, as well as many interesting plants there are significant examples of Pulhamite, the imitation stone cliffs and grottos created by James Pulham & Son in the late 19th century. Finally we repaired to the Cellar to taste samples of Rothschild white and red wine whilst hearing about the vintages stored there and the illustrious banquets which are still held in the house.

Steuart Thompson, Regional Treasurer

There are Local Event Groups (LEGS) in Bournemouth & Poole, Chichester and Portsmouth, the Isle of Wight, Salisbury, Southampton, and Thames Valley.

Fellows from anywhere in the Region are welcome to attend any of the regional or LEG events and can bring their guests. More details about forthcoming events together with booking details are sent out to Fellows by email and also appear on the Regional webpages at:

www.thersa.org/fellowship/regions-and-worldwide/South-Central

Tony Hoskins FRSA writes about recent events in the Thames Valley

Fellow's open house tour

This was a unique opportunity to visit a private collection of Chinese art, furniture, wood statuary and vernacular objects, all located in the owner's home, a Fellow of the RSA.

His home is a classical Queen Anne period manor house atop the Cherwell Valley in Oxfordshire. He started collecting from the time of his teenage days in the East End. Now he has laid out his collection in five rooms of his manor house home. Each of these five rooms of the collection represents a typical Ming or early Qing (pronounced 'Ching') home.

Of particular value to the Fellows who attended on this September afternoon was that the owner personally guided the visitors, giving detailed explanations of the history of each room and its artefacts, as well as his own anecdotal explanation of how he came to collect them. In addition, he had provided curator's notes that gave more detail on each item, for those Fellows wishing to go into more depth.

A generously extensive buffet, provided by the host and his wife made the visit all the more enjoyable.

New Fellows Evening provides networking opportunity

For recently joined Fellows in the Thames Valley, this was an opportunity to be more aware of activities occurring close to home and to meet some of their other local Fellows. The New Fellows evening was held at the Leander Club, near Henley Bridge in December. Founded in 1818, Leander Club is described as the largest, most historic and successful rowing club in the world, and its facilities are very impressive.

To help gain a better knowledge of the RSA in the Thames Valley, the evening started over coffee and tea, with an introduction to by the Regional Chair Tony Hoskins. It continued with a discussion of the events that have been recently held and those planned for 2009. The RSA's networking approach was also discussed, with examples of some initiatives, as a means of indicating to new Fellows the benefits of such local approaches. Fellows were encouraged to discuss how they could participate in the Fellowship of the RSA, and there was an opportunity for questions and answers regarding these events, as well as of the regional activities.

After the formal proceedings, both the new Fellows and the hosts continued the discussions in the convivial surroundings of the bar at the Leander Club.

Tour around Prodrive facilities - October 2008

For those Fellows interested in the finer arts of motoring engineering, the evening visit around the Prodrive facilities in Banbury was a special opportunity.

Prodrive was formed in 1984, with an original focus on motorsport. Since then the company has won more than 100 international rallies and six World Rally Championship titles with Subaru, as well as winning the British Touring Car Championship five times, and twice winning the GT1 class at the Le Mans 24 Hours.

However, whilst it has very active motorsport links, its major role revolves around work on future road car projects is, by its nature, less visible. It works for a wide spectrum of the world's largest vehicle manufacturers and their suppliers on significant projects in every area from consultancy, vehicle engineering, and product design to niche model production. Given the growing focus on vehicle efficiency, including reducing environmental impacts, Prodrive is playing a key role in developing automotive technology, including, within its own operations, striving for continual improvement in its environmental management.

The visit started in the Heritage Centre, which houses a collection of cars covering Prodrive's entire history. It continued with a tour around the site taking in the engine, transmission and damper department, the Aston Martin Customer build, rally workshop, fabrication, CNC, Aston Martin Racing, and the tour with at the Subaru World Rally Team.

Salisbury LEG working in partnership to plan community youth engagement

The Salisbury RSA LEG has been working with other bodies in the district on the Salisbury & South Wiltshire Forum. Addressing a meeting last summer, Cllr John King of Salisbury District Council spoke about the perceived need for a Forum where groups could discuss issues such as the 20 Year Plan for Salisbury. He said that it was clear that many Forums did exist but their duties, powers and responsibilities were often uncertain to outsiders. Such groups could become somewhat fixed in their membership; potential contributors could find it could be difficult to find how to access them. He noted it had become evident that A4

briefing papers written in a journalistic style can catch the attention of potential members and interested parties better than lengthy reports.

The Forum demonstrated the urgent need for a sustained, cross-cutting debate about the key challenges that face our communities. Major issues such as housing, transport and sustainability are managed largely from departmental 'silos'. This approach ignores the impact that one issue (eg energy /shrinking oil supply) has on other (eg transport). A narrowly sectoral approach impoverishes democracy by replacing informed debate with consultation by questionnaire.

The RSA Salisbury and South Wiltshire Forum is planning to engage with young people from schools, colleges and community organisations in a new initiative called 'The Big Project'.

John Potter, Joint Chair of the Forum, said: "The future of our city and its communities belongs as much – arguably more – to the younger generation."

He added: "Schools and colleges are required to foster active learning for active citizenship as part of their citizenship and related curriculum commitments. The Big Project, given the necessary support, could make a significant contribution to life across the county."