

How can we, as Fellows, contribute to positive social change and create the society we want and the capacity to get there?

Welcome from the Chair

Anticipation. I think that is probably the best way to describe the current "state of mind" of the RSA in Scotland as we issue this latest newsletter.

We have spent recent months shaping and refining what the RSA is and does in Scotland, within the overall period of transformation that the RSA as a whole has been going through. This has resulted in huge changes – if you haven't been on the RSA website lately take a really good look, it's full of fantastic stuff, including videos of all the amazing lectures that are now taking place regularly, articles, blogs and Twitter feeds!

In Scotland, it seems to me that we are now about to take the first steps in a journey we have spent a great deal of time planning for. But, as the old adage goes, if you only have eight hours to cut down a tree, spend seven of them sharpening the axe! That axe has been sharpened through debate and discussion, consultation and discourse with the Fellowship across the country, including the latest results of the Fellowship Survey, which is reported on in this newsletter.

The course that has now been plotted for 2009 is an incredibly exciting one. We have already had the launch of the new RSA Scotland Venture Fund, which aims to directly support through seed funding the innovation and ideas of Fellows; we have had an excellent seminar on the learning and skills agenda, which we hope will lead us to identifying where best the resources and efforts of FRSA in Scotland could be applied; our Food for the Future work is moving forward quickly; and we will shortly be announcing details of our flagship thematic programme for the year on design and sustainability, which will include Masterclasses with RSA RDIs, an Inquiry in Design and Sustainability, plus an "openspace" lecture programme, featuring world café style discussions. All of that, combined with events at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, the Aberdeen Word Festival and the Festival of Politics, adds up to an impressive year!

Ultimately though, it comes down to outcomes – so in all of this the question at the core will be: "what difference can we make?" How can we, as Fellows, contribute to positive social change and create the society we want and the capacity to get there? That is why we are all Fellows – we want to step up. This is where the new RSA Networks come in – creating the spaces online and offline for Fellows from different disciplines to come together and...what? Well, that's up to you – it's your space and opportunity! So, please do sign up to the Networks platform on the website, and also try to make it along to one of our new openspace City Network events, which we will be holding across the country – we'd love to see you there!

Warmest wishes

Louise

Louise Macdonald FRSA

What's new?

RSA Scotland Fellowship Survey

207 Fellows responded to the RSA Scotland survey which was circulated in January 2009. The survey was part of our continuing effort to learn more about the interests and experience of RSA Fellows in Scotland. The responses revealed the following:

- 88% of Fellows think that Education and Skills are the biggest priority challenge in Scotland. In second place, 48% of Fellows thought that health was the biggest priority challenge in Scotland.
- 83% of Fellows thought that the RSA should make an impact through influencing Scottish Parliament/Government. 63% of Fellows felt that RSA Scotland should make an impact by providing an opportunity to explore or challenge the status quo.
- 70% of Fellows said that networking opportunities are needed to enable a stronger RSA impact in Scotland. 57% said that partnerships with other organisations are needed to enable a stronger RSA impact in Scotland.
- 74% of Fellows said that the RSA could help to make stronger connections between its Fellows through regular, local networking events. 55% said that this could be achieved through an annual or biennial conference.

We will be analyzing the survey results and creating a report which will be available on the RSA Scotland website. Together with the RSA centrally and the RSA Scotland committee, we will be working to respond to your suggestions and recommendations through events, communications and programming.

RSA Networks Platform

The [Networks Platform](#) has been in development for the past 18 months and will continue to evolve and develop well into 2009 and go through further iterations according to what we all need.

In the recent RSA Scotland survey, it came out that only 22% of Fellows who responded to the survey had encountered the platform and of those who had, the general impression that it is a potentially useful tool but that it would be better if it were complemented by face to face meetings and if it were more trafficked by RSA Fellows in Scotland.

We are working to make it a dynamic, user-friendly tool for RSA Fellows to connect, exchange ideas and experiences. If you have never visited the RSA Networks Platform before please give it a try and let us know what you think. We want to create as many mechanisms as possible for Fellows to connect and collaborate. If you have any questions, please contact [Judith](#).

RSA Scotland Venture Fund

Since the launch of the RSA Scotland Venture Fund on 20 January 2009, we have received over 20 requests for applications and one very generous offer to contribute to the fund for the next round of applications. The Fund has also spurred Fellows to contact each other with project ideas and collaborate on various proposals.

Our hope is that this is the beginning of what will be an exciting process. RSA Scotland is taking the lead with the Venture Fund. Through its Venture Fund, RSA Scotland hopes to act as a powerful and innovative force which brings together the different disciplines and perspectives of its Fellowship.

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The RSA Scotland Venture Fund can fund a wide range of projects and activities. The rationales may range from those which seek to push the boundaries of thought in areas fundamental to the RSA's values, to those which develop new multi-disciplinary approaches or those which work directly with practitioners to generate research-based innovation and change. The Fund seeks to fund projects, led by and involving RSA Fellows that tackle or remove the barriers to social progress, inspire our network of Fellows and others to be a force for civic innovation and social change and contribute to the challenging agendas around education and skills or design and sustainability.

The key impacts we will be looking for are projects that result in transformational and sustainable change

Our hope is that this initiative will be self-perpetuating and that we will be able to create a successful model that can be replicated throughout the UK and internationally. If you are an RSA Fellow in Scotland with a project idea, we would urge you to consider applying to the Fund. Alternately, if you want to contribute to the Fund, allowing us to make even more grants, then we would be delighted to hear from you.

So far, we have been thrilled by the response that the Fund has generated and the high quality of the submissions that have come in.

The closing date for the current round of applications is imminent, March 2009, but opens again for the next Grants Panel meeting. The application process is open at all times so please feel free to request or submit an application at any time.

If you would like an application form please [email Judith Friedman](#)

RSA Fellows- Project Spotlight

Red Button Design: Water Transport, Sanitation and Storage

Red Button Design is an internationally award-winning design house developing products exclusively for the aid and humanitarian markets. Formed by University friends, Amanda Jones FRSA and James Brown FRSA. Red Button Design is currently bringing to market a patented water transport, sanitation and storage device for use by individuals across the developing world.

Each year 2.2 million people die from diseases caused by lack of safe water and basic sanitation. The nature of the contamination is varied, viral, microbial, parasitic and chemical contaminants all contribute to this staggering death toll. These individual problems have existing individual solutions but these rely on having a range of products available and the necessary diagnostic tools to know which treatment is needed. The product we are proposing will be effective in all of these situations allowing its users to collect water from the nearest source and sanitise it for drinking and bathing use.



This unit is suitable for both relief in the case of a contaminated or disrupted water supply and, for millions of people without a local source of safe water, as a life-saving everyday appliance until a sustainable water infrastructure can be established.

The unit combines standard off-the-shelf components in an innovative way to enable water to be completely sanitised without UV, chemical or heat treating and using no power other than that inherently generated by the rotation of the wheels. This simplicity of design also allows the unit to be assembled and maintained in the field with basic tools and without specialist knowledge.

Red Button Design would be interested in collaborating with other FRSA's on new design ideas with a focus on sustainability and humanitarian implementation, looking into associated low cost, high volume manufacturing techniques and interesting new routes to market looking at atypical and bottom of the pyramid markets. For more information, please see their [website](#) or contact [Amanda](#) or [James](#).

Education and Skills Exploratory Seminar

At both the RSA Scotland Conference in November 2007 and in the recent RSA Scotland fellowship survey, Fellows identified Education and Skills as priority challenge for Scotland (74%) and an area of personal and professional interest (60%).

To determine how the RSA should enter into this arena, RSA Scotland held a meeting on 12 February 2009 with Fellows who are interested in contributing to this area, together with those concerned with education and skills in Scotland (including representatives from Learning & Teaching Scotland (LTS), Skills Development Scotland, employers, schools, colleges and universities) and staff from the RSA Opening Minds programme.

Given the rich tapestry of interests, expertise and experience of the RSA Fellowship in this area and the recent development of the RSA Education programme, the meeting was dedicated to sharing experiences and exploring areas where there is synchronicity.

There is a tremendous opportunity share experience with the RSA Education programmes and, where appropriate, adapt them to a Scottish context.

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The [RSA Opening Minds](#) programme has been adopted to varying degrees in 200 schools in England. Through the [RSA Education campaign](#), the Education Charter had 1500 signatories since its launch in January 2008. The [Future Schools Network](#) is growing and the [RSA Academy](#) in Tipton has been officially launched and is in full operation.

With the RSA's expertise in education and the exciting new developments in the Scottish context, there is fertile ground for contribution from the RSA in Scotland to the education and skills agenda.

The central questions from here are:

1. Who will take this forward?
2. Where are the gaps/opportunities in this agenda?
3. What would be the mechanism for reaching a conclusion about an RSA intervention in this arena.

We are interested in hearing from you about how you think the RSA might add value to the wider education and skills agenda.

British American Project: Conference in Edinburgh

[BAP](#) connects opinion formers and up-and-coming high flyers from every sort of profession and political persuasion across the Atlantic.

RSA Fellows are being invited to contribute to the forthcoming 'British American Project' conference, either as speaker, panellist or sponsor. The conference theme is 'Sustainability & Development', to be held in Edinburgh on the 5/9 November 2009. Confirmed speakers include Jonathon Porritt CBE FRSA.

This is not an open invitation to attend but an opportunity for Fellows to speak or sponsor. Sponsors have the opportunity to nominate "rising stars" who, if selected, can attend the November conference in Edinburgh. We believe that this year's conference theme of "sustainability and development" will be of genuine interest to Fellows, and there would clearly be significant opportunity to contribute to the debate. For more information, contact [Duncan Glassey](#)

Food for the Future Forum

RSA Scotland is continuing its discussion on how we can create a collective way of addressing the 'food issue' in order to make an impact in the area of climate change, improve Scotland's health, live more sustainably, promote small and medium enterprise in Scotland and aid Scottish Government in its role as catalysts. Following on from meetings at Scottish Parliament, Fellows are working to develop an approach that will address and galvanize Scotland behind a more sustainable, healthful food policy.

Since it was initially conceived by Steve Baldry FRSA as a low-carbon marketplace which offers an alternative to the supermarket, the thinking around the project has shifted in response to the changing economic climate and according to the input from various Fellows and interested partners and now seeks to:

1. Create an open forum for discussion about the production and distribution of food in Scotland
2. Develop awareness and understanding of the food issues and exchange of ideas of what is possible to be done now in addressing them
3. Provide opportunities for diverse stakeholders (retail, agriculture, health etc...) to meet, share ideas and network
4. Turn theory into action through identifying, promotion and testing future models which can be propagated across society
5. Stimulate debate between stakeholders about vision
6. Build framework which can position the work of various organisations and companies in this area
7. Contribute to policy development around food (Food Policy report to be published by Scot Gov Summer 2009)
8. Bridge gap between Health/Agriculture/Enterprise/Education policy as it relates to food.

The Forum will have two streams, one that focuses on food science, health, education and technology and the other which explores issues surrounding agriculture, environment, enterprise and sustainability.

The Forum has had two meetings at Scottish Parliament which have been hosted by Robin Harper MSP, FRSA. From here, we will be further developing the action points for the forum for which we would welcome Fellows' contributions. The Forum has a blog which Fellows are encouraged to contribute to: <http://foodforthefutureforum.blogspot.com/>

For more information, please contact [Judith Friedman](#).



Burns and the Rights of Women

Dr Catherine Smith FRSA, the author of the new biography 'The Stars of Robert Burns.' will be speaking at 2pm on Sunday, 8 March 2009 at the Smith Institute for the Stirling International Women's Day event. Her talk addresses the recent condemnation of Burns regarding his affiliation with pornography and slavery and lets the poetry speak for itself.

RSA Fellows' Media and Creative Industries Special Interest Group

The RSA Fellows' Media and Creative Industries Special Interest Group working in partnership with the Patrons of the National Galleries of Scotland to give a lecture on George IV: A Life in Caricature on 10 March 2009. For more information, visit the [RSA Scotland website](#) or contact [Ann Packard](#).

Leading for Social Change ACOSVO and RSA thematic discussion dinner, sponsored by RBS

ACOSVO, in partnership with the RSA and sponsored by RBS, is hosting a Scottish Leaders Dinner which explores "Leading for Social Change." This "Social Change" dinner is the first in this year's series of thematic discussion dinners, which ACOSVO is hosting throughout 2009 with the generous support of the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Susan Deacon FRSA, Professor of Social Change at Queen Margaret University & Former Health Minister, and Lucy Conway FRSA, Isle of Eigg's *Big Green Challenge* project will challenge our thinking about leadership in the context of social change. The event will be chaired by Claire Stevens, Director Scotland, CSV and a fellow of the RSA.

This will be an excellent opportunity to explore the challenges, emerging trends and opportunities involved in leading social change with leaders in the third sector and other RSA Fellows.

The dinner will take place at Royal Bank of Scotland HQ, Gogarburn House, Edinburgh, on **Thursday, 19 March 2009 5:30 - 10:00pm**.

Unfortunately, this event is completely full. If you are interested in this topic and would like to attend a similar event in the future, please contact Pat Armstrong FRSA, Executive Director ACOSVO office@acosvo.org.uk

The Melting Pot

RSA Scotland is delighted to have entered in to a partnership with [The Melting Pot](#), a new type of incubator for social innovation in Scotland and very much in tune with the RSA's social change and social entrepreneurship agenda.

The Melting Pot is located centrally in Edinburgh and provides spaces for individuals and organisations to meet, work, connect and hold events. A not-for-profit enterprise, it offers a flexible, accessible and friendly work environment that encourages social innovation and helps ideas take shape and flourish.

The RSA Scotland Outreach Coordinator, Judith Friedman, will normally be based in the Melting Pot for one day a week where she will be available to meet Fellows and convene meetings. To arrange a time to meet simply contact Judith by phone or email. Additionally, if Fellows are interested in using The Melting Pot for hot-desking or using informal meeting spaces in central Edinburgh, please let Judith know or contact The Melting Pot directly.



RSA City Networks

Fellows said that local networking opportunities were needed to enable a stronger RSA impact in Scotland. In response to this, we are working to create local hubs of Fellowship activity throughout Scotland.

The **Edinburgh Network** will meet regularly on the last Thursday of the month at [Le Monde Hotel](#), 16 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PF, 5-7pm. The next Edinburgh Network meeting is 26 March 2009.

The evenings will give you a chance to meet other RSA Fellows and will give you a chance to share ideas around the new RSA Scotland Venture Fund, the recent survey and the Education and Skills and Design and Sustainability project agendas and anything else that you think that other RSA Fellows might want to work on.

Throughout 2009, we plan to launch RSA Networks throughout Scotland in order to provide more opportunities for Fellows to meet, to share ideas, and to find ways to make an impact. These events are free and non-ticketed and we only suggest that you bring lots of business cards and an open mind.

Members of the RSA Scotland committee and RSA staff will be present to answer any questions about Fellowship and getting involved with the work of the RSA in Scotland. If you have any questions prior to the event, please contact [Judith Friedman](#).

RSA Glasgow Network due to launch April 2009

Aberdeen Network due to continue May 2009

RSA Scotland Committee

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