

## Food for thought? Who knows what we are thinking? And is the 'Big Society' a case of someone has stolen our clothes?

We move from discussing the 21st Century Enlightenment (food for the mind) to considering food for the people ...

### Conference to engage with school pupils. Barnardos Ideas Symposium - challenging the future. Are we thinking about Edinburgh's waterfront?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT : RSA Scotland Conference & AGM - 4th September 2010

We are pleased to be able to give details of the forthcoming Conference and AGM. The conference will look at the influence of market forces on the availability, affordability and accessibility of food in our society.

**Venue:** Stewart's Melville College Performing Arts Centre, Queensferry Road, Edinburgh

During the day we are also holding the AGM - so come along and kill two birds with one stone...

We will be addressing many questions.

- Is organic, locally produced food practically and economically only available to those who can afford it?
- Can consumers easily make good nutritional choices for a healthy diet and, if so, how do they do this?
- Do industrially produced food products with the backing of highly sophisticated advertising and marketing campaigns provide the best food products and is this the only viable way to feed urban-based societies?
- Does the dominance of supermarkets' highly efficient distribution methods and downward pressure on prices squeeze out locally produced, organic, unprocessed equivalents?
- Is the message about food miles backed up by the science or is it a desperate attempt to keep farming and specialist growers/rearers in a livelihood?
- What impact will the economic crisis have on our food choices?

RSA Scotland is grateful to the Principal and Staff of Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools for supporting the conference and for encouraging the involvement of senior pupils in the debate.

#### Programme:

- 09.00 Arrival and registration
- 09.30 Pat Armstrong welcome and introduction
- 09.45 Keynote welcome from Matthew Taylor
- 10.00 – 12.00 Debate and discussion:  
***This house believes "green" food is a luxury we cannot afford.*** Sheila Dillon from Radio 4's "The Food Programme" will chair the debate. There will be two main speakers who will be seconded by senior pupils from Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools.
- 12.00 – 12.30 RSA Scotland AGM



Stewart's Melville : Performing Arts Centre  
Venue for the RSA Scotland Conference & AGM 2010

- 12.30 – 14.00 Lunch and networking
- 14.00 – 15.00 Mini sessions – the subject of these will be advertised nearer the date and delegates will be asked to choose one to attend.
- 15.00 – 16.00 Panel session with Q&A, chaired by Matthew Taylor.
- Closing address, Matthew Taylor.

*[The afternoon session is likely to include some input from the Bothwell Gardens project that was funded by our Venture Fund last year and is engaging lots of people with local food.]*

The venue is fully accessible and there is some car parking within the school grounds. It is approximately 20 minutes walk from Edinburgh Haymarket train station, and 10-15 minutes taxi ride from Edinburgh Waverley.

Tickets for the day will cost £40 for both Fellows and non-Fellows. This will include a buffet lunch and refreshments.

Further details will be published in due course and you will be invited to book through *Eventbrite* but if you wish to indicate your intention to attend now, please send an email to any of the Scottish committee or Jane Kille on [jkfrsa@gmail.com](mailto:jkfrsa@gmail.com). This will help us in our planning.

#### Recent Events

**Brain Imaging and its impact on society : What are we thinking? Who has a right to know?**

A number of Fellows participated in this event, which was organised by the Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of Strathclyde on 25th June. Nothing is more intimate and private than a person's thoughts. New technologies from neuroscience are getting closer and closer to "seeing" what we think. These have many possible applications, not all of them for medical use. The day's event looked at various ethical aspects of the possibilities following an introduction to the neuroscience by Professor Peter Sandercock, Professor of Medical Neurology, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh.

#### Matthew Taylor's Annual Lecture: 21st Century Enlightenment

In his annual lecture RSA Chief Executive Matthew Taylor explored what we mean by the idea of 21st Century Enlightenment and why he thinks the original enlightenment period was not just about new ideas but a more fundamental shift in consciousness. This event was chaired by David Aaronovitch, writer, broadcaster and columnist for *The Times*.

A number of Fellows in Scotland saw the live broadcast of the Lecture at The Melting Pot, Rose Street, Edinburgh. Discussion there was terminated early when a security alarm went off in the building - thankfully it was just a technical fault.

More can be found about the lecture at Matthew Taylor's blog which was posted after the event.

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

The Fund Panel met early in June to discuss the latest round of bids. A general comment is that the standard of submissions is getting much better and two of the three bids this time round were successful. Fellows who have projects for consideration are reminded that the next closing date for bids is Friday 3rd September 2010. Application forms are available from Jamie Cooke [jamie.cooke@rsa.org.uk](mailto:jamie.cooke@rsa.org.uk)

Don't forget that bidding for money from the RSASVF does not preclude Fellows bidding to the Catalyst Fund administered by the RSA at John Adam Street (or vice versa).

## Big Society

Sound familiar? Well of course this is one of the themes of the new government at Westminster. But Fellows will also recognise that it is reflected in what we have been saying for the last couple of years - that we are about finding ways of allowing people to take responsibility for their lives. To become engaged. To make things happen. Those are our clothes - but should we be making that more widely known or should we just be "good citizens" and help the idea further along the road?

Well it seems that not even the politicians are quite sure about this one just yet. Members of the Glasgow Network, led by Mic Starbuck, have begun putting out feelers to make sure that we get involved as the ideas progress at Holyrood (and elsewhere). The response from government has not exactly been deafening but we'll keep plugging away.

## those are our clothes ...

### Coming Events

**Edinburgh Book Festival: 22nd Aug, Joseph Stiglitz**, Nobel Prize winner and acclaimed economist.

In his lecture Professor Stiglitz will map out the course and causes of the financial crisis, and argue for genuinely radical reforms to prevent another crash, showing why the bulk of the cost of recovery should be borne by those in the financial sector - not just for reasons of natural justice but for compelling economic reasons also. *Chair still to be confirmed.* Further details will be announced as soon as they are available.

We hope there will be drinks and networking available for Fellows following this event.

**Barnardos Ideas Symposium "Open Thinking" - 8th Sept**

This event combines a number of sponsors and is by invitation only. We have a number of places available and if you would like to attend, please let Rob Wherrett know as soon as possible, so that your name can be added to the pool. [robw@zymolysis.biz](mailto:robw@zymolysis.biz)

**Guerrilla Gardening and Eco-horticulture ...**

Plans are now underway to engage with a number of groups in the Glasgow area for the forthcoming lecture from Benjamin Bauer, an expert in eco-horticulture at the University of Witzenhausen. More details will be issued by email to the Fellowship but the provisional date for the event is early October.

### Angus Millar Lecture

Details have yet to be finalised but this annual event will take place in the autumn.

### Bilingualism Matters

An event is being organised at the Scottish Parliament for later in the year. A case of "watch this space..."

### Goodison Group

A joint event is being planned with the Goodison Group around the topic of Lifelong Learning. More details in due course.

### Hume looms ...

7th May next year will see the 300th birthday of David Hume - star of the Scottish Enlightenment (and Matthew Taylor's self-confessed icon). So we are now looking for ideas to celebrate this in connection with our own take on Enlightenment Thinking. Just **what** should we do to mark this great philosopher's contribution?

## 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 14 July from 5.30 - 7.00pm. If you want to make sure your name is included on the email list please let us know.

Network contact is Rob Wherrett [robw@zymolysis.biz](mailto: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. Email reminders are sent out to Fellows with an EH postcode, so 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](mailto:june17@fsmail.net)

**Perth** appears to be the next likely venue for a new network. Interested Fellows are asked to contact David MacLehose to help get things in motion. David can be contacted at [david@heritagesolutions.co.uk](mailto:david@heritagesolutions.co.uk)

The RSA Fellows' **Media, Creative Industries, Culture & Heritage Network** is holding a lecture at **6pm on Tuesday 13th July** entitled **Genesis of European Film Festivals along the Venice blueprint. A new cinema palace for Venice : projects compared.** The speaker is Laura Marcellino. Resident in Venice, where she graduated in 1981 (School of Oriental Studies) Laura has worked for three decades in the European film scene involved in film festivals, markets and film funds. **Venue:** Anderson Strathern LLP, Rutland Court, Rutland Square, Edinburgh

Pre-payment essential by crossed cheque £6.00 in favour of **RSA Fellows' MCICH Network** sent to Ann Packard, 81 Cumberland Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6RD. Telephone queries via 0131 556 2052 or e-mail [annpackard\\_pppt@onetel.com](mailto:annpackard_pppt@onetel.com). Guests are most welcome. Delegates are requested to send their name, address, job title and company/organisation plus telephone and contact e-mail and, if they so wish, a short biography of maximum ten lines.

The network also has two further events planned and others in the pipeline. The first is on 28 September with the 1970 Club and the second is in December with the National Library of Scotland

## Edinburgh Waterfront

Led by Bill Cairns FRSA of Cairns Intersphere Consulting, an international team of consultants came together in March to consider the current status and the future of the proposals for the Edinburgh waterfront from Cramond to Portobello. This week long review

culminated in a series of presentations, an opportunity for questioning and ultimately in the preparation of a working paper:-  
*Edinburgh Waterfront Independent Review*

Instigated by the recent standstill of Edinburgh's waterfront regeneration efforts in the wake of the global economic downturn, the purpose of the seminar was to investigate the reasons why these efforts have stalled and more importantly, how the regeneration of Edinburgh's waterfront could be restarted under a new paradigm. The review is highly critical of the planning to date and the lack of cohesion of present development. Moreover there is evidence that large organisations are now ignoring the previous agreed planning guidelines. This crucial development of the capital's conurbation is worthy of far more consideration, especially in the light of the recent economic downturn and the revised projections of population and other factors.

Fellows who are interested in learning more are encouraged to contact Bill Cairns directly at [wjcairns@cairns-icl.com](mailto:wjcairns@cairns-icl.com)

## Nicely Run In

Three months into the post, I can safely say that I have been kept busy from day one! Being responsible for four countries and around 14,000,000 people (although admittedly only around 1,900 of these are Fellows!) it is guaranteed that I will always have plenty going on.

In Scotland, the largest of my areas, I am lucky to have a Fellowship positively overflowing with ideas. A multitude of excellent projects are being brought forward covering topics as diverse as democratic engagement, the arts and community gardening, reflecting the exciting vibrancy we have here in Scotland. The success of the Ideas Exchange with Matthew Taylor alongside the broadcasting of his Annual Lecture to an audience in Edinburgh have connected us to the wider Society in London and beyond; while the RSA Scotland Conference in September will be an ideal opportunity for us to meet together.

In terms of the next few months, I will be continuing to work closely with Fellows across Scotland to support your ideas for projects and events, and to try and ensure that your Fellowship is a valuable part of your life. Don't hesitate to contact me at [Jamie.cooke@rsa.org.uk](mailto:Jamie.cooke@rsa.org.uk) if you have any questions or ideas – alternatively come along to the Glasgow or Edinburgh network meetings and I'll hopefully see you there! **Jamie Cooke**

## Fellows will expect a glass of wine ...

### Snippets

#### Fellow Tipplers?

Conversation about the organisation for a recent event mentioned that "*Fellows will expect a glass of wine*". Are we really that hooked on alcohol? If so - hands up anyone who fancies a social wine tasting. (Nominations for a free venue would help.) Please contact the committee and we will see what we can do.



Early morning on Loch Seaforth, Isle of Lewis  
Photo © Reroq Publishing

#### Going West

We hear that Tony Hodgson is going west - or rather he is taking the IFF World Game (featured in the December 2009 Newsletter) to the USA. Rumour has it the destination is San Francisco... Where next?

#### Highland Fling

Discussions about how we connect to Fellows north of the Central Belt continue to stimulate. Someone mentioned the possibility of a Highland Fling (and we don't think they were keen dancers). Instead maybe there is something metaphorical in all this - so if you are north of the Highland Line - then we want to hear from you with ideas.



Urban decay - Rothesay, Isle of Bute  
Photo © Reroq Publishing

#### Trams (not smart)

Sad commentary on the state of the capital's infrastructure: Princes Street - so recently closed for the laying of the new road and tramlines - is already breaking up. Maybe it was the wrong sort of frost in late spring... **Not what we mean by People Centred Cities.**

## selects 12 people randomly...

#### Wisdom comes randomly

We hear that Colin Campbell FRSA is leading a project to develop Wisdom Councils. This idea, which started in Austria, selects 12 people randomly from the local community. Through a process of dynamic facilitation they are then helped to come up with ideas for presentation to the local power brokers on improving their community etc. It's repeatable and sounds a terrific idea. We wait to hear more as the project moves forward.

Will the pain be worth it?

In amongst all the brouhaha about the budget and its impacts on jobs, there is one thing that we might turn our attention to. If we (the RSA) are trying to develop accountabilities in society at large, then we might start to question why Public Sector bodies continue to employ Big Business rather than relying more on local enterprise for services and supplies. We could actually save money and increase jobs across the country.

There is a lesson to be drawn from the successes we have had in local enterprises across Scotland. So here's an open question to YOU the Fellows:

#### How do we encourage more use of local and small businesses by the Public Sector - to the benefit of all?

What Future without a Future Jobs Fund?

The Budget cancellation of the Future Jobs Fund is likely to have significant impact on a number of organisations seeking to get people back into work. Charities that depend on finance under the terms of the fund to enable the less fortunate, disabled or those otherwise lacking in job skills are going to have their work cut out. But this has a Scottish dimension since although the FJF was a UK-wide scheme, we don't yet know what the impacts are going to be once this flows through to Holyrood.

RSA Scotland Committee 2009-2010

Chair: **Patricia Armstrong** pat.armstrong@acosvo.org.uk

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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



Enlightenment bridge still in use. "Bridge over the Atlantic" - Clachan, Seil Island near Oban. Originally designed by Thomas Telford and built between 1792 and 1793  
Photo © Reroq Publishing



Redundant architecture? Designed by Thomas Stevenson in 1857, the Eilean Bhan lighthouse at Kyleakin seen from the Skye Bridge.  
Photo © Reroq Publishing

## Fellowship Council

More will shortly be forthcoming from the Fellowship Council on a number of topics. Of no surprise will be the Fellowship Charter - which has been trailed on the website and via email.

We also understand there is to be a Fellow's Questionnaire and some information about the use of the Nings (web networking tools).

## Venture Fund

Panel Chair: **Dugdale Bradley** jpdbradley-rsa@yahoo.co.uk

Panel Deputy Chair: **Rob Wherrett** robw@zymolysis.biz

Panel Members: Frances Gallagher and A N Other tba

Applications to: jamie.cooke@rsa.org.uk

Cover photo - Nairn Viaduct, Inverness © Alan Crawford

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

## AGM Matters ...

Of course it does. Moreover this year will see several changes to both Officers and Committee. Fellows are encouraged to get involved in helping to run what is, after all, YOUR Fellowship here in Scotland.

Convening Notice for the AGM together with nomination papers for the Committee will be on their way by 4th July (although there's no connection with that being US Independence Day!)

Last year's AGM Minutes can be found on the Scotland portion of the RSA website.

Don't just leave it to others. We would be very happy to have more Fellows actively involved at this level. The commitment is not huge - around 5 meetings a year plus dialogue by phone/email. It is more about facilitating things than organising specific events but we do try to be as representative as we can, whilst also driving forward the new ways of active Fellowship.