



RSA Scotland Newsletter January 2008

This Newsletter is being made available electronically to the 70% of Fellows in Scotland who have internet access and who are happy to receive it in that form, while everyone else will continue to receive it in hard copy form, mailed from the RSA in London. If you have received the email notification with the link to the Newsletter on our website but still wish to receive the Newsletter in hard copy, please email Sue Hunter, Secretary of the Scottish Committee, at sue.hunter@morton-fraser.com.

More than events...

The Fellows' Conference in November confirmed feedback received from many Fellows over the past couple of years that, while the programme of RSA events in Scotland was appreciated, there was a firm desire for the RSA and its Fellowship to become more active and contribute both locally and nationally to Scotland. Your Scottish Committee has set itself a new strategy focussing on this, and the Conference marked a key stage in implementing this. All this has been helped by the major changes in the RSA outlined in Matthew Taylor's vision for the future, and we are now able to see some of the key elements that will underpin RSA Scotland activities over the next 2-3 years:

- Engagement of Fellows - here better communications, the development of RSA Networks and a more comprehensive database of Fellows' interests accessible to Fellows will be important infrastructure developments to support new forms of collaboration
- Development of partnerships with organisations relevant to social change and the areas specifically linked to our projects and activities; for example, Education/Skills, Design, Sustainability
- Continuing to monitor public consultations and facilitating input from RSA Scotland and individual Fellows
- Enhancing the profile of the RSA in Scotland, working with national bodies such as the Scottish Parliament and the Futures Forum as well as more local organisations
- Focussing the Scottish Committee's efforts on just two main project areas but at the same time encouraging the activity of groups of Fellows with a particular interest or within a particular local area
- Working with RSA headquarters on several UK-wide projects to ensure that the Scottish dimension is fully considered.
- An events programme of high quality to demonstrate the RSA's traditional challenge and thought leadership, focussing (though not exclusively) on key themes and activities
- Resourcing will be needed to support all this and we would expect some additional support from the RSA, to be matched with funds from sources in Scotland.

The Committee has temporarily cut back on the number of events in the first quarter of 2008 in order to find time to work on the ideas generated at the Conference, in particular trying to ensure that any project plans identify the special "added value" of the RSA in areas where there are many other organisations active. The Fellows' Networking evening on 28 February in Glasgow (see below) will be an opportunity to outline where we have reached and more details will be in our next Newsletter and placed on the RSA Scotland website.

Plans for Spring/Summer 2008 include an event on delivery of public service with Professor Alice Brown, Public Services Ombudsman, a lecture from Neil Murray, Executive Director of Scotland's National Theatre, an event looking at issues relating to young people at risk of unemployment, the annual Angus Millar Lecture and a possible event linked to the China@Scotland Festival. The Committee is also looking at holding a number of Fellows' Networking evenings outside the Central Belt, instead of a formal dinner in Edinburgh or Glasgow.

On behalf of the RSA Scottish Committee, I send you best wishes for a happy and successful 2008!

Bob Porrer
Chair

Fellows' Conference - Outcomes

Some 65 Fellows attended a special one day conference at St George's School Edinburgh on 17 November. The conference, which had a keynote speech from Susan Deacon, Professor of Social Change at Queen Margaret University and a former Scottish Executive Minister, was also addressed by Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive of the RSA, and by Gerry Acher, Chairman of the RSA Trustee Board. However, the main focus was small group discussions at which Fellows could share ideas about the challenges facing Scotland and how the expertise and energy of Fellows could have an impact within a developing post-devolution Scotland. Round-table discussion groups reviewing the opportunities across Scotland and how the RSA might respond were followed by Thematic Groups which identified the potential for RSA involvement and action in Scotland in six specific areas:

- Education, Enterprise and the Skills Agenda
- Sustainability
- Design
- Building Communities and Citizen Engagement
- Business Growth
- The *Inspiring Scotland* pilot project

(More details of the Thematic Group topics are available in the Past Events section of the RSA Scotland website)

In welcoming delegates, Bob Porrer, Chair of RSA Scotland, reminded delegates of the Scottish Committee's strategy, set in August 2006 in response to the desire of many Fellows to contribute in the context of post-devolution Scotland. Enhancing the RSA's impact within Scotland meant that greater activity and involvement of Fellows across Scotland was essential. It was encouraging that this desire for impact had been mirrored by a similar development in the RSA as a whole, with the appointment of Matthew Taylor as Chief Executive and a new strategy focussing on the RSA as a network for civic innovation.

A full report on the Conference and its outcomes will be lodged on the RSA Scotland website. Feedback from delegates has been very positive, with special praise for the speakers. Comments included "inspiring" and "stimulating" and suggested that the conference had been a useful first step in encouraging the engagement of Fellows.

The Scottish Committee has started to consider the range of ideas generated by the discussion groups and to decide priorities, with the aim of having one or two flagship projects and a number of other activities to be run by the Committee or, more independently, by small groups of Scottish Fellows. The Committee is also considering how to improve the supporting infrastructure - most notably how the Fellowship Directory and the new RSA Networks facility on the web can be used to help networking of Fellows with similar interests, and how the RSA and RSA Scotland websites can be used to facilitate the exchange of ideas. The areas identified as first priority for potential RSA Scotland projects are Education and the Skills Agenda and Design and Sustainability. We are hoping also to link with the RSA's Drugs project and the new Prison Education project and to promote actively the Sustainability and Carbon Trading agenda when the RSA's Carbon Trading scheme is re-launched in the Spring of 2008.

Over the next few months we would also hope to encourage groups of Fellows in Scotland with special interests to connect with the aim of seeing how they and the RSA could make a difference.

All RSA Regional Chairs have been invited to present their Committee's plans at a conference in London towards the end of February, looking at the role of the Regions within the development of RSA networks, engagement of Fellows and potential future projects.

Fellows' Networking Evening

5.30-8.00pm Thursday 28 February at the Lighthouse, Glasgow.

At this event you will be able to meet other Fellows, talk to RSA staff and hear about the RSA's current programme. There will also be the opportunity to meet members of the Scottish Committee, discuss current projects and ideas for development in Scotland and hear from the RSA's Chief Executive, Matthew Taylor. Drinks and canapés will be served. Fellows within reasonable travelling distance of Glasgow should have received notification of the event; if not, and you wish to attend, please apply with details of name, job title, company, postal and email addresses and daytime telephone number to Sarah Tucker, Fellowship Administration Officer, RSA, 8 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6EZ, enclosing a cheque for £15 (payable to RSA No 1 Account) to cover the cost of refreshments.

Recent Events

Since the last Newsletter in August there have been eight successful events:

- Matthew Taylor lecturing at the Futures Forum in the Scottish Parliament, with 90 attending
- A New Fellows' Reception in Edinburgh attended by 33 Fellows
- The RSA Lecture by Alan Little at the *Belonging in the New Europe* Conference at the University of Edinburgh, with 130 attending
- Three Transport Debates in Dumfries, Oban and Glasgow with a total of 69 attending
- An event on Prisons held in the Scottish Parliament, with 51 attending
- A Design lecture at the Lighthouse in Glasgow with around 80 attending

Reports and further details of most events (some including audio playback of lectures/debates) are available in the *Past Events* section of the RSA Scotland website.

Fellows' Directory

The main RSA website gives Fellows access to a Directory of Fellows which enables you to identify Fellows by Fellowship Region/Country and Town/City, nature of business and interest. The interest list has been expanded significantly and this means that the directory can be a useful tool to locate and connect with other Fellows. However, the Directory can only really be effective if the majority of Fellows register on it; at present under 400 of the 1,250 Fellows in Scotland are listed. We therefore wish to encourage all Fellows in Scotland to register; having a comprehensive directory of Fellows and their interests is essential if we are to develop a more active Fellowship.

The main RSA website can also now be used to update your contact information, including postal and email addresses so that central records are correct. Just go to www.theRSA.org/fellows/login.asp .

RSA Scotland Notice Board

From time to time Fellows hear of a lecture, conference or project organised by another organisation which may be of interest to other Fellows in Scotland. We are setting up an open RSA Scotland Notice Board so that you can inform other Fellows through our website. This is in addition to the more interactive Fellows' Message Board, for which you need to login to add a message.

Obviously, the listing of such activities organised by other organisations does not imply endorsement by RSA Scotland and not everything will be appropriate for listing. The name and email address of the Fellow who has supplied the information will be given in case there are any queries.

If you wish to suggest something for inclusion on the RSA Scotland Notice Board, please email louisem@youngscot.org .

RSA Scottish Committee 2007/08

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The Committee welcomes ideas for future events - if you have any suggestions please send these to Sue Hunter, Secretary to the RSA Scottish Committee by email to her at sue.hunter@morton-fraser.com or by post at Morton Fraser, 30 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JX.

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