



MEMBER'S NEWSLETTER

Why a members' newsletter?

Last session, the RPSG's Council decided to start a newsletter for members as one of a series of actions to kick start the Society's activities after (fingers crossed) the Covid years, and also to mark its 220th anniversary. The aim is to provide an additional service to members to help keep them abreast of the Society's recent activities and those that are in the pipeline for the next few months. It will also provide an additional forum for discussion among, and input from, members. The format is to be electronic only, for reasons of cost and manoeuvrability, with two issues per year in the first instance. This first issue is timed to coincide with and anticipate the start of the programme of lectures and social events for the 2022-23 season.

Current composition and activities of RPSG Council

As the Society's website shows, the past two years has seen considerable turnover of Council members and office bearers. The committees through which the Society's affairs are run have been slightly restructured, as follows: the Speakers group, chaired by Campbell Forrest, organises the lecture series that forms our central activity; the Finance & Administration group, chaired by Richard Service, takes care of the Society's finances; the Communication and Marketing group, chaired by Phil Woodrow, is charged with promoting the RPSG and building up our membership; and the Members' Events group, chaired by Tony Burton, manages the services and additional events that the Society provides to its members.

A message from the President

The Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow has a long and illustrious history. In keeping with the broad perspectives of the Society, last year (the 220th annual lecture series) we covered a wide range of topics relating to major issues such as climate change, the ongoing pandemic, disease, eugenics, artificial intelligence, gender, diversity, memory, music and human societies past and present. I hope you our members, who form the essence of the society, enjoyed this programme.

The Society faced several challenges in the past two sessions due to the lockdowns resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic. After running the second half of the 20/21 season using Zoom only, during 21/22 we were also able to provide hybrid lectures from a new venue at the University of Glasgow. We thank the University for making this available to us. Getting the sound and visuals right for the home and virtual audience was not easy, despite the sophisticated technology, but in the end this worked well. We are

extremely grateful for the support provided by Glasgow University IT technicians Nikolaos Lazidis, James Matthew and Joe Tinkler. I would like to thank members for supporting us with this, and for continuing to provide the informed and robust questions for speakers that are an important feature of our lectures.

But, however good the technology, there is nothing to replace the feeling of fellowship and engagement that comes from being together in person. We are hopeful that our large, live audience will return next year. As you know already from the email I sent in early August and as you will see below, we already have a suitable venue lined up that will allow a post-lecture gathering after the talks in the coming session 22/23. We have an impressive list of speakers lined up, including a good number of names that you will recognise.

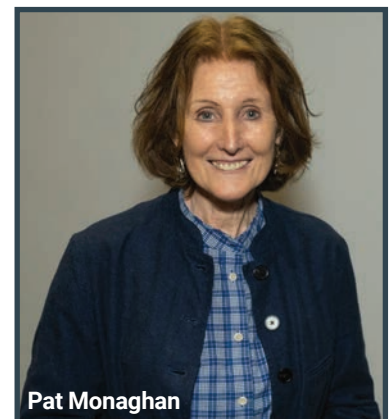
We welcome members thoughts on all of these matters. Please do help us continue the work of the Society and encourage others to join us.

Current RPSG office bearers

President: Patricia Monaghan
Past President: Geraint Bevan
Secretary: Tony Burton
Treasurer: Richard Service

Current Council members

Adrian Bowman
Leonard Esakowitz
Campbell Forrest
Tricia Fort
Felicity Huntingford
Colin Miller
Graham Watt
Phil Woodrow.



Pat Monaghan



Some highlights from the 2021/22 session

Lecture series associated with COP26: In addition to its usual lecture programme, the RPSG organised a series of 3 lectures in the run up to COP26, the critically important international meeting on climate change held in Glasgow in November 2021. The aim was to give members the opportunity to get an up-to-date background from people working on the front line, in Scotland but also with an international dimension. These lectures, which are available on the RPSG website, were from: Baroness Young (Chair of the Woodlands Trust) on *Bestriding the world stage like a Colossus? Or Doomed, we're all Doomed!*; Francesca Osowska (CEO of Nature Scot) on *Nature and Climate: an Emergency Response* and Pete Smith (Professor of Soils and Global Change, University of Aberdeen) on *The climate emergency in Scotland – what can we do about it?* Overall, these lectures were well attended, prompted vigorous discussions and, judging by your comments, were much appreciated.



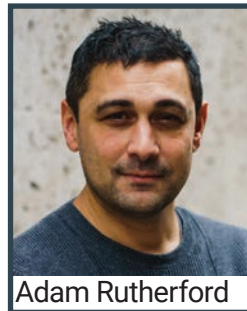
The main lecture series: Through a combination of Zoom and hybrid presentations, and in spite of lockdown, the RPSG was able to provide members with an excellent series of lectures. Here is a representative sample, to remind readers of the exceptionally high quality of our speakers and the breadth and topical nature of our coverage.

Eugenics: A dark history and a troubling present. Adam Rutherford, Honorary Fellow, University College London.

The Gendered Brain: Do you have a female brain or a male brain? Or are we asking the wrong question? Gina Rippon Professor of Cognitive Neuroimaging, Aston University.

What has the pandemic taught us about human nature? Stephen Reicher. Wardlaw Professor of Psychology, University of St. Andrews

The EU without Britain: Never Closer Union? Professor Vernon Bogdanor Professor of Government at King's College, London. **Professor Bogdanor's lecture has had more than 6,000 views.**



Adam Rutherford



Gina Rippon



Stephen Reicher



Vernon Bogdanor

from a member

...may I take the opportunity to Thank you for your contribution to "keeping the Show" on the road ...I think I've only missed one item , but however good they have been, I'm still looking forward to the autumn when we can get back to our regular face to face meetings with real atmosphere... Enjoy Summer when it eventually arrives.

Best Regds.

Two highly topical lectures in the session 21/22 were associated with the RPSG's medals:

The Adam Smith Lecture. The health and wealth of nations: pitfalls and opportunities in the economic recovery from the pandemic. Anton Muscatelli, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glasgow.

The Graham Lecture. What would Lister do in a post-pandemic world? Iain McInnes, Director of the Institute of Infection, Immunity and Inflammation, University of Glasgow.



Anton Muscatelli receives the Adam Smith medal from the President



Enlightening talks given by internationally known experts

Special Events

Members' trip to York and joint meeting with the York Philosophical Society: In March 2022, we had our first members' outing, organised by our Secretary, Tony Burton. This comprised a 3-day trip to visit a sister Society in York and went extremely well. The trip, which is described in full and illustrated on the RPSG website, included visits to Barnard Castle and the Bowes Museum, a joint meeting and dinner with the York Philosophical Society and a guided field trip to Askham Bog.



Conducted tour of Askham Bog by Professor Alastair Fitter



Lunch at Greys Court overlooking York Minster



Members stay at the Bar Convent, England's oldest living convent.



Conducted tour of the Merchant Adventurers Hall, Piccadilly, York

'This trip was an outstanding success; preparation and organisation were excellent. The venues we visited were diverse and our guides were experts in their fields which added so much to the quality and enjoyment of the trip.'

'All the speakers not only knew their stuff but could put it across in an entertaining way. The Bar Convent provided wonderful accommodation - and food. And I don't think I have eaten so much for a long time. I particularly appreciated the visit to Askham Bog, a nice contrast, and not a place one would think of when visiting York.'

RPSG Social Event: After a two-year break, on Sunday 11th September the RPSG held its traditional members' social event at Scottish Opera Production Studios at Cowcaddens. This was fully booked, with 58 attendees. In a sense, this led on from the very interesting lecture last session from Alex Reedijk. General Director of Scottish Opera on: An enduring art – opera in Scotland, which described, among other things, the creative ways in which Scottish Opera kept going during lockdown, including outdoors, undercover performances at these same studios.

Starting with welcome drinks and ending with a very substantial tea, the event mainly took place in the rehearsal studio, in front of the minimalist set for the upcoming performance of *Ainadamar*. The proceedings were opened by RPSG Secretary Tony Burton, with a message of regret on our behalf for the death of Queen Elizabeth II, as befits a society with royal accreditation. There followed a warm message of welcome from the President, Pat Monaghan, among other things celebrating the fact that we can at last meet again in person to enjoy RPSG events, the soiree being just one of a series of excellent lectures and other events for the coming session.

We started with the first screening of a short film about the RPSG to celebrate its 220th anniversary. This was organised by Tony Burton and produced for the Society by Production Attic. Making extensive use of images from our extraordinary archives and of interviews with society members and past lecturers, the film summarised the Society's fascinating history and celebrated its inclusiveness, breadth of vision and sustained interest in current political and societal events, scientific discoveries and cultural events. The film will be posted on the RPSG's website and will be used in full and in edited snippets, to promote the Society. Thanks to all involved for an excellent, informative and attractive film. This was followed by lively and very stimulating lectures from Stuart Stratford, Scottish Opera's Music Director and from John Liddell, who was for many years their head of costume.

Bearing up Pat's point about the importance of meeting and participating in person, all three presentations stimulated lively debate, which eventually had to be brought to a temporary halt, so that we could have our tea, during which discussion continued.

Many thanks to Scottish Opera for hosting this event and to Tony for the non-trivial work of organising it. Thanks to Richard Service and Neil Metcalfe for ensuring that the audiovisual systems worked well for us.



Stuart Stratford



John Liddell



Tony welcomes members

Looking forward to the 2022/23 session

Lecture programme: We have assembled an outstanding programme of lectures for this coming session, the first on 28th September, starting at 7.30pm. Members' speaker suggestions were much appreciated in this process. This session, lectures will be held in the Sir Charles Wilson complex, kindly made available by the University of Glasgow. The lecture theatre is easy to get to from Kelvinbridge Underground and by bus and free university car parking is available nearby. For the reasons outline in the President's letter to members, Council has decided to revert to live lectures only, with recordings being available subsequently on YouTube, as in previous sessions.



Sir Charles Wilson Lecture Theatre

Details of the lecture programme for the coming session are in the brochure that has already been circulated to members and on the website. We look forward to seeing as many members as possible in person. Briefly, the speakers and titles for 2022 are:

William Dalrymple (Historian, Author and Broadcaster). The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company. September 28

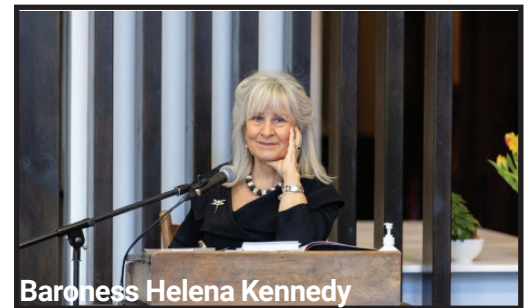


William Dalrymple

Gordon Dutton (Professor of Visual Sciences, Caledonian University). The impact of brain injury on vision: what does this teach us about how our minds see? October 12

Saiful Islam (Professor of Materials and Modelling, University of Oxford). Making a materials difference to Green Energy (including batteries). October 26

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC (Specialist in Civil Liberties and Human Rights). The nature of justice. November 9



Baroness Helena Kennedy

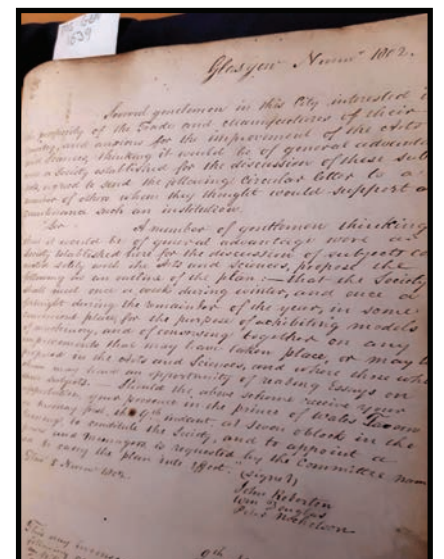
Neil Adger (Professor of Human Geography, University of Exeter). Changing places: migration and climate change. November 23

Paul Collier (Professor of Economics and Public Policy, University of Oxford) Joint Lecture with the University of Glasgow. Left Behind: How poor places can get trapped, and how they can catch up. November 30

Alastair Campbell (Communicator, Writer, Strategist). Changing the lens on mental health. December 7

Members' trips: Looking further ahead, and following the success of this year's trip, another joint meeting with the York Philosophical Society, with associated visits, is planned. In addition, a visit to the Newcastle Philosophical Society is being arranged. These are scheduled for April and May 2023. In both cases numbers are limited to 25 RPSG members. More details will be given in the next Members' Newsletter.

Looking into the RPSG's past: While carrying out research for the promotional film, we were delighted to find the original minute book from 1802 in our archives, with a record of the RPSG's first meeting in beautiful copperplate handwriting. This has encouraged us to dig deep into both Council minutes and the published proceedings of the RPSG over the 220 years since it was founded. These records contain many delights, some of the most interesting of which are shown in the promotional film. We plan to highlight more of these in forthcoming Members' Newsletters. Just by way of illustration, here are some lectures reported in the minute book for 1914-18 that resonate with our current concerns:



Record of 1st meeting 1802

The economy of heating or cooling buildings by means of currents or air (Lord Kelvin)

Periodicity in infectious diseases

The house as a contributory factor to the death rate

Failures of engineering structures

The problem with secret diplomacy

The adjustment of war expenditure between taxes and loans

The future of Palestine

Science and education

Invitation to RPSG members

We would like to include a 'Contributions from members' section in future newsletters. Do please send us your thoughts about any aspects of the Society's activities past or present, for consideration for the next newsletter. Please contact the Newsletter Editor (Felicity.Huntingford@glasgow.ac.uk) if you would like to do this, by November 18th 2022.