

Talks Programme

Illustrated Public Talks • Royal Scottish Geographical Society

2009–2010

We are delighted to introduce the programme of public talks planned for the 2009-10 season. We look forward to welcoming back some familiar faces, as well as introducing for the first time to RSGS some exciting new ones. Please come and join us.

Stephen Venables was the first Briton to climb Everest without supplementary oxygen and by a new route. That groundbreaking ascent was just one of his many pioneering expeditions around the world. He has appeared in several TV documentaries, and in the film *Shackleton's Antarctic Adventure*. His first book, *Painted Mountains*, won the prestigious Boardman Tasker prize.



Benedict Allen pioneered the filming of authentic journeys for television. By not using a film-crew, he has allowed millions of people around the world to witness for the first time adventures unfolding genuinely in inhospitable terrain. Benedict's talks will be run in conjunction with University Expeditions Committees.

Col John Blashford-Snell is one of the world's most highly respected explorers, having organised and led over 100 expeditions and still found time to pioneer whitewater rafting and launch Operation Raleigh. In recognition of his leadership of the Blue Nile, British Trans-Americas and Zaire River expeditions, he was awarded the RSGS's Livingstone Medal.

Chris Bradley travelled extensively in the Middle East, Asia and Africa as a civil engineer. He is now an adventure tour leader and consultant.

Dee Caffari is the first woman to sail solo, non stop around the world in both directions, in her boat *Aviva*. She has also just smashed the Round Britain and Ireland Record monohull speed record attempt, so should have lots of thrilling stories to share with us.

Vanessa Collingridge is an author and broadcaster whose passion is geography and its associations with science, the environment and history.

Thomas Joshua Cooper is a unique landscape artist and photographer. One of his works, *Point of No Return*, concerns the origins of civilisation in the remotest locations of the world.

Dr Paul Cox is an ethnobotanist who has spent three decades searching the rain forests of the Pacific islands and Southeast Asia for new medicines. He discovered the anti-AIDS drug candidate prostratin, and has received the Rachel Carson Award for his advocacy of indigenous peoples. His current research is on the causes of neurodegenerative illness.

Fred Daniels is a seasoned and zestful traveller, who now likes nothing better than to put on his backpack and explore less accessible parts of the globe.

John Dunn is an explorer, writer and photographer with a passion for the Canadian Arctic. *Cordillera Crossing* charts a 1,000km struggle through the untracked wilderness of northern British Columbia.



Benedict Allen



Col John Blashford-Snell



Dee Caffari



Dr Paul Cox



Monty Halls



Patrick Holden

Masthead photograph: Am Buachaille, Sandwood Bay, Sutherland © Craig Aitchinson www.landandlight.co.uk

Aberdeen • Fraser Noble Building, King's College, Aberdeen, AB24 3UE

5 Oct 09	Benedict Allen	Life on the Edge
2 Nov 09	John Dunn	Cordillera Crossing
7 Dec 09	Cameron McNeish & Richard Else	Sutherland - The Empty Lands?
11 Jan 10	Dee Caffari	Around the World and Back Again
1 Feb 10	Fred Pearce	Peoplequake
1 Mar 10	Julie Summers	Everest Needs You, Mr Irvine

Ayr • Carnegie Library, 12 Main Street, Ayr, KA8 8EB

30 Sep 09	David Edwards	Wilderness Canada
28 Oct 09	Martin Moran	Nanda Devi
25 Nov 09	Bruce Goodlad	Russia
27 Jan 10	Cameron McNeish	Wilderness World of Cameron McNeish
24 Feb 10	Stephen Venables	Shipton Country
23 Mar 10	John Pilkington	Up the Mekong to Tibet

Borders • Wynd Theatre, Buccleuch Street, Melrose, TD6 9LD

6 Oct 09	Peter Mackay	The Northern Lighthouses
3 Nov 09	Bruce Gittings	A Geography of Secret Places
1 Dec 09	Bruce Goodlad	Russia
12 Jan 10	Ian Mitchell	Utah's National Parks
2 Feb 10	Steven Sloan	Protecting Livestock – Saving Human Life
23 Feb 10	Stephen Venables	Shipton Country
9 Mar 10	Mike Thomas	China

Dumfries • Easterbrook Hall, The Crichton, Bankend Road, Dumfries, DG1 4TA

28 Sep 09	David Edwards	Wilderness Canada
26 Oct 09	Martin Moran	Nanda Devi
30 Nov 09	Bruce Goodlad	Russia
25 Jan 10	Chris Minty	Belize
22 Feb 10	Stephen Venables	Shipton Country
22 Mar 10	John Pilkington	Pilkington in Ladakh

Dundee • Tower Extension Theatre, University of Dundee, Perth Road, Dundee, DD1 4HN

6 Oct 09	Benedict Allen	Life on the Edge
3 Nov 09	John Dunn	Cordillera Crossing
1 Dec 09	Dr Paul Cox	Travels of an Ethnobotanist
12 Jan 10	Jasper Winn	Kayaking A Thousand Miles Around Ireland
2 Feb 10	Fred Pearce	Travels to Find Where My Stuff Comes From
2 Mar 10	Julie Summers	Everest Needs You, Mr Irvine

Dunfermline • Carnegie Hall, East Port, Dunfermline, KY12 7JA

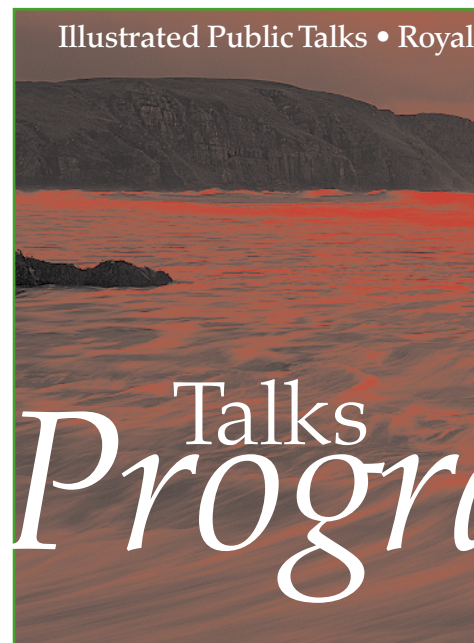
9 Sep 09	Fred Daniels	The Three Deserts of Egypt
7 Oct 09	Benedict Allen	Life on the Edge
4 Nov 09	John Dunn	Cordillera Crossing
2 Dec 09	Dr Paul Cox	Travels of an Ethnobotanist
6 Jan 10	Gavin Francis	Shetland to New Zealand by Motorbike
3 Feb 10	Fred Pearce	Peoplequake
3 Mar 10	Julie Summers	Everest Needs You, Mr Irvine

Edinburgh afternoon • Royal Botanic Gardens, 20A Inverleith Row, Edinburgh, EH3 5LR

23 Sep 09	David Edwards	Energy
21 Oct 09	Aqqaluk Lyngø	View from the North
18 Nov 09	Vanessa Collingridge	The Making of STV's <i>Scotland Revealed</i>
20 Jan 10	Patrick Holden	Connecting Food, Soil & the Planet
17 Feb 10	T J Cooper	The World's Edge
24 Mar 10	John Pilkington	Royal Road to the Incas

Edinburgh evening • Napier University Morningside Campus, Morningside Rd, Edinburgh, EH10 4BY

8 Oct 09	Benedict Allen	Life on the Edge
5 Nov 09	John Dunn	Cordillera Crossing
3 Dec 09	Dr Paul Cox	Travels of an Ethnobotanist
7 Jan 10	Gavin Francis	Shetland to New Zealand by Motorbike
4 Feb 10	Fred Pearce	Travels to Find Where My Stuff Comes From
4 Mar 10	Julie Summers	Everest Needs You, Mr Irvine



David Edwards has been an expedition science leader in Botswana and a ranger in the Grand Canyon National Park. He now lectures across the UK on expedition planning and on our energy future.

Gavin Francis is a GP turned adventurer, who in 2007-08 spent 18 months travelling with his wife from Shetland to New Zealand, mostly on a 1982 BMW motorbike.

Bruce Gittings created and maintains the web-based *Gazetteer for Scotland*, a great source of information about Scotland's geography, people and history.

Ann Glen is the author of several books on aspects of Scotland, including railway history, and is a regular contributor to *The Scots Magazine*.

Bruce Goodlad works full time in the mountains, instructing and guiding all over Europe, Nepal and Antarctica. His talk is on ski touring in the former Soviet Union, specifically the Kola Peninsula and Kamchaka.

Monty Halls has presented several TV programmes and series, including *Monty Hall's Great Escape*, *The Perfect Weapon*, and *Great Ocean Adventures*. With a marine background, he has a profound interest in oceans and has led several diving expeditions. He has published several books, and writes a regular column for the UK's *Dive* magazine.

Patrick Holden has been involved in the organic movement since 1973, initially as a full-time



organic farmer, and now as Director of the Soil Association, the charity which campaigns for sustainable organic farming and responsible forestry. He is still a part-time farmer, as well as a popular speaker, broadcaster and writer. Patrick's talks are run in conjunction with the Soil Association.

Jeremy Leggett is a geologist who began his career as an oil industry consultant. In the 1990s he moved to Greenpeace, and later founded Solarcentury, the solar energy company. Now executive chairman, he states his company's purpose: "to make a big difference in the fight against climate change - our aim is to revolutionise the global energy market."

Aqqaluk Lynge has represented the Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland (his home country) and the Far East of Russia, as President and then Vice-Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) since 1997. He has promoted the rights of indigenous peoples since his youth, and has demonstrated a deep commitment to pan-Inuit unity. Aqqaluk's talks are run in conjunction with Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, and his letter to RSGS members is in the summer 2009 edition of *The Geographer*.

Peter Mackay is currently the Librarian of the Scottish Arctic Club, and is a recent Chairman of the Commissioners of the Northern Lighthouse Board.

Glasgow afternoon • Renfield St Stephens Church Centre, 260 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4JP

8 Oct 09	Benedict Allen	Life on the Edge
5 Nov 09	John Dunn	Cordillera Crossing
3 Dec 09	Dr Paul Cox	Travels of an Ethnobotanist
7 Jan 10	Gavin Francis	Shetland to New Zealand by Motorbike
4 Feb 10	Fred Pearce	Travels to Find Where My Stuff Comes From
4 Mar 10	Julie Summers	Everest Needs You, Mr Irvine

Glasgow evening • Boyd Orr Building, University of Glasgow, University Avenue, Glasgow, G12 8QQ

21 Oct 09	Aqqaluk Lynge	View from the North
18 Nov 09	Vanessa Collingridge	The Making of STV's <i>Scotland Revealed</i>
16 Dec 09	Stephen Venables	Higher than the Eagle Soars
20 Jan 10	Patrick Holden	Connecting Food, Soil & the Planet
17 Feb 10	Stuart Nisbet	Glasgow & Atlantic Slavery: The Carribean Evidence
17 Mar 10	Jeremy Leggett	The Finance, Climate & Energy Crunches

Helensburgh • Victoria Halls, Sinclair Street, Helensburgh, G84 9LE

24 Sep 09	James Ogilvie	Staring Down on Stars
29 Oct 09	Martin Moran	Nanda Devi
26 Nov 09	Bruce Goodlad	Russia
28 Jan 10	Ann Glen	Cairngorm National Park
25 Feb 10	Stephen Venables	Shipton Country
25 Mar 10	Bruce Gittings	Exploring Deseret

Inverness • The Highland Council Chamber, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX

5 Oct 09	Martin Moran	Mountains of Norway
9 Nov 09	John Dunn	Cordillera Crossing
14 Dec 09	Stephen Venables	Higher than the Eagle Soars
11 Jan 10	Jasper Winn	Kayaking A Thousand Miles Around Ireland
8 Feb 10	Chris Bradley	Libya - The Mediterranean's Greatest Secret
8 Mar 10	John Pilkington	Royal Road to the Incas

Kirkcaldy • School of Midwifery, University of Dundee Fife Campus, 5 Forth Ave, Kirkcaldy, KY2 5YS

21 Sep 09	David Edwards	Energy
19 Oct 09	Aqqaluk Lynge	View from the North
16 Nov 09	Peter Mackay	The Northern Lighthouses
18 Jan 10	Chris Minty	Belize
15 Feb 10	Monty Halls	Travels in Search of the Weird & Wonderful
15 Mar 10	Ann Glen	Canada

Lanarkshire • Airdrie Arts Centre, Anderson Street, Airdrie, ML6 0AA

15 Oct 09	Col John Blashford-Snell	In Darkest Africa
12 Nov 09	George Sutherland	Missing in Borneo
10 Dec 09	Cameron McNeish & Richard Else	Sutherland - The Empty Lands?
7 Jan 10	Ian Mitchell	Urban Regeneration in Glasgow
11 Feb 10	Dr Iain Stewart	How Earth Made History
11 Mar 10	John Pilkington	Royal Road to the Incas

Perth • Perth Concert Hall, Mill Street, Perth, PH1 5HZ

13 Oct 09	Martin Moran	Nanda Devi
10 Nov 09	John Dunn	Cordillera Crossing
15 Dec 09	Stephen Venables	Higher than the Eagle Soars
12 Jan 10	Dee Caffari	Around the World and Back Again
9 Feb 10	Dr Iain Stewart	How Earth Made History
9 Mar 10	John Pilkington	Royal Road to the Incas

Stirling • Albert Halls, Albert Place, Dumbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2QL

14 Oct 09	Col John Blashford-Snell	In Darkest Africa
11 Nov 09	George Sutherland	Gallipoli
9 Dec 09	Cameron McNeish & Richard Else	Sutherland - The Empty Lands?
13 Jan 10	Dee Caffari	Around the World and Back Again
10 Feb 10	Dr Iain Stewart	How Earth Made History
10 Mar 10	John Pilkington	Royal Road to the Incas



Jeremy Leggett



Aqqaluk Lyng



Cameron McNeish



Richard Else



Jasper Winn



Dr Iain Stewart

Cameron McNeish is one of Britain's best known mountain walkers. He is editor of the award-winning *TGO* magazine, President of the Backpackers Club, Chairman of the Nevis Partnership, and serves on the Wilderness Foundation's Advisory Panel. **Richard Else** is one of Europe's most experienced remote location film makers, having filmed in many of the world's least hospitable places. He has produced several short films and TV series, including the award-winning *Wild Climbs*.

Chris Minty has been involved in over 30 expeditions which have taken him around the world. He was awarded the MBE for services to the conservation of the Central American Rainforest, to recognize his outstanding achievements at Las Cuevas in Belize.

Ian Mitchell is a successful author, writing about his love for the great outdoors, from the Cairngorms to the Caucasus and the Rockies. He is also enthusiastic about urban walks, especially in his native Glasgow.

Martin Moran has achieved many major climbs in Scotland, the Alps and the Himalayas. One of his books is *The Munros in Winter*, an account of the first completion of the Munros in a single winter.

Stuart Nisbet is an historian who recently unveiled the connections that Scotland, and in particular Glasgow, had with the slave trade.

James Ogilvie has summited five of the seven highest peaks in the world. His books include *Staring Down on the Stars*, an account of his Everest experiences.

Fred Pearce is one of Britain's finest science writers, reporting on environment, popular science and development issues from 64 countries over the past 20 years. He specialises in global issues, including water and climate change, and is a regular broadcaster, international speaker, and author.

John Pilkington is a journalist and broadcaster with the BBC World Service and Radio 4, for whom he has made adventure documentaries, most recently *On the Trail of Butch & Sundance*.

Steven Sloan is Chief Executive of GALVmed, a charity which makes livestock diagnostics and medicines accessible to the millions for whom livestock is a lifeline.

Iain Stewart is a Scottish geologist known by his TV appearances in numerous short films and series. *Earth - the Power of the Planet*, his latest series for the BBC, reveals him embarking on a personal journey to tell the life story of our planet, how it works and what makes it so special.

Julie Summers is an author and historian whose first biography, published in 2000, was *Fearless on Everest - The Quest for Sandy Irvine*.

George Sutherland is an amateur military historian of international repute. He launched a successful expedition to find and recover a Dutch aircraft that crashed in Brunei's Sarawak jungle in WWII.

Mike Thomas is Professor Emeritus at the University of Stirling, where his research interests include tropical weathering and landform development.

Jasper Winn is an accomplished author, broadcaster, photographer and film-maker. In 30 years of travel, Jasper has canoed the length of the Danube, cycled across the Sahara, and roller-skated through the Netherlands. His latest kayaking adventure was around the coast of Ireland.

Details are correct at the time of going to print (1st July 2009), but may be subject to change. For the latest information, please contact your local RSGS Centre, or the RSGS website at www.rsgs.org, or the RSGS headquarters.



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RSGS members support the educational work of the Society and may attend any of the talks listed here for free. **If you are not already a member, please consider joining and supporting our work.**

The annual membership rates are:

- £47* Joint
- £33* Single
- £20 Concession

* A higher rate is currently payable in Edinburgh or Glasgow because of extra talks.

To join, please complete and return the form available at www.rsgs.org/joining or phone our office on 01738 455050 with your details.

You can also join in person at most of the talks.

For further information, please visit our website www.rsgs.org or email enquiries@rsgs.org or phone 01738 455050.

