



Press release: for immediate release

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Scottish academics honoured as RSE Prize Winners 2011/12 announced

The Royal Society of Edinburgh has today announced the winners of its inaugural prizes, recognising some of the top talent in Scotland at both senior and early career levels.

Renowned historian, Professor Tom Devine; world pioneer in the growing field of geomicrobiology, Professor Geoffrey Gadd; and international leader in orbital dynamics, Professor Colin McInnes, are among those who have been awarded these prestigious prizes.

Sir John Arbuthnott, President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, commented, "It is a pleasure to be able to award these prizes to individuals who have contributed, and continue to contribute, so much to advancing understanding in their respective fields. Their achievements do much to cement Scotland's place firmly at the cutting-edge of the global research community across a wide area of knowledge. A key role of the RSE is to promote public engagement with science and the arts and humanities. All of this year's Prize Winners have shown passion and flair for communicating their work to audiences far and wide. I congratulate each of them on their achievements, and on winning this year's RSE Prizes."

Professor Tom Devine OBE HonMRIA FRSE FBA, Senior Research Professor in History at the University of Edinburgh, has been awarded the RSE/Sir Walter Scott Prize, for his outstanding contribution to Scottish History. Professor Devine has made a prolific contribution to Scottish historical literature and brought Scottish history alive for audiences around the world. Frequently sought out to contribute to Scottish, UK and international media and learning festivals, he has also initiated projects of truly international ambition and significance, including founding and developing the Research Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies at Aberdeen, and the University of Edinburgh's Scottish Centre for Diaspora Studies.

Professor Geoffrey Gadd FRSE, Boyd Baxter Chair of Biology at the University of Dundee, receives the RSE/Sir James Black Prize for his outstanding contribution to the growing field of geomicrobiology. His research has significantly advanced understanding in this field, which concerns the roles of microbe and microbial processes in geological and environmental processes. The winner of several international awards and fellowships, Professor Gadd's research is at the interface of microbiology, geochemistry and mineralogy; and he regularly contributes to outreach activities, meetings and lectures to both the international scientific community and lay audiences.

Professor Colin McInnes FRSE FREng, Professor of Engineering Science, University of Strathclyde, has been awarded the RSE/Lord Kelvin Prize for his

outstanding contribution to space systems engineering. Combining elegant applied mathematics with practical and often commercial space applications, Professor McInnes' work on orbital dynamics has played a leading role in the development of solar sail technology, offering the possibility of low-cost deep space missions. His many international links have put Scotland firmly on the map as a leading centre for space engineering research.

Each of these senior Prize Winners will deliver a public lecture in Scotland as part of the RSE events programme and will receive their medals at these events. Details will be publicised on the RSE website when available. Prizes awarded to early career researchers will also be presented at these public lectures.

The RSE/Makdougall Brisbane Medal, recognising excellent achievements of early career researchers in the physical sciences, has this year been jointly awarded to two equally worthy individuals:

Dr Sharon Ashbrook, Reader in Physical Chemistry at the University of St Andrews, and at the forefront of research into solid-state Nuclear Magnetic Resonance spectroscopy, for her outstanding scientific quality and leadership record and for her commitment to excellence in all areas of academic life;

and

Dr Rob Jenkins, Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology, University of Glasgow, who has made a number of significant contributions to the field of human face perception and social interaction, for his outstanding scientific creativity, the interdisciplinary reach of his research and his passion for science communication.

Dr Nicola Stanley-Wall, lecturer in the Division of Molecular Microbiology, University of Dundee, receives the RSE/Patrick Neil Medal, the early career prize in the field of life sciences, for her outstanding research work, leadership skills and public engagement activities. Dr Stanley-Wall runs a highly successful research group at the university and her work in encouraging young people to take an interest in microbiology has included organising the two-day 'Magnificent Microbes' event at the Dundee Science Centre.

Each of the early career Prize Winners is an inaugural member of the RSE Young Academy, established in 2011 to bring together some of the most able and innovative young academics, entrepreneurs, artists and professionals in Scotland, with the aim of harnessing their creativity to develop a coherent and influential voice on behalf of the most talented people of their generation.

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For more information about this year's prize winners or the RSE Prizes, please contact:

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About the Royal Society of Edinburgh

The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE), Scotland's national academy, was founded in 1783 and the Fellowship today includes some of the best intellectual talent in academia, the professions and business. The RSE facilitates public debate, research programmes, educational projects and policy formulation. Its strength is its diversity and impartiality. In fulfilling its Royal Charter for the 'advancement of learning and useful knowledge', the RSE seeks to contribute to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of Scotland.