

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2012

British Pugwash update

This has been a busy year for British Pugwash, with activity on a number of fronts. Maintaining momentum in our work on **nuclear weapons and disarmament** is always a key concern, despite the current fall-off in public and political attention. The political focus on Trident renewal has reduced and the perceived success of the 2010 NPT quinquennial review may have diminished the level of concern about the future of that vital treaty. Pugwash is still making the urgent case for reducing and, in due course, eliminating nuclear weapons. We aim to keep the issue prominent in the public eye (especially among politicians and the younger generation) and to provide ideas on possible approaches to arms reduction and disarmament.

This year we have, among other things,

- participated with the Tricycle Theatre in London on their innovative “Nuclear Season” of plays, films and exhibitions relating to nuclear weapons.
- worked with the UK MoD on an audit of their programme on Verification of Dismantlement of Nuclear Weapons (report to be published shortly).
- collaborated with the Hay Festival on the Joseph Rotblat Memorial Lecture, given this year by Rose Gottemoeller, Acting Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security in the Obama Administration.

To ensure that Pugwash engages with current issues of both scientific and international political relevance, we have also been active in the area of **energy policy**. British Pugwash has established a working group to explore three possible UK energy “Pathways to 2050”. Our objective is to promote an intelligent and numerate public discussion of a highly complex policy topic, on which decisions are urgently needed. We hope to publish a report early next year. In parallel, we hosted an informative public talk by Mike Weightman, head of the UK Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), who led the UK team of experts visiting Fukushima shortly after the disaster, and then guided the ONR study on its implications for the UK nuclear industry.

We also seek to keep alive the collective memory of our roots. Work on the **history** of the Pugwash movement is ongoing, and this year we helped Oxford University Press stage the well-attended launch of Andrew Brown’s excellent biography of Joseph Rotblat, with speakers on Jo’s achievements.

During the coming year, we will remain active on all these fronts, and hope also to make progress towards the realisation of a British Pugwash dream – to establish a Disarmament Institute in the UK. This Institute would bring together UK and international expertise (governmental, academic and NGO) on the technical, political and economic issues involved in eventually achieving complete international elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

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Dates for your diary

2012

10th October British Pugwash discussion meeting: Dr Peter Weightman, “**Generating clean energy from sunlight and maintaining biodiversity**”

December Public meeting on nuclear issues (to be confirmed)

2013

January/February Launch of “**Pathways to 2050**”

March/April AGM

See the British Pugwash website for updates:

http://www.britishpugwash.org/upcoming_events_29_09.htm

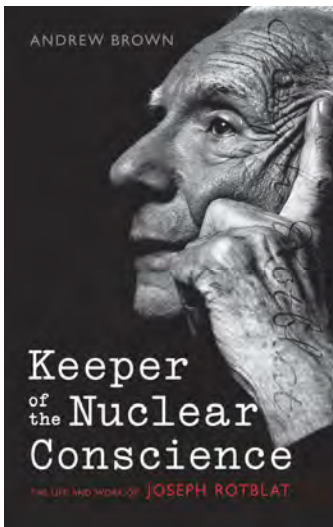
RECENT EVENTS 2012

Keeper of the Nuclear Conscience

British Pugwash, together with Oxford University Press, launched Andrew Brown's biography of Joseph Rotblat, *Keeper of the Nuclear Conscience* on 8 February at a packed [meeting](#) in University College London.

Andrew Brown describes Joseph Rotblat as a post-enlightenment visionary who will matter for generations to come. He outlined Rotblat's early life, his work with James Chadwick at Liverpool University and the experience of working on the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos in 1943/4. From

his return to the UK, having left the Manhattan Project, Rotblat's scientific work became interlinked with his lifelong effort to oppose further development of nuclear weapons. As a founding member of Pugwash, he participated in and later led its innovative work in influencing



international policy on weapons of mass destruction, using a combination of behind-the-scenes diplomacy and public awareness raising. In Brown's view, Rotblat's legacy is relevant today, when there are still many obstacles to the elimination of nuclear weapons. Brown concluded that Rotblat and his colleagues excelled in “slow history – painstaking deep analysis and explicit consideration of unintended consequences and the perceptions of others. Those charged with these onerous tasks in future would do well to study Rotblat's contributions, even when he was wrong.”

Paul Rogers, Professor of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, recalled Rotblat's key role in establishing Bradford's Department of Peace Studies and his inspirational relationship with younger generations. Looking back to the Cold War period, Professor Rogers argued that Pugwash had an important role in breaking the “bureaucratisation of homicide”, where officials and scientists became locked in a mindset dominated by the so-called “balance of terror”. Pugwash was later able to influence key voices around President Gorbachev, persuading him that Russia could not sustain this “balance of terror”. Today, Rogers considers that the world has moved from the “edge of the abyss” of nuclear confrontation to a “slippery slope” of proliferation and risks of war. This presents massive dangers where we will need “wisdom to exceed our own capacity for destruction”, in which movements such as Pugwash are so important.

Sandra Ionno Butcher, Director of the Pugwash History Project, highlighted the mix of pragmatism and idealism in the approaches developed by Joseph Rotblat and his Pugwash colleagues. They were pioneers of “Track-2 diplomacy” – bringing together influential people to move negotiations on when they become blocked at the highest levels. Rotblat, in particular, believed in public engagement wherever it was relevant, particularly with young people, leading him to develop the WMD Awareness Programme and PeaceJam UK, where young people work with Nobel laureates (see pages 3 & 4).

Lessons of Fukushima

Just prior to the first anniversary of the Fukushima earthquake and tsunami, Dr Mike Weightman, who is responsible for the independent regulation of the safety and security of the UK nuclear industry,

addressed a Pugwash [discussion meeting](#) at University College London. He outlined the results of his international fact-finding mission to Japan in May 2011 on behalf of the IAEA. In his October 2011 report on the issues raised for Japan, he particularly stressed the health, social and economic implications of the disaster. These included the loss of access to land, reduced energy sources and loss of confidence both in nuclear power as an energy source and the government's record in handling the crisis.

On the implications for the UK nuclear industry and the lessons to be learned, he argued that UK nuclear systems are different from those in Japan. He nonetheless stressed the importance of enhancing technical safety measures and preparedness, increasing transparency and enhancing the safety culture within the industry. He posed two final questions:

- Was the Fukushima disaster an institutional and cultural failure rather than a failure of science, engineering or people?
- Are the hazards and consequences of nuclear power more about the potential social, political and economic impact than physical harm to people?

The Tricycle Goes Nuclear

The Tricycle Theatre – a popular arts venue in North London – ran a “Nuclear Season” of plays, films and exhibitions relating to nuclear weapons. The WMD Awareness Programme collaborated extensively on various initiatives that included staging the [Get Up Stand Up! Show](#), a night of stand-up comedy and political messages in the same format as the Edinburgh and Glastonbury shows run previously. We also worked with the Tricycle to organise an installation of 1000 [Peace Cranes](#) in the foyer of the cinema.


The film [Dan Britt's animation](#), part of the WMD Awareness Programme's “Thousand Reasons” campaign, aims to engage people aged 18-30 in the debate on Trident renewal. The film has already reached almost 15,000 people through blogs and websites.

Joseph Rotblat Memorial Lecture

The 2012 [lecture](#) at the Hay Festival on 10 June featured [Dr. Rose Gottemoeller](#), Acting Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security in the Obama Administration and

Dr Rose Gottemoeller and Nick Gowing at Hay



US Chief Negotiator for the new START treaty. Gottemoeller honoured Joseph Rotblat's contribution to

disarmament, explaining that his tireless campaigning helped to establish nuclear abolition as an acceptable policy goal. She outlined progress made towards “nuclear zero” in recent years – most notably President Obama's Prague Agenda and the new START treaty. She used these as a platform to imagine how future technologies and social media might help overcome obstacles to global disarmament, particularly the problem of verification – ensuring that any one country doesn't “cheat”.

Lost in Translation

In Dublin, the WMD Awareness Programme ran a session entitled “Lost in Translation” at the July 2012 Euroscience Open Forum (a major science-focused event held every two years and attended by up to 5,000 people). It posed the question of why scientists frequently fail to get their messages across, and how we can frame our messages to create resonance with the intended audience. Karen Hallberg (Professor of Physics at the University of San Carlos de Bariloche and a Pugwash Council member) and Chris Rapley (formerly Director of the Science Museum and the British Antarctic Survey) addressed the issue from the perspectives of nuclear weapons and climate change respectively, while Ro Randall (a psychologically-trained psychotherapist) outlined some of the psychological issues involved. John Finney chaired a lively panel discussion, concluding with a well-received showing of one of our [Don't Buy It!](#) short films starring Alasdair McGowan.

International Pugwash Meetings

British Pugwash members have participated in a number of international meetings in 2012. In March in Paris, French Pugwash, together with UNESCO's Division of Ethics, Science and Society, organised the first workshop of the re-formed Standing Working Group on the Social Responsibility of Scientists. A major aim of the event, in which

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Robert Hinde and John Finney participated, was to look at areas of work that the group might most usefully tackle. A number of possibilities were identified, some of which related to issues also of interest to UNESCO's World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST). We look forward to future collaborative work with UNESCO on social responsibility issues.

The President of Pugwash, Jayantha Dhanapala, an ex officio member of COMEST, was unable to attend the Commission's meeting in July. John Finney participated in his stead. The meeting focused mainly on ethical issues relating to the environment, science and nanotechnologies, and climate change. It was also agreed that UNESCO's 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers should be reviewed and updated, a process on which Pugwashites are already being asked for input. Following discussion of possible future work, British Pugwash is putting forward a proposal for COMEST to discuss developing a framework of ethical principles relating to military robotics (e.g. armed drones).

In August, John Finney also took part in a Strategic Foresight Workshop on "A Secure World without Nuclear Weapons". Organised by Canadian Pugwash, it took place at the "home" of Pugwash – Thinkers' Lodge in Pugwash, Nova Scotia, where the first Pugwash workshop was held in 1957. Several scenarios for a nuclear-disarmed world in 2040 were examined under the guidance of a strategic foresight practitioner. The discussions raised a number of novel and interesting issues relating to the possible routes towards, and the maintenance of, a nuclear weapon free world.

The PeaceJam Education Programme

Adolfo Perez Esquivel, the Nobel Peace Laureate, who led our highly successful April 2012 conference at the University of Bradford, was one of thirteen laureates who together created the [PeaceJam UK](#) education programme. An artistic and immensely courageous man, he held 300 students and teachers transfixed as he described his life as one of the "Disappeared" in Argentina and answered the many questions from his young audience. Sadly, owing to cuts in university funding, this will be the last conference to be held at Bradford. The university has supported us from the beginning and we are most grateful to them for all the help they have given.

Work with the Rotary-funded Peace Scholars will go on. We have continued to develop our partnerships, particularly with the Rotary, whose members work with us and with teachers, delivering the curriculum wherever teachers do not have the time, and have enabled us to extend the programme into schools in Wales and Scotland, the Channel Islands and Northern Ireland. Now The Mount secondary school for girls in York is the first school to bring the PeaceJam Ambassadors curriculum into their sixth form studies, looking specifically at ideas on peace, violence, social justice and oppression as part of their overall ethos of global thinking.

Pugwash history archives

British Pugwash, together with the Pugwash History Project, has started a project to organise and digitise the extensive Pugwash photo collection, along with its newsletters, which document Pugwash activities from 1963 onwards. The work is being carried out by staff, Executive Committee members and volunteers. We hope that in future we will be able to put the photo database and a search facility for the Pugwash newsletters on the Pugwash History website. Special thanks are due to our interns – Nara Improta, Stuart Pallister and Ed Ross – without whose hard work this project would not have got started.

RESOURCES

British Pugwash

- *Verification of nuclear weapon dismantlement: Peer review of UK MoD programme* (forthcoming)
- *Pathways to 2050* (forthcoming): a document providing information on three possible UK energy strategies between now and 2050, aimed at promoting informed public debate leading to a rational decision, taking account of technical, economic, environmental and political factors.
- For updates on developments relating to the UK and US Trident replacement programmes follow Nick Ritchie's Twitter feed at <http://twitter.com/UKTrident>
- Pamphlet on the History of Pugwash <http://www.britishpugwash.org/documents/Pugwash-historyFINAL.pdf>
- Andrew Brown, *Keeper of the Nuclear Conscience: the life and work of Joseph Rotblat* Oxford University Press, 2012