

## **British Pugwash Newsletter: May 2024**

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### **1. Upcoming Hay Festival lecture, 1 June: Professor Carlo Rovelli**

This year's lecture features Professor Carlo Rovelli, who will speak on how 'Relations, not Entities, Make up the World.' The lecture will take place on Saturday 1 June, 1pm at the Wye Stage.

'From the mystery of quantum physics all the way to the horrors of disruptions to world peace, we make the mistake of thinking in terms of individual entities. We forget that entities are made by their relations. Italian theoretical physicist and writer Carlo Rovelli suggests that trying to make sense of the world in terms of relations can help us make better sense of reality on all its levels.'

To attend the lecture visit the [Hay Festival](#) website.

A video of the event will be posted on our [YouTube channel](#) soon afterwards.

### **2. Annual lecture: Professor Dame Athene Donald**

On 9 May the [Centre for the Study of Existential Risk](#) and British Pugwash hosted a public lecture by British Pugwash patron, [Professor Dame Athene Donald](#) entitled "Reflections on the legacy of Sir Joseph Rotblat in a time of nuclear risk." Prof Donald reflected on Sir Joseph Rotblat's enduring legacy in the face of increasing risks posed by nuclear weapons and the critical responsibilities of scientists in today's world.

A video of the event and interview will be posted on our [YouTube channel](#) shortly.

### **3. Webinar video: Dr James Acton on rising nuclear risks**

On 8 April Dr James Acton gave a talk on his latest research and analysis. He discussed rising tensions between the nuclear powers, and the prospects for a more peaceful world. In particular, he considered nuclear entanglement and escalation risks, and the impact of new technologies on nuclear decision-making.

Watch the video of the event [here](#).

#### **4. AGM and Annual Report**

The contents of the annual report for 2023 include:

- Developments in 2023 (in the US-Russian nuclear relationship/ in other states' nuclear weapons programmes / in the chemical and biological domains)
- Projects (Student and Young Pugwash / PeaceJam / Nuclear risk reduction / UK nuclear weapons)
- Meetings and events (including on: nuclear fusion / the Russia-Ukraine war / rising nuclear risks)
- Internal developments (Membership / Executive Committee)

Download the annual report [here](#).

#### **5. Student / Young Pugwash Update**

- 7th Annual SYP Conference: 'AI, Peace and Security'

The Student / Young Pugwash Conference was held at King's College London on 27 January. The subject of the conference was 'Artificial Intelligence: implications for peace and security'. We held this conference to encourage new thinking on the legal, political and technical questions associated with this topic, with a focus on ethical science.

A review of the conference and materials from the event, including: video / pictures / slides / presenter contact details, are available [here](#).

- Webinar: 'AI and nuclear matters'

This webinar, held on 29 March, featured two speakers. Ali Alkis (Hacettepe University, Turkey) spoke on 'Nuclear Security and Artificial Intelligence: Balancing Pros and Cons in Safeguarding Critical Assets.' Mariam Mumladze (Free University of Tbilisi, Georgia) spoke on 'Adapting Existing Arms Control Frameworks for the Dual-Use Challenges of AI in Nuclear Deterrence.'

Watch the video of this webinar [here](#).

- Negotiation Simulation

SYP UK joined with SYP Germany to hold their second joint event on 2 May, a 'Negotiation Simulation', which took place online via Zoom. The participants had to consider how they would come to an agreement on constructing a new port. In turn, they needed to find the right balance of individual gains and compromise for collective success, which can be difficult between six stakeholder groups with sometimes strongly opposing interests. Our event used a Harvard Law School Role-Play Simulation Exercise.

More information on the exercise is available [here](#).

#### **6. Recent articles and reports of interest**

- May

[Russian MFA](#), Foreign Ministry statement on the Russian Armed Forces' exercises held to practice for the use of non-strategic nuclear weapons

Tong Zhao, [Foreign Affairs](#), The Real Motives for China's Nuclear Expansion,

Daniel Schoolenberg, [The Diplomat](#), Is the US Finally Taking China's NFU Seriously?

[Reuters](#), Russia says Polish discussion on hosting US nuclear weapons is dangerous

- April

Jaroslav Adamowski, [Defense News](#), Polish leaders plan to talk things out on nuclear weapons

- March

Dieter Dettke, [The Globalist](#), Germany and a European Nuclear Deterrence Capability

[United Nations](#), Secretary-General's remarks to the Security Council - on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Dean Andromidas, [EIR](#), Putin Promotes Nuclear Power in Space, as Roscosmos Calls for Lunar NPP

Eliana Johns and Mackenzie Knight, [Federation of American Scientists](#), Details of Russia's nuclear modernization are inconsistent with warnings of vast nuclear expansion

Frank N. von Hippel, [Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists](#), Not Just Oppenheimer

David Kearns, [War on the Rocks](#), Strategic Myopia: The Proposed First Use of Tactical Nuclear Weapons to Defend Taiwan

[Arms Control Association](#), Plan A: How a Nuclear War Could Progress

[Reuters](#), Russia says it is considering putting a nuclear power plant on the moon with China

Daryl Kimball [Arms Control Association](#), U.S. Warns of New Russian ASAT Program

Kelsey Davenport, [Just Security](#), Enhancing Nuclear Transparency in Iran Could Help Prevent a Wider War

[British Pugwash](#), China's Call for a No-First-Use Agreement

Jonathan Tirone, [Bloomberg UK](#), Iran's Switch to Highly Sought Civil Nuclear Fuel Seen as a Ploy

- February

James Acton, [Pod Save the World](#), Should The U.S. be Concerned Putin & Russia Might Have Nukes in Space?

William Burr, Richard Lawless and Henry Sokolski, [Washington Post](#), Why the U.S. should start telling the whole truth about Israeli nukes

- January

Jeffrey M. Kaplow, [H-Diplo](#), Review: Signing Away the Bomb: The Surprising Success of the Nonproliferation Regime

Mark Trevelyan, [Reuters](#), Ukraine war drives shift in Russian nuclear thinking - study

[Russian MFA](#), Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's interview with TASS news agency

## **7. Obituary: Kit Hill (by John Finney and Tom Milne)**

Friend and scientific colleague of Jo Rotblat for nearly 50 years, Kit Hill made important contributions to the British Pugwash Group as secretary, treasurer and author of books and research reports. During the early 1990s, when nuclear disarmament was being explored as a practical possibility, he co-authored a report with Rudi Peierls, Sebastian Pease and Jo, examining the UK case (*Does Britain Need Nuclear Weapons*, British Pugwash Group, 1995). He later co-organised an International Pugwash Workshop *The Prospects of Nuclear Energy*, which resulted in a Pugwash monograph (*Nuclear Energy: Promise or Peril*, World Scientific Publishing, 1999).

Like Jo, Kit was a physicist who devoted most of his professional life to medical physics. With his early research years coinciding with the time of atmospheric nuclear weapons testing, it's likely that this motivated his interest in understanding the effects of radioactive fallout on the environment. He may well have been the only person to have been involved in measuring radioactivity in milk and in thyroid glands following both the Windscale fire of 1957 and, three decades later, the Chernobyl disaster.

Kit also made major contributions to the application of ultrasound in medical diagnosis, work that was recognised by several awards. For example, he was the joint winner of both the first and second 'Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology' prizes, and with his research group was awarded the 1982 British Institute of Radiology Barclay Prize. He was Head of the joint department of Medical Physics, Institute of Cancer Research and Royal Marsden Hospital Sutton. His eminent position in the field is evidenced by his Presidencies of the British Medical Ultrasound Society (1976-1978), the European Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine (1978-1984) and the British Institute of Radiology (1989-1990).

A regular presence in what he described as the "rather dingy" British Pugwash offices in Great Russell Street, Kit would provide a calm and considered voice in debate on complex issues, when often there were strongly-held and competing views, and his contributions were much valued by all. It was a long trip from his home in Devon to the Pugwash Office, however, and, at a certain point, Kit tried to resign his role as secretary and let someone else have a go. But as was often the case with those he liked and valued, Jo would not allow this for a very long time!

Kit's final published contribution to Pugwash was to write a short, personal biography of Jo Rotblat, which he titled *Professor Pugwash: The Man who Fought Nukes* (Halsgrove, 2008). He wrote the book, he said, to be read by people of all ages (including his, by then, six grandchildren) and it provides a fitting, final contribution to his efforts to promote the social responsibility of scientists and build a peaceful world.