

PRESS RELEASE

Monday 8 February 2016

Academic Excellence in Scotland Recognised with Announcement of RSE Prizewinners

Some of Scotland's most exceptional academic talent is being recognised as the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) reveals its 2016 Prizewinners. These awards are presented to individuals at the height of their discipline, as well as those who are showing great potential in the early stages of their career. Representing areas as diverse as particle physics, entrepreneurship and race equality, they highlight the vitality and scope of Scotland's academic sector.

Professor Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, President of the RSE, commented, "I offer my warmest congratulations to this year's talented Prizewinners. They, along with previous recipients, help to advance 'learning and useful knowledge', which is also part of the RSE's remit."

Professor Iain Stewart, Professor of Geosciences Communication, School of Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences, University of Plymouth, receives the RSE Senior Public Engagement Prize. He receives this accolade for his exceptional, wide-ranging public engagement through the medium of broadcasting and his work with school pupils and teachers. Professor Stewart is due to host an RSE and Irvine Bay public lecture at the end of February on the theme of "Scotland Rocks - a Tartan Tour of Planet Earth."

Dr Helen Bridle, Assistant Professor, School of Engineering & Physical Sciences, Heriot-Watt University, is awarded the RSE Innovator's Public Engagement Prize for her innovative and original contributions to public engagement as an ambassador for (young women) engineers and engineering. Her work, delivering the "Ingenious!" outreach scheme to schools and her publication in "Lab on a Chip" has led to increased public engagement activities across schools and science festivals.

Professor Anthony Doyle, SUPA, School of Physics & Astronomy, University of Glasgow, is awarded the RSE/Lord Kelvin Medal, a senior prize, for his outstanding contribution to the field of experimental particle physics and for his extensive public engagement activities. Through developing critical analysis methods, his work has led to major developments that have made the recent discovery of the Higgs Boson possible.

Professor Thomas Simpson FRS FRSE, Alfred Capper Pass Professor of Chemistry, School of Chemistry University of Bristol, receives the RSE/Sir James Black Medal, a senior prize, for his outstanding contribution to the biosynthesis of natural products as a pioneer in the interdisciplinary field of chemical biology.

Dr Asier Unciti-Broceta, PI/Group Leader, Cancer Research UK Edinburgh Centre, MRC Institute of Genetics & Molecular Medicine, University of Edinburgh, is awarded the RSE/Patrick Neill Medal, an early career prize, for his outstanding research work in biomedical technologies and innovative therapeutics through multi-disciplinary collaboration.

Dr Malcolm Macdonald, Reader of Space Technology, Department of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, University of Strathclyde, receives the RSE/Makdougall Brisbane Medal, an early career prize, for his outstanding research in the development and application of space mission systems to challenge conventional ideas and advance new concepts in the exploration and exploitation of space. Dr Macdonald is also a Member of the RSE Young Academy of Scotland.

Mr Adam Purvis, Founder and Director, Power of Youth, Edinburgh, receives the RSE/Henry Duncan Medal, an early career prize, for his outstanding work in promoting entrepreneurship across the globe to build a better world through business.

Dr Nasar Meer, Reader in Comparative Social Policy and Citizenship, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, University of Strathclyde, receives the RSE/Thomas Reid Medal, an early career prize, for his ground-breaking research work on Muslim identities, race equality and nationalism. In addition to this, he has an outstanding record in media and public engagement. Dr Meer is also a current RSE Personal Research Fellow.

ENDS.

For more information, contact RSE Press Officer, Hannah Smith on 0131 240 2792, hsmith@royalsoced.org.uk

Notes to Editors

About the RSE

The Royal Society of Edinburgh is a leading educational charity which operates on an independent and non-party-political basis to provide public benefit throughout Scotland. Established by Royal Charter in 1783 by key proponents of the Scottish Enlightenment, the RSE now has around 1600 Fellows from a wide range of disciplines. The work of the RSE includes awarding research funding, leading on major inquiries, informing public policy and delivering events across Scotland to inspire knowledge and learning.

James Weir Foundation Support

The public engagement awards presented to Professor Iain Stewart and Dr Helen Bridle are supported by the James Weir Foundation.