

RAMSAY TRUST NEWS



The Ramsay Trustees

The current members of the Ramsay Trustees are **Dr Elliot Finer (Chairman)**, **Professor Peter Atkins**, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford, **Dr Tony Bastock OBE**, Group Managing Director of Contract Chemicals Ltd, **Professor Richard Catlow**, Dean of the Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences at UCL, **Professor Robin Clark CNZM FRS**, Sir William Ramsay Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at UCL, and **Dr David Wilbraham**, Chairman and Non-Executive Director of Akers Biosciences.

In November 2010, **Mr Andrew Ladds**, Chief Executive of the Society of Chemical Industry retired his position as a Ramsay Trustee. A new Trustee will be appointed in due course.

The Ramsay Advisory Council

The current members of the Ramsay Advisory Council are as follows:

Professor Richard Catlow FRS, Dean, Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, UCL (*Chairman*)

Professor Eleanor Campbell, FRS, Professor of Physical Chemistry, University of Edinburgh

Dr Elliot Finer (*ex officio* as Chairman of the Trustees)

Professor Sue Gibson, FRSC, Professor of Chemistry, Imperial College London

Professor Anthony Legon FRS, Professor of Physical Chemistry, University of Bristol

Professor William Motherwell FRS, Alexander Williamson Professor of Chemistry, UCL

Professor David Parker FRS, Professor of Chemistry, Durham University

Professor Ivan Parkin, Professor of Chemistry and Head of Department, UCL

Professor Martin Poliakoff CBE, FRS, Research Professor of Chemistry, University of Nottingham

In May 2010 **Professor Steve Caddick**, Charles Vernon Professor of Organic Chemistry and former Head of the Chemistry Department at UCL stood down as a member of the Advisory Council when he took up his new post as Vice-Provost (Enterprise) at UCL.

The Annual Ramsay Dinner

Dr Elliot Finer, Chairman of the Trustees, was host at the 79th annual Ramsay Memorial Dinner, held at UCL on 13 July 2010. Dr Finer proposed the Loyal Toast and the toast to Sir William Ramsay.

The Guest Speaker for the occasion was **Professor Dave Garner, FRS**, President of the Royal Society of Chemistry and Professor of Biological Inorganic Chemistry at Nottingham University, who proposed the toast to "Ramsay Memorial Fellows Past and Present".

Dr Russell Minns, British Ramsay Fellow 2008-10, responded on behalf of the Ramsay Fellows.

This year's Ramsay Dinner — the 80th — will take place at UCL on the evening of Tuesday 28 June 2011. Please contact the Acting Executive Secretary — Karen Wishart, Academic Services Department, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT (email: k.wishart@ucl.ac.uk; tel: 020 7679 8877) — for further details.

Award of British Ramsay Fellowships

In 2010, British Ramsay Memorial Fellowships were awarded to the following:

Dr Matthew Habgood - to undertake a research project entitled "Inclusion of polarization effects in theoretical models of intermolecular forces", under the mentorship of Professor Sally Price and co-sponsored by the Department of Chemistry at UCL.

Dr Bao Nguyen – to undertake a research project entitled "Activation of carbon dioxide by amines" under the mentorship of Professor Andrew Livingston based at and co-sponsored by the Department of Chemistry at Imperial College London.

Dr Christopher Rennick – to undertake a research project entitled "Studies of the reactivity of ultracold molecules with ions in an ion trap" under the mentorship of Professor Timothy Softley based in and co-sponsored by the Department of Chemistry at the University of Oxford.

Award of British Ramsay Fellowships in 2011

This year, a total of 30 applications were received for Ramsay Fellowships, and, following the meeting of the Ramsay Advisory Council in February 2011, this number was reduced to a shortlist of candidates.

The Chairman of the Trustees is currently engaged in negotiations with co-sponsors and it is likely that three co-sponsored Fellowships will be awarded this year as in the previous year. These awards will be confirmed in due course.

The Trust would be pleased to hear from readers who might be able to use their contacts with industry or charities or other bodies to identify any potential co-sponsors for British Ramsay Fellowships. Please contact the Acting Executive Secretary – Karen Wishart, Academic Services Department, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1E

6BT (email: k.wishart@ucl.ac.uk; tel: 020 7679 8877) - if you feel that you may be able to help us in this regard.

Current British Ramsay Fellows 2009-11

Dr James Bull is currently in the second year of his Ramsay Fellowship, based in and co-sponsored by the Department of Chemistry at Imperial College London. The title of his research project is "Synthesis and functionalisation of haloaziridines as building blocks for organic synthesis".

Dr Russell Minns is also in the second year of his Ramsay Fellowship, based in and co-sponsored by the Department of Chemistry at UCL. His research project is entitled "Femtosecond molecular dynamics of model chemical reactions".

Dr Geoffrey Hyett completed the first year of his Ramsay Fellowship at UCL but resigned to take up a permanent lectureship position at the University of Leeds. The Trustees wish him every success in his new position.

Current Overseas Ramsay Fellows

Dr Niek Heuts is in the second year of his Netherlands Ramsay Fellowship (2009-11). Dr Heuts is based at the Manchester Interdisciplinary Biocentre at the University of Manchester and is fully funded by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The Ramsay Trust has been informed that the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences is no longer able to provide funding for Ramsay Fellowships. Therefore there will be no further awards for the Netherlands Ramsay Fellowship for the foreseeable future.

Mr Reed Roberts and **Ms Deidre Clelands** are the current Honorary New Zealand Ramsay Fellows, who both took up their three-year Fellowships as PhD students in the Department of Chemistry and the Department of Physics respectively at the University of Cambridge on 1 October 2008. Mr Roberts' and Ms Cleland's Fellowships are tenable for the duration of their PhD studies at the University of Cambridge and are concurrent with Woolf Fisher Scholarships.

News concerning former Ramsay Fellows

Obituaries

The Trustees note, with sadness, the death of **Dr John G COLLINGWOOD**, HonDSc, FEng, FICHEM Director, Unilever plc and Unilever N.V., 1965-77, and Head of Research Division, Unilever, 1961-77. Dr Collingwood was also a former Ramsay Trustee.

The Trustees also note, with sadness, the death of **Dr Ronald Henry Hackman**, Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, on 27 May 2010 in Canberra. Dr Hackman was a

Ramsay Fellow from 1947-1949 at the University of Cambridge and spent many years investigating the chemistry of the insect cuticle. He had an international reputation in his field and his research was applied to insect control throughout the world.

Who's Who of Ramsay Fellows

There was a good response to last year's request for information from former Ramsay Fellows. If you would like to be included in the former Fellows' database the form is available electronically on the Ramsay Trust web pages at: www.ucl.ac.uk/ramsay-trust and can be mailed to us at the address provided on the website or by email to k.wishart@ucl.ac.uk.

We are pleased to profile two former Ramsay Fellows: Professor J. Edgar Anderson, a British Ramsay Fellow from 1968 – 1970 and Dr Alaric Naiman, a United States Ramsay Fellow from 1979-1980.

A Look inside the Ramsay Trust By J. Edgar Anderson



In the Autumn of 1967, I was coming to the end of four years' postdoctoral research abroad, firstly as a Salters' Fellow at the University of Strasbourg and then as a Harkness Fellow at California Institute of Technology, and I was hoping to get a lecturer appointment in some British University.

My CalTech host Jack Roberts was very active on my behalf and wrote to many department heads, one of them being Sir Ronald Nyholm at University College London, Chairman of the Advisory Panel at that time. There are still some who remember how enthusiastic Ron could be about what he thought was a good idea, and since the department had just lost an NMR spectroscopist, which I had some claim to being, things clicked into place. He had the inspiration to suggest that I apply for the Ramsay Fellowship, and do two more years full-time research, and there would be a lectureship thereafter, in 1970. That all worked out.

My *alma mater* was Glasgow University, so I had a particular awareness of Ramsay that other chemists might not have had. I had been taught by some of the early Glasgow Ramsay Fellows who figure in the list of Fellows that the Trust circulates, and who had clearly chosen the teaching pathway, single-mindedly. The chemistry laboratories were new since Ramsay's time in Glasgow, but I did take the Ordinary Bacteriology class in the building of Anderson's College where Ramsay had his first paid employment in 1872.

I progressed through the academic grades in my career at University College London, and retired as Professor of Organic Chemistry in 2005, at which point the Department was rated as Grade five, starred, in the University Assessment Exercise, and I had published over one hundred and twenty papers.

One lucky consequence of being at University College is that I became involved in the administration of the Ramsay Memorial Fellowships Trust from 1975 to 2004, as Scrutineer, the person who reads all applications received and the comments of the candidates referees, and then, consulting as necessary, draws up a short list for the Advisory Panel to consider. The Scrutineer is in attendance at Advisory Panel and at Trustees meetings, and so has a very good view of all aspects of the operation of the Trust. Much happened in the time that I was involved with these two committees, but I shall draw attention to one important development for each.

The 1970s and the first half of the eighties were marked by high inflation which presented a challenge for all Charity trustees. For the Ramsay Trust, salaries for Fellows increased rapidly in terms of pounds, yet income from conventionally rather conservative investments did not keep pace. In one year, the Trustees decided not to offer a Fellowship, so challenged was the Trust's income. The eventual solution found was to develop co-sponsorship of Fellowships with other charities, universities, and chemical companies. This was totally due to the work of the Chairman of the Trustees at the time, Sir Denis Rooke, and this is a strategy which largely continues at present, and the number of Fellowships awarded has increased in recent years.

From the advisory Committee's point of view, the last twenty or so years has seen the Government and the Royal Society offering well-funded advanced fellowships to allow young chemists to spend five years doing research before taking up an academic position. This was the need – Senior Fellowships - that the Trust had always been trying to meet for Chemistry, and these new schemes were much better resourced. Given that such Government funding is for British and EEC citizens, the Commonwealth-wide purview of the Trust is a distinguishing feature.

There is much more that any account of the years I spent as Scrutineer should cover, but these are particularly interesting developments. The other characteristic of working at University College is that I have almost invariably attended the Ramsay Dinner with my wife Eleanor, and I have had the chance to meet new Fellows shortly after their appointment, and to meet older Fellows again, as they choose to attend, all of which enhances for me the idea of Fellowship.

In the shadow of giants

By Alaric Naiman



The long year of my Ramsay Fellowship brought surprising perspectives. A DPhil candidate shares his career plan: City banking. High-tech investment? No, just banking. Why undertake the rigorous path of a chemistry degree? Because it trains the mind as well as any other, and better than most.

Impressed at his choice, I felt validated in my own. Midway through Berkeley's PhD programme, my attraction to a long-anticipated academic career was declining. Science delighted, but not the sacrifices needed to secure an ivory perch. Teaching gratified; less so those students for whom my beloved subject was a reviled requirement. Seeing the strong but tortuous link between results and social benefit – economic, political, spiritual – I leaned toward industrial R&D.

Then MLH Green arrived from Oxford with a dazzling lecture on metal-vapour synthesis. With divergent job offers and no clear direction, I was fortunate in both a postdoctoral fellowship and Malcolm's welcome for a year at the ICL.

Culture shock: everyone so clever and self-possessed. Laboratories hoary and budgets slim. But the skill, technique, insight, collegiality... how British inspiration so often seeds American innovation. I was humbled, informed and a little enlightened.

With dodgy equipment, a romantic turn and other impedimenta, my work bore little direct fruit. But I learned, enjoyed, and perhaps grew enough to justify NATO's investment. One lasting regret: I'd come to test the notion that carbon vapour might prove as interesting as metals. And it does, but we missed C₆₀ by a whisker. (The one, perhaps, that kept shorting our electron gun.)

Home again, to Polaroid's then-thriving R&D laboratories. It was a heady time of flowing funds and fascinating problems. I delved into molecular design of ferroelectric liquid crystals, laser imaging, more. But that once-great firm was in decline, and of what we accomplished, not much emerged into the real world.

Then on to managing tri-national R&D efforts in a smaller company making electronics chemicals, those oils in which chips are cooked. An exercise in transience: however vital our contributions to microcircuitry, little that we made remained in finished products. And I found that even in thriving companies, much of money, time and effort are wasted, if the metric be shareholder value or consumer and societal benefit.

So after a dozen years, I emigrated again, joining a boutique consulting firm in another British college town. The under-specified job gave scope to explore a great range of industrial and consumer products and processes: chemistry, materials science, applied physics, medical engineering and systems integration. It was an intensive practical education, penetrating core technical problems and expanding opportunities for a hundred firms worldwide; and an ecologist's dream of competing, interpenetrating, occasionally symbiotic and ever-changing sociotechnical systems.

From the coign of applied scientist, I was drawn into strategic planning, business process improvements and organizational culture change. These fuzzier disciplines built to a parallel career in management training, opening global doors that technical credentials alone rarely can.

Frequent flying wore thin, and one wants time to write and reflect. Hanging a virtual sign, I went out on my own (with some congenial associations), and for a decade have continued with the same sorts of work, often *pro bono* for educational and charitable institutions. Like the metal-patterning formulations I once helped to create, little I achieve sees daylight. Yet sometimes one is privileged to serve a seminal or midwife role in the birth of that which is good and useful. And it is pleasant to find, ever and again, the extent to which scientific epistemology and engineering pragmatics are directly relevant to the most ethereal of social issues. Even banking.

This arc might dismay purer scientists. But that year by the Cherwell transformed my understanding in valued ways, fertilizing further evolutions in the decades since. I remain grateful for this opportunity, and send respects to my more academic colleagues among the Ramsay ranks. While hoping one day to dine with you in London, I invite any passing through New England to stop for a visit and a pint of what passes here for ale. My best to all.

Alaric Naiman lives in Massachusetts, grows magnolias, practices Zen, and does a bit of consulting as TransitionStates.com.