

# BroadSheet

The newsletter of the John Snow Society

**RSPH**  
ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH  
VISION, VOICE AND PRACTICE

SUMMER 2011



## Pumphandle Lecture 2011

**"Epidemiology for the Bottom Billion - where there is not even a pump handle to remove!"** Hans Rosling

Thursday 8th September – 5:15 pm

John Snow Hall, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine



Professor Hans Rosling trained in statistics and then medicine at Uppsala University in Sweden, receiving his medical degree in 1974. After further training in public health at St Johns Medical College in Bangalore, India, and in international aid and disaster relief, and in nutrition and tropical medicine in Sweden, he worked as a District Medical Officer in northern Mozambique from 1979 to 1981. While in Mozambique he came across a new disease, called "konzo" by local people, to which he devoted ten years of research, tracking outbreaks of the disease in poor rural areas of five countries of Africa. His collaborations ranged from economics to plant genetics, and traced the causes of the disease to a combination of malnutrition and high dietary intake of cyanide from natural toxins in bitter cassava roots.

He taught postgraduate courses at Uppsala from 1983 to 1996, and then moved to a professorship at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, where he was Head of the Division of International Health from 2001 to 2006. Over this period he developed a unique method of presenting data on complex patterns and trends, for which he has become internationally famous, and which he has presented to many audiences, including at the UN, the Davos World Economic Forum and TED lectures. He now divides his time between the Karolinska and the Gapminder Foundation which he set up with his son and daughter-in-law, developing the [www.gapminder.org](http://www.gapminder.org) website which is visited by more than 2 million people annually. He was listed as one of 100 leading global thinkers by Foreign Policy Magazine in 2010.

The Lecture will be followed by the Society's Annual General Meeting, to be held at the John Snow Public House (at the corner of Broadwick and Cambridge Streets, in Soho), to which all are invited....

The Lecture will be recorded and placed on the Society's website.

## Pumphandle Lecture 2010

**"Sapiens, Synergy, Solidarité, Success"**

Reported by Dr Rosalind Stanwell-Smith

Society members and guests assembled in the John Snow Lecture Theatre last September 8th for a stimulating set of 'S' topics from our 18th Pumphandle Lecturer, Dr. David Nabarro. Dr. Nabarro's wide ranging career in international health has included leading Roll Back Malaria and Health Action in Crises for the WHO and coordinating work on influenza and global food security for the UN.

The intriguing title related to his theme of describing how organizations, such as the WHO and UN, approach the many-faceted challenges of a "pluri-polar world", through informed judgment (sapience), seeking a whole better than the sum of different parts (synergy), commitment to equity (solidarité) and tracking the progress of defined outcomes (success). A tall order and with ambitious goals, such as halving the proportion of people with income less than \$1 a day, or those who suffer from hunger, by 2015. Such targets, set at the Millennium, cannot be achieved by 'business as usual', nor, on current trends, by 2015: but the goals have allowed development of a framework to divide a seemingly impossible task into smaller, achievable segments. Using the Global Food Security Crisis strategy as his main example, Dr. Nabarro cited the use of low cost interventions, coordinated across different national programmes in agriculture, social protection, health and education.

The 'SUN' (Scaling-up Nutrition) initiative engages the various organizations and sponsors through showing economic benefit from investment in nutrition as well as in basic hygiene and capacity development. The detail involves more 'S's to convert concepts into tangible results, for example solid support from stakeholders, sound operational scale and sustainable funding. Far from simple in practice, but he was able to report progress with interventions such as maternal schooling in Brazil, community based nutrition schemes in Ethiopia, doubling of iodized salt consumption in Senegal and decreased childhood anaemia in Peru. Support for any country requires a "demonstrated willingness to act", so part of the task is in assessing both severity of a country's problem and how to develop readiness to work with the multi-level planning involved. At the international level this also means a greater commitment to global advocacy and action.



Dr David Nabarro, the 2010 Pumphandle Lecturer, following through with the traditional handle removal gesture, to close the lecture.

Working through the steps involved, Dr. Nabarro acknowledged the current gaps in helping people and their countries through this eminently logical framework. Just as reliable sanitation and safe water supply require much more than removal of a pumphandle (it took around another 50 years in the UK), this talk demonstrated that small steps are important in the "road map" to sustainability. Success may depend not just on coordinating these steps but making sure international leaders notice and invest in them. In our not so wise and uncoordinated world, the 'SUN' initiative gives hope of progress. The slides from Dr. Nabarro's superb lecture are available on the Society's website.

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# Encounters at the Pub

Members will be aware of the Society's constitutional encouragement to visit the John Snow Pub on Broadwick Street on any visit to London. The Pub's new manager, Carla Cookson (a member of the Society!), welcomes members.

As a consequence of the Society's growth, one is increasingly likely to find other members from around the world on a visit to the Pub. One way to make such contacts is by asking for the current guestbook (normally kept behind the flap in the ground floor bar). If it is not there, it is most likely with a member, probably in the upstairs bar. You are encouraged to seek them out and make new friendships with your many colleagues.... and of course to sign the book.

Facsimile photocopies of old guestbooks, and a complete set (all six editions) of Society coffee mugs, are kept in a cabinet provided by the Society, in the upstairs bar. Should members wish to browse the old books, they should request the key from Carla or from whomever is behind the bar. Once again we note with sadness the disappearance of the first guestbooks, covering the 1960s and 1970s – should anyone learn of their whereabouts, please encourage their return to the Society and Pub.



John Snow Public House on Broadwick Street (note – this was Broad Street in 1854). The hallowed red granite kerbstone is just visible between various legs on the right in this photo



Dr Snow is temporarily reincarnated in the form of David Clapham



David Clapham with his daughter Catherine Clapham who wrote the script for the event.

## Happy Birthday John Snow

This March the JSS was honoured to be invited to a re-enactment of John Snow's 37th Birthday party (in 1850). Dr Snow, who had temporarily been reincarnated in the form of long time society member David Clapham, presented his latest idea on the causes of Cholera. Society members slipped easily into the role of Victorian Miasma theorists and passionately argued against John Snow and his outlandish ideas.

Snow talked to the society about his upbringing in York, his medical apprenticeships in Newcastle and his life as a London doctor. He explained his tireless work in the field of epidemiology and his hope that soon he would have definitive proof that Cholera is a waterborne disease.

Dr Snow admirably took questions from all the Miasma theorists in the room and fought his case well, though whether anyone was convinced by his outlandish and implausible theories has yet to be seen.

David has been looking for an opportunity to dress up as John Snow for many years. He is waiting eagerly for the call from Hollywood inviting him to take the lead in 'John Snow: The Movie'.

## Heidelberg Chapter report

The Heidelberg Chapter of the John Snow Society gathered around an unmistakable Broad Street pump after it was discovered behind the University's Institute of Public Health on Monday June 27, 2011. How it got there remains unknown, but its appearance is thought to be associated with JSS member Oona Campbell's visit to the department from the LSHTM that week – though some worried it might be associated with the ongoing and as yet unresolved E coli outbreak in Germany. Members arrived bearing their mugs, intending to collect water samples for analysis. Fortunately the pumphandle had already been removed, and bean sprouts were nowhere in sight. Mugs were raised in celebration and used for tea instead!



Heidelberg Chapter meeting - Sabine Gabrysch holds her third edition mug, next to Oona Campbell, to left of pump.

## Nordic Chapter report

The Nordic Chapter of the John Snow Society held its 2011 general assembly in Drammen, Norway in June during the Norwegian Drinking Water Conference. This is arranged every second year in between the Nordic Drinking Water Conferences.

The Chapter gave its 2011 Pumphandle Award to Ivar D. Kalland, former director of the Bergen Water and Sewage Works, for his outstanding and enthusiastic work to promote good and safe drinking water with special focus on security and emergency preparedness in Norway, and for his contributions to the International Water Association.

During more than 30 years Ivar Kalland worked out 4 masterplans for the development of the water supply system of Bergen, and has been in charge of building one of Norway's most advanced and resilient drinking water systems.

He has contributed enthusiastically in development of Norwegian Water, the National Association in the water sector, and has been a member of the National Committee of the IWA. He has been recognized for his resolute and skilled handling of the waterborne outbreak of giardiasis which occurred in Bergen in 2004. This year's Nordic Pumphandle awardee is an evaluated, respected and honored member of the Norwegian and Scandinavian drinking water sector, widely known for his knowledge determination and good sense of humour.



Ivar Kalland holding the pumphandle and certificate for the 2011 award of the Nordic Chapter of the John Snow Society

## John Snow Bicentennial Conference

**"The Lasting Impact of John Snow –  
Epidemiology Today and Tomorrow"**

April 11-12, 2013

First announcement

The John Snow Society and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine announce their decision to hold an international conference to celebrate the 200th anniversary of John Snow's birth. This will be held at the LSHTM in London, and will feature an array of prominent speakers who will be asked to link Snow's work with the most important themes of epidemiology today and tomorrow.

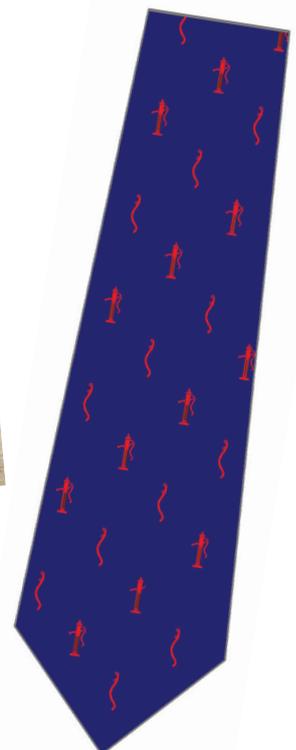
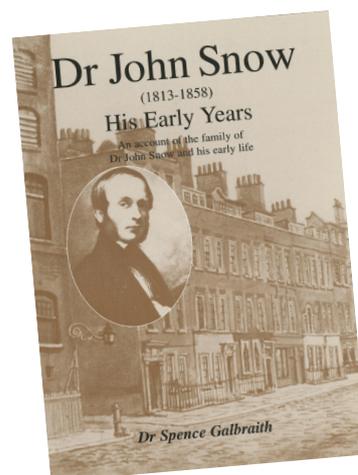
Satellite meetings and events are also planned. Members with foresight may wish to plan their 2013 itineraries accordingly...

## Exclusive to JSS Members

The ever popular silk ties are still available to members for £16 (£12 if collected in person). The Society also offers silver pump motif lapel pins, mugs and the book "John Snow: His Early Years" by Dr Spence Galbraith, available at the special price of £5.

Discount is available for bulk purchases.

Please contact [johnsnowsociety@rsph.org.uk](mailto:johnsnowsociety@rsph.org.uk) for more details.



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# Another Author looks to the John Snow story for inspiration

Children's author and John Snow Society member, Deborah Hopkinson, is currently researching a historical fiction novel for 10-14-year-olds entitled *The Trail of Coffins*, based on Dr. John Snow and the 1854 cholera epidemic. The (fictional) protagonist will be a boy hired to help John Snow with his menagerie. "I'm excited to do research at the Wellcome Library and walk the same streets that Dr. Snow did. And, of course, I take my

responsibility to visit the John Snow Pub seriously so would love to meet fellow members and learn as much as possible!" Based in the USA, she'll be in London August 1-7th and Deborah plans to be at the John Snow Pub. If you would like to meet Deborah please get in touch, her email is [deborahhopkinson@yahoo.com](mailto:deborahhopkinson@yahoo.com). She'll also be getting a temporary UK mobile number.

## John Snows everywhere!

Because of his iconic status in epidemiology and anaesthesiology, Dr John Snow's name appears in many places - not only as a Pub in Soho, and the name of the main lecture theatre at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the building which houses the Royal Society for Public Health on Mansell Street in London, but also a College in Durham University, and the building which houses the National Health Service offices in County Durham... and as awards given by the American Public Health Association and by the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland... and "incorporated" as a well known public health consulting organisation. And then there are the Pumphandle awards given by the Nordic Chapter of the John Snow Society, and by the the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, and by the Milestone Foundation.... We suspect that the Society may be in part responsible for a recent proliferation of such eponyms, for which we do not apologise. Members who know of other sites commemorating JS are encouraged to inform us.

## From the Society's Scrapbook

Helen Rees upstairs in the John Snow, stopping off on her way to Chair the WHO SAGE.



## John Snow Committee

Nominations sought from enthusiasts

**According to our constitution, the society's policies are set by a Steering Committee, and proposals are placed before the Annual General Meeting, which takes place at the Pub, following the annual Pumphandle Lecture.**

Current Committee members are: Prof Paul Fine (Hon Pumphandle President), Dr Ros Stanwell Smith (Hon Pumphandle Secretary), Prof Sandy Cairncross, Dr Mary O'Mahony, Prof Jimmy Whitworth, Dr Dilys Morgan, Dr John Watson, Dr Adrian Padfield, Prof Andy Hall, Dr Sabine Gabrysch. Members are appointed for three years, terms are staggered, and at least two current members step down each year (SC and JWh in 2011). Members standing down may put themselves forward for re-election.

Nominations are invited for membership on the Committee. Only Society members in good standing (with an intact mug\*) are eligible. A valid nomination will consist of a statement of no more than 54 words by the nominee, indicating eagerness to serve and vision for the Society. Nominations received by the Society's secretariat ([dhunter@rsph.org.uk](mailto:dhunter@rsph.org.uk)) by 1st September will be eligible for vote at the AGM.

*\* Members are reminded that broken mugs (and hence membership standing), and lost membership cards, may be replaced at a cost of £5 and £2 respectively (plus postage).*

supported by



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