

Exploring future challenges

The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)'s 21st Century Challenges project aims to improve public understanding of, and engagement with, some of the big issues likely to affect our lives and society in the coming years.

Geographical thinking and solutions are at the heart of a number of key challenges affecting places, societies, environments and livelihoods, both locally and globally, and the series encourages its audiences – both online and in person – to think from those challenges from new and unique perspectives. The project, now in its fourth year, will feature panel discussions and an informative website with interviews, blogs and biographies covering a wide range of issues.

Topics covered to date have included the role of digital technologies in offering the countries of Africa realistic economic, educational and development opportunities. Closer

Lastminute.com Martha Lane Fox and several MPs including Vince Cable and Hilary Benn.

This year, the series is set to reach a larger and broader audience online. The Society will be opening up its archive of talks from the 21st Century Challenges series under a Creative Commons licence, which supports the idea of universal access to research, education and culture on the internet. Talks from the series will be released on the Society's YouTube channel throughout the year, and anyone who wants to can share them on their own websites.

The series continues on 7 March with a discussion about global health in the 21st century. The event will explore how societies can strike the balance between preventing viral outbreaks and pandemics and trying to eradicate established diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS, as well as looking at how the nature of these threats is changing.



to home, the project has also explored the ways in which British society is adapting to an ageing population, particularly in terms of the effects on healthcare and social services, potential gaps in the job market and the age of retirement itself.

The series was launched in 2008 by Kofi Annan and Sir Bob Geldof, who discussed the major challenges facing the countries of Africa. There have since been more than 18 panel debates with more than 60 keynote speeches by some of the leading thinkers from across academia, NGOs, science, business and politics. Notable contributors to the series have included the BBC's Evan Davis and Rory Cellan-Jones, founder of the *Big Issue*. John Bird, chief executive of the Eden Project. Tim Smit, scientist Professor Robert Winston, founder of

The knowledge and experience of the panellists is typical of the calibre of all the 21st Century Challenges' speakers. Dr W Ian Lipkin is director of the Center for Infection and Immunity at Columbia University in New York and a leading authority in disease eradication. Dr Marie Charles is founder of Global Medic Force, an organisation that transfers clinical skills to healthcare workers in the developing world. And Professor Peter Piot, director of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and former under secretary-general of the UN, has made a significant contribution to our understanding of HIV infection in Africa. Attendees will get the chance to pose questions to the panel.

'Every event in the Challenges series has engaged the audiences with a range of complex issues in a way that helps them both understand the challenge, and consider new approaches to finding positive solutions,' says the project's coordinator, David Over. 'The key to the success of 21st Century Challenges has been the variety of perspectives and depth of understanding that our speakers and online interviews bring to the big issues faced by the world today.'

■ Shell supports the Society's 21st Century Challenges series. For more information, visit www.21stcenturychallenges.org



The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) promotes enjoyment and understanding of our world. Membership is open to all. You may use geography in your profession, have a thirst for geographical knowledge or a passion for travel. *Geographical* is the Society's magazine and is available as part of membership. To find out more, call the Membership Office on 020 7591 3080



ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY (WITH IBG)

SELECTION OF EVENTS FOR MARCH

1 March, 6pm

Scott of the Antarctic and Manchester: The untold story
(Lecture, Manchester)

Dr Max Jones is a leading polar historian, the author of *The Last Great Quest* and the editor of the Oxford World's Classics edition of Robert Falcon Scott's last journals. In this groundbreaking lecture, he will reveal for the first time the leading role that the citizens of Manchester played in Scott's last expedition. Joint lecture with the Manchester Histories Festival 2012.

For further details, visit www.rgs.org/cheshireandnorthwales

6 March, 7pm

The role of geography in conservation
(Lecture, Newton Abbot)

More than ever before, our physical and cultural world is threatened by human activities. Heather Viles, professor of biogeomorphology and heritage conservation at the University of Oxford, shows how geographers around the world find solutions to problems of conservation.

For further details, visit www.rgs.org/southwest



7 March, 7.30pm

Global health in the 21st century
(21st Century Challenges, London)

How can societies strike a balance between combating viral pandemics and attempting to eradicate established diseases such as malaria? Speakers include Dr W Ian Lipkin, director of the Center for Infection and Immunity at Columbia University, Professor Peter Piot, director of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and Dr Marie Charles, an innovator in global healthcare and founder of Global Medic Force.

Tickets: Members £7, non-members £10. Visit www.rgs.org/whatson or call 020 7591 3100

16 March, 7.30pm

The 737 Challenge
(Lecture, Worcester)

A talk by Richard Parks who last year became the first person to climb the highest mountain on each of the world's continents and stand at the South Pole, North Pole and the summit of Mount Everest in the same calendar year. Joint event with King's Himalayan Club.

For details, visit www.rgs.org/midlands



21 March, 7pm

Discovering Sri Lanka
(Travel event, London)

An informative evening for those who are interested in visiting Sri Lanka for the first time. Discover more at the exhibitor stands and ask questions of our expert panel, which will include the high commissioner, His Excellency Dr Chris Nonis, and Royston Ellis, author of the Bradt guide to Sri Lanka, who has lived in the country for more than 30 years.

Tickets: Members £10, non-members £15. Price includes wine and an information pack. To book tickets, visit www.rgs.org/travel or call 020 7591 3100

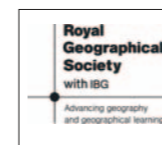
26 March, 6.30pm

Madagascar's spiny forest
(Lecture, London)

Dry spiny forest in the southern part of this wonderful island is home to numerous endemic species, including the endearing ring-tailed lemur. Thomas Elmquist looks at loss and regeneration, and the role of social institutions in this fascinating forest.

RGS-IBG members and one guest.

Remember wwtwo bring your membership card



The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) is a leading world centre for geographers and geographical learning. One of our aims is to stimulate the awareness and enjoyment of the subject to a diverse range of people.

Geography is about the understanding of the people, places and environments of our world, the processes by which they are changing, and the interconnections between them – both locally and globally.

The Society carries out a wide range of activities to support these aims. We support research groups; promote geography within the national curriculum; produce scholarly publications; provide training in scientific field techniques and expeditions; offer information through our large map collection, library and picture library, and engage the wider public through our popular national lecture series.

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