Chair’s Report by Peter Brooker

This has plainly been a very successful year. Financially, the Society is stable and we have been able to hold a well-attended event at Abergavenny on Raymond Williams’s *People of the Black Mountains* and to support a additional event hosted by the University of Brighton at Hastings on Robert Tressell’s *Ragged Trousered* (read ‘Ars’d’, Williams advised) *Philanthropists*. *Key Words 9* is out, in circulation, and heading your way, and we are holding a second postgraduate essay competition. In short, it’s all green shoots – with no unearned bonuses, no haircut, hacking, or sign of austerity in sight.

Thanks on all these achievements to the members of the Executive, to the *Key Words* editorial board for their collective acumen and professionalism, to Liz Allen and helpers for orchestrating the day at Abergavenny and to Dave Laing for representing RWS at Hastings. And thanks and all praise to Jennifer Birkett for her tireless work, well over and above the job description of Treasurer.

This issue of the Newsletter includes reports on the above events. What I might also mention is the present progress on the organisation of the Raymond Williams Archive held at the University of Swansea. The papers were first gathered together in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the process of cataloguing by Katrina Legg has proceeded at Swansea since 2010. A report is now in preparation, edited by Steve Woodhams, to synchronise with the publication of the catalogue and as a prelude to the official opening of the archive. The varied materials including drafts of key books, plays and unpublished novels held in the archive will be of tremendous academic and public interest and a rich resource for further research.

This year’s AGM will also be a rather special one. We are delighted that Anthony Barnett has agreed to give this year’s annual lecture. It is particularly fitting that his talk will be combined with the launch of new editions of Williams’s *The Long Revolution* (with a Preface by Anthony), in this book’s anniversary year, and also *The Country and the City* (introduced by Stan Smith) and Williams’s novel *The Volunteers*. Thanks to Parthian and Spokesman Books for taking this task on so willingly.

Finally, this year’s AGM will be my last as Chair of the Society. I have held this post with pleasure and pride since 2005; that is to say, for at least twice as long as I should have, most of this time, it seems, having to do with something called the Bond and Bank Transfer. But chiefly it’s been a unique and valued experience working over this time with friends and fellow officers and members and good to play some small part in shaping the Society. Yesterday, as some will remember, it was the struggle, to-day the committee runs like clockwork. Above all, as the years have turned into more years, it has been particularly good
to read and reread and to write on Williams, and, as ever in my own work, to learn again what new ideas and continuing relevance his writing offers. The events I have mentioned above are their own testimony to this and to what the RWS is about.

Good luck to the Society and good luck to the new Chair.

MERRYN WILLIAMS, Honorary President of the Society, adds:

Peter has steered the Society through a difficult patch, and all of us have benefitted from his patience, sound common sense, good humour and outstanding scholarly expertise. We thank him heartily for all his hard work, and are delighted that he will be continuing to contribute as a member and Trustee.

**Raymond Williams Foundation (RWF)**

The RWF aims ‘to commemorate the works of Raymond Williams, in particular in the sphere of adult education for the benefit of the public’. Its objectives include ‘support for adult education through partnership with the Workers Educational Association (WEA) and other organisations’. RWF has a close relationship with the Raymond Williams Society.

The centrepiece of RWF activity in recent years has been an annual Raymond Williams weekend held in May at Wedgwood College in Staffordshire. The 2011 weekend was the 23rd, with the keynote lecture given by Richard Wilkinson, co-author (with Kate Pickett) of *The Spirit Level*, whose thesis is summarised in its sub-title: *Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*. Tristram Hunt, now the Labour MP for Stoke on Trent Central, opened the course with a lecture on ‘The Idea of Equality’, using his biography of Engels to illustrate the theme entertainingly. The lecture can be accessed on the RWF website.

The main thrust of RWF work continues to be linking such residential events to the growing network of informal pub/café/bar discussion circles. Philosophy in Pubs (PiPs) is closely associated with RWF and Pips held its first (and very successful) residential at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool in June 2011. A new initiative is the RWF Residential Library – Reading Retreat scheme. This was launched with the participation of 16 venues across Great Britain, with aims of supporting and developing library collections and promoting residential reading room ‘retreats’ with grants from the RWF where needed.

In the last year, the RWF has attracted increasing interest from across the globe, in the form of academics seeking information but also applications for funding. An RWF partnership with RUWON in Nepal has been established with RWF grants assisting women and families with desperate economic and educational needs. Similar applications from Southern India and Central Africa were recently approved.

Details of all RWF activities can be found at [www.raymondwilliamsfoundation.org.uk](http://www.raymondwilliamsfoundation.org.uk)

Derek Tatton
RWF Administrator and RWS Executive Committee member
A well-attended day school on Raymond Williams’s *People of the Black Mountains* was held at the Priory Centre, Abergavenny, on Saturday 8 October 2011.

Dr Elizabeth Allen (Regent’s College, London), spoke on ‘People of the Black Mountains: Stories in Space’, and Professor Simon Dentith (Reading University), on ‘People of the Black Mountains: Landscape and Story’.

A Panel Discussion, ‘Remembering Raymond Williams’, brought together three of Williams’s former students at Cambridge: Simon Dentith, Derek Tatton, and Stan Smith. Themes covered included landscape and memory, the local perspective and the view from the height, history and stories, gendered perspectives, and narrative voices.

The event was organised by Elizabeth Allen.

The Society is grateful to the Raymond Williams Foundation, and Regents College London, for their kind sponsorship.
Raymond Williams and Robert Tressell in Hastings
20 September 2011

This conference was organised by the University of Brighton with the support of the Raymond Williams Society. It celebrated 50 years of The Long Revolution, written when Williams lived in Hastings and the centenary of The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists. Dave Laing spoke about the work of the Society and contributed a brief paper on ‘Raymond Williams: the Hasting Years’ to the conference pack.

Over 70 people attended the event, with some 20 papers given on topics ranging from Williams’ idea of culture to practical aspects of reading Tressell with working class students today.

The keynote speakers were Professor Stuart Laing of the University of Brighton, Professor Ian Haywood of Roehampton University and the playwright Howard Brenton, whose adaptation of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists was performed in Liverpool and Chichester in 2010.

Noting the enthusiastic response to this event, its organisers, Professor Deborah Philips and Dr Mark Erickson, are exploring the possibility of holding another conference in 2012, possibly on the theme of Television and Media, since the pioneer of television technology John Logie Baird carried out some of key experimental work in Hastings. Raymond Williams’s Television: Technology and Cultural Form would also be a focal point of such an event.

NEW EDITIONS OF BOOKS BY RAYMOND WILLIAMS

Parthian Books have republished The Long Revolution and the novel The Volunteers. The new edition of the influential critical text which secured Raymond Williams’ reputation as one of the foremost writers and thinkers of his generation has an introduction by Anthony Barnett.

The Volunteers is a political thriller set in the Wales of a terrifying future where the national agenda is controlled by the media organization News Corp. The novel begins with the
assassination of a Welsh Minister in the grounds of St Ffagans. Republished in the prestigious Library of Wales series, *The Volunteers*’ dystopic vision of the Information Age has more relevance now than ever.

Another influential text, long out of print, *The Country and The City*, has been republished by Spokesman Books. There is a new introduction by Stan Smith. The playwright Trevor Griffiths has written that the book is “a long, painstaking and beautiful examination of English literature in the search for shifting images of "country" and "city" through history and the often class-freighted and ahistorical meanings we give them. I challenge anyone to read his first chapter and not be eager to go on. As with Joyce and Irishness, so Williams with Welshness: two national cultural elements in my own background that have resonated within my own thought and work.”

**RAYMOND WILLIAMS ON CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

This new selection, edited by Professor Jim McGuigan of Loughborough University, is to be published in 2012 by Sage. Jim McGuigan writes:

“I work in a university social sciences department nominally as a sociologist. However, I’ve always been situated in my own mind, at least, between the humanities and the social sciences. In recent years, I have found it very difficult to teach about Williams and his contribution to, for want of a better term, cultural sociology. The main reason for this is that my students do not tend to have the literary background and sufficient knowledge of history to tackle much of Williams’s writings. So, a basic principle of selecting texts for *Raymond Williams on Culture and Society* is that they are accessible to apprentice social scientists.

“The second reason for doing this book is perhaps somewhat more ambitious: to save Williams from a marginal and exclusively literary/political reputation; that is, in effect, to recover his work for sociology and cultural studies. I think it is true to say that since his death in 1988 Williams’s legacy has largely been in the hands of literary scholars and most especially, I suppose, the Raymond Williams Society and its annual, *Key Words*. I am not complaining about that but I do believe it has deflected attention from Williams’s intellectual significance and enduring relevance for social analysis and cultural politics.”

The articles and extracts to be included in the book are:

- Culture is Ordinary (1958);
- Mass, Masses and Mass Communication (1958);
- Structure of Feeling and Selective Tradition (1961);
- Advertising – The Magic System (1960/1969);
- Controversy (1962);
- The Idea of a Common Culture (1967);
- Social Darwinism (1972);
- Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory (1973);
- The Technology and the Society (1974);
- Drama in a Dramatised Society (1974);
- Communications as Cultural Science (1976);
- Developments in the Sociology of Culture (1976);
- Realism and Non-Naturalism (1977);
- A Lecture on Realism (1977);
- Means of Communication as Means of Production (1978);
- ‘Industrial’ and ‘Post-Industrial’ Society (1983);
- The Culture of Nations (1983);
- Resources for a Journey of Hope (1983);
- State Culture and Beyond (1984);
KEY WORDS 9
The new edition of the Society’s annual peer-reviewed publication Key Words A Journal of Cultural Materialism has recently been published and all members should have received their copy. This issue includes four articles on aspects of Raymond Williams’s work by Japanese scholars, plus papers on Terry Eagleton’s œuvre by Tony Crowley and Edward Larrissy. Other articles consider the novel Border Country (Simon Dentith) and offer a comparison of Williams and Wittgenstein (Ben Ware).

POSTGRADUATE ESSAY COMPETITION
The closing date for the second competition for work grounded in the tradition of cultural materialism is December 31 2011. The aim is to encourage a new generation of scholars in this area, especially those grounded in discourses and approaches arising from the work of Raymond Williams.

The competition is open to anyone studying for a higher degree (masters or doctoral) in the UK or elsewhere, or who graduated no earlier than July 31 2009. The prize for the winning entry is 100 GBP and a year’s subscription to the Society. The winning essay will also be considered for publication in Key Words.

Entries should be 5-7,000 words in length, including endnotes. Further details can be found on the website – www.raymondwilliams.co.uk. Entries should be sent to Catherine Clay at: catherine.clay@ntu.ac.uk

ANNETTE HUGHES
Annette Hughes, who came from Shrewsbury, was a student at the London School of Economics along with my mother and shared a flat with her in Cambridge where they were evacuated at the beginning of the war. They were close friends all their lives. She married Ronald Lees, who as a scientist was not expected to serve overseas, but ironically he died of pneumonia in August 1944 while my father got through the war in Europe without a scratch. Annette might have married again, for she was a very popular person, but for some reason it never happened and she built a career working with disturbed children. She often visited us when I was a child and always brought lovely presents. After retirement she moved to Abergavenny where she made many friends, and her kindness and good sense were invaluable to our family at times of crisis. She died on 16th August, almost exactly twenty years after my mother, aged ninety-three and in full possession of her mind to the end. As we watched the August riots, I remembered her telling me that if people were worried about young delinquents, they should stop closing the child guidance clinics – and that was years ago!

Merryn Williams
The Raymond Williams Society

Annual Lecture

3pm, Saturday, 26 November 2011
The New Seminar Room,
St John’s College, Oxford

The Long and the Quick of Revolutions:
Can the Left Regain the Future from Market Fundamentalism?
by
Anthony Barnett
(founder of openDemocracy)

Admission: £3 (£2 to students/unwaged; free to RWS members)

To be followed by a wine reception marking the launch of Parthian Press’s new edition of Raymond Williams’s
*The Long Revolution*

Sponsored by Parthian and openDemocracy

To pre-book a ticket, please contact Carl Thompson (email: carl.thompson@ntu.ac.uk). The lecture will be preceded by the Society’s AGM (2-3pm, RWS members only), which will take place in the same room. Contact Carl for further information.