

Make your way to Scotland's capital for the 2008 Radstats Conference

It was agreed at the last AGM that the next Radstats conference would be held in Edinburgh - the first time in Scotland! The conference will be held at the new Out of the Blue artist and community space in Leith, formerly the Drill Hall for the Territorial Army on Saturday 1st March. Come on Friday and spend your extra leap year day in Edinburgh!

Edinburgh has been called both the Athens of the north and auld reekie; the truth is probably somewhere in between. Contemporary literature is thriving - Ian Rankin, JK Rowling and Alexander McCall Smith all share the same postcode. The city gets in a stushie (and hoachin) in the summer with all the festivals, but March is free from all this. There is plenty to do though with countless great (and small) eateries, pubs, museums & galleries or opportunities to go ghost hunting, castle crawling and even rickshaw-rides past Eric Miralles' stunning Scottish parliament at the foot of the volcanic landscape of Arthurs Seat! There is something for everyone here in the ancient & revived capital of Scotland.

The conference venue is in Leith, a port town with plenty of radical history, now part of Edinburgh. Regeneration here has increased wealth inequality, and waves of immigrants have claimed the area as their own. The venue is a short walk from the new SYHA flagship hostel on Leith Walk. The conference will obtain group rates here.

Watch the website www.radstats.org.uk for information about travel, accommodation, social events and programme in the coming months. For questions about the conference, contact the organising committee at conf08@radstats.org.uk.

CALL FOR PAPERS

A Decade of Devolution: Does it measure up?

Radical Statistics will hold its annual conference in Edinburgh, Saturday March 1st, 2008.

Paper proposals relating to any related topics are welcome, including:

- Changes in attitudes toward national identity in the UK
- Comparability of official statistics across devolved countries
- Devolved policies on care for the elderly: is there evidence for improved quality of life?
- Poverty and wealth inequality across the UK; mapping deprivation
- Health statistics, mortality: is there a 'Scottish effect'?
- Effects of tuition fees on young people in debt, or on higher education
- Migration in an expanded EU and policy on asylum seekers
- Voting patterns and multi-party politics

- or other relevant topic to the theme.

The Radical Statistics Group was formed in 1975 as part of the radical science movement associated with the establishment of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS). The researchers and statisticians who started Radstats shared a common concern about the political implications of their work and an awareness of the actual and potential misuse of statistics. Members of Radical Statistics believe that statistics can be used to support radical campaigns for progressive social change.

Please send an abstract of your paper indicating the topic and outlining your use of statistics to the organising committee at conf08@radstats.org.uk. The deadline for proposals is Monday 8 October.

Submissions are invited for the Fourth Radical Statistics Critical Essay Competition 2008.

First prize £300, Second prize £200

- Your submission must be your own unaided original work:
- either -specifically produced for the competition,
- or - originating from your course of study.
- It could address a current social research policy/question with critical use and interpretation of relevant data sources, or be a critique of statistical methodology in an applied context.
- In some circumstances the submission may be the work of more than one person, in which case any prize awarded would be shared.

Submissions are invited in two categories:

Student: undergraduate or postgraduate

Open: any non-student.

The indicative length is 3,000 words maximum.

Where the work submitted originates from course work, written consent of the tutor responsible will be required.

The deadline for submission is 1st July 2008.

Prizes in both categories will be awarded on the basis of readability, clear presentation of statistical material, critical perspective and convincing argument.

The judges are:

Professor Danny Dorling, University of Sheffield,

Dr Eileen Magnello, University College London,

Dr Ben Goldacre, journalist and medical doctor.

Winning essays will be featured on the Radical Statistics website and published in a special issue of 'Radical Statistics', the newsletter of Radical statistics. Judges decision will be by 1st September 2008. More detailed information can be found on the website www.radstats.org.uk.

Applications are encouraged well before deadline. Enter, by sending your essay by email, labelled: **Radstats Critical Essay**, including full name, address, age and number of years for which you have been studying or engaged in statistics, social research, or the social sciences to janet.rmshapiro@btopenworld.com

Help needed with the essay competition!

As reported at the 2007 AGM and in *Radical Statistics* 94, the essay competition in 2006 failed to get enough entries.

I met with Lee Williamson and Alan Marshall to decide how we could encourage more people to enter. One idea was to allow students to submit essays or projects that were assessed course work with the agreement of tutors. The other was to make personal contact with staff teaching statistics and obtain their cooperation. This is the difficult task. An advance announcement has already been sent to the UK data base of email addresses but many of these were returned unknown.

Articles in professional newsletters may help to publicise the competition. Two have been published in the RSS newsletter and Operational Research Insight. These were about the general anxiety about core studies in higher education and whether there really is a decline in the number of specialists teaching statistics. This concern itself is a possible topic for an essay.

The help of all RadStats members is needed; if you are in contact with students, ask me for posters; if you know any person teaching students, put me in contact. We must encourage entries from students.

Those in work or retired can also enter. The discussion list is lively and packed with messages of anger and concern about crucial issues; please could these contributors channel their incisive comments into an essay and send it to me by July 1st 2008!

Our excellent judges will help with publicity.....



But it's over to you! Let me know if you have ideas for making the competition in 2008 a great success.

Janet Shapiro

Books available for review

If you would like to review one of the books listed below, or any other book of interest to Radical Statistics readers, please contact the editors on editors@radstats.org.uk or use the contact details on the inside back cover.

Bethan Thomas and Daniel Dorling (2007), "Identity in Britain: A cradle-to-grave atlas", The Policy Press.

[A presentation of Census and other data with witty commentary using beautiful mosaic cartograms (as does Dorling et al. (2007) reviewed above).]

Mary Shaw, Bruna Galobardes, Debbie A. Lawlor, John Lynch, Ben Wheeler and George Davey Smith (2007), "The handbook of inequality and socioeconomic position", The Policy Press.

[Not only clear definitions, explanations, and further reading but also discussion points and assessment of strengths and limitations.]

Will Somerville (2007), "Immigration under New Labour", The Policy Press.

[A comprehensive account and assessment of immigration policy under Blair.]

Hilary Graham (2007), "Unequal Lives: Health and Socioeconomic Inequalities", McGraw Hill Open University Press.



NHS Together campaign

Celebrate and Defend the NHS!

A national march and rally to celebrate NHS achievements and to defend its core values.

Saturday 3 November 2007. Central London.

A national demonstration to celebrate the NHS will take place in central London on Saturday, 3rd November. The NHS belongs to everyone and its principles must be protected. Unite is urging its members to join the campaign and attend the demonstration to ensure the future of the NHS:

11am: Assemble at Temple Place, Victoria Embankment, London

Noon: March to Trafalgar Square for a rally, entertainment and a big screen celebration of the NHS. Transport from around the country.

So get involved, publicise the event to colleagues in the workplace, other trade unions, local campaign networks and supporters, and encourage as many people as possible to join in and make it a day to remember.

Visit **<http://www.nhstogether.org.uk/>** for details.

