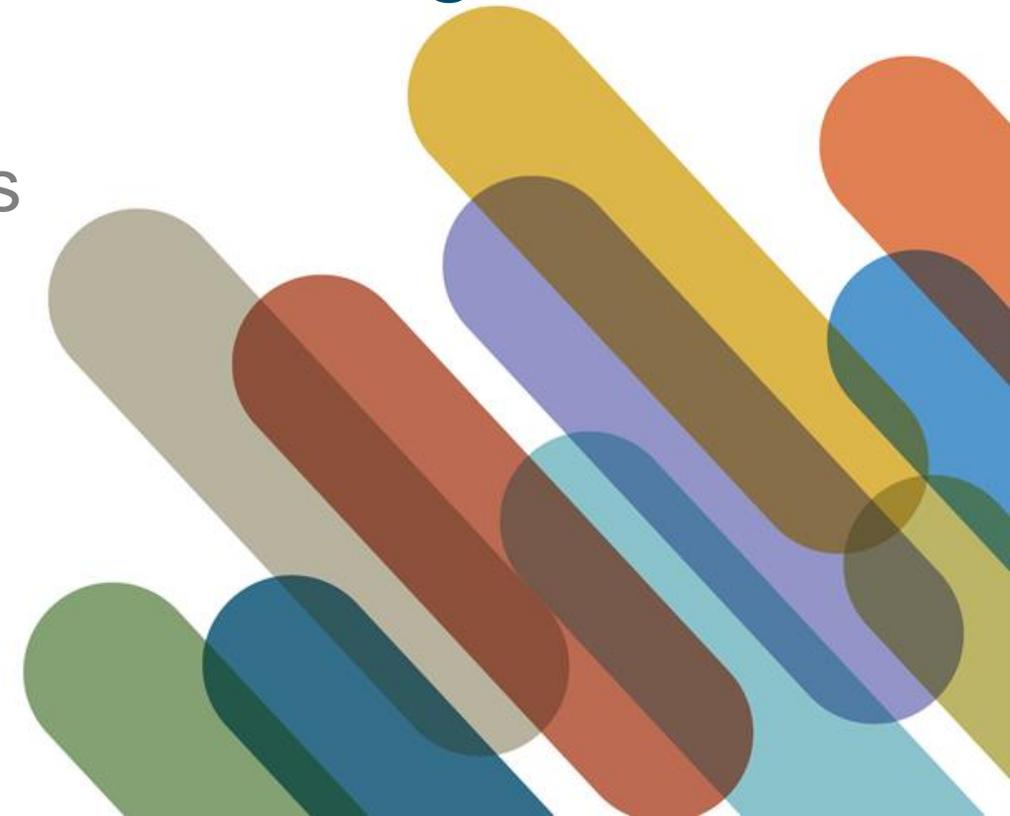


# Royal Statistical Society, 185 Years Young

Recent developments and future priorities

Professor Deborah Ashby  
President, RSS



# Introduction to the Society

RSS founded in 1834, so our 185<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Our vision: a world with data at the heart of understanding and decision-making

Key strategic objectives

- for statistics to be used effectively in the public interest
- for society to be more statistically literate
- to develop the skills of the statistical profession
- to strengthen the discipline of statistics



# Key figures

6,250 fellows in over 90 countries worldwide

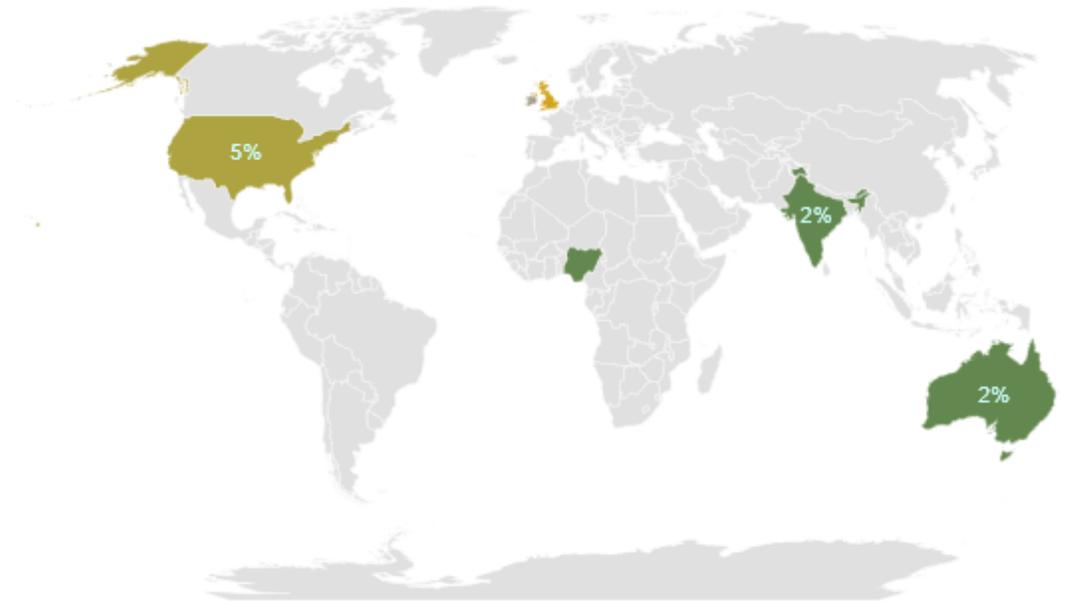
- most members: United Kingdom and United States
- fewest members: South Korea and South Sudan

10,000-plus membership for the first time including

- 2,800 e-student members (free)
- 875 e-teacher members (free)

## Members by Country

74% 5% 2% 1% 12%



United Kingdom	United States	India	Australia	Nigeria	Hong Kong	Ireland	Others
74%	5%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	12%



# Key facts

## RSS Council

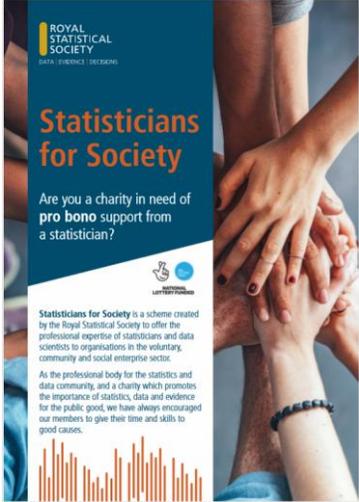
- total: 18 men, 19 women
- four Vice-Presidents: Academic Affairs, Education & Statistical Literacy, External Affairs and Professional Affairs

## MemCom awards 2018 including

- Professional Association of the Year
- Best Campaign on a Shoestring

## MemCom awards 2019. Short-listings include

- Best Member Event (RSS conference 2018 - Cardiff)



# What do we offer members?

## RSS publications



- fortnightly e-newsletters and new *Member Update*
- *Significance* magazine and three journals
  - Series A: *Statistics in Society*
  - Series B: *Statistical Methodology*
  - Series C: *Applied Statistics*
- Journals' high impact factors
  - A: 2.473 (11/123)
  - B: 2.894 (6/123)
  - C: 1.750 (27/123)

# What do we offer members? (Cont'd.)

Key reason for joining: involvement / engagement

Local groups including:

- East Midlands / West Midlands / South Wales / Nigeria (new)

Specialist sections including:

- Environmental / Medical / Social Statistics / Young Statisticians

Special interest groups including:

- Teaching Statistics / Women in Data Science & Statistics (new)

Other key groups including:

- Academic Affairs / Discussions Meeting Committee



# What do we offer members? (Cont'd.)

Involvement / engagement opportunities

- New members being sought  
e.g. Education Policy Advisory Group
- Statistical Ambassadors  
media advice / interview opportunities
- Statisticians for Society  
shortlist re: MemCom 'Member Engagement'
- RSS annual conference

Cardiff (2018): key speakers including Sir David Cox, Sir John Curtice and Hannah Fry (right)

Belfast (2019), Bournemouth (2020), Manchester (2021)



## What do we offer members? (Cont'd.)

Policy / public affairs / recent achievements

- DfE: Advanced Maths Premium (£600 per pupil)
- House of Commons: student loans inquiry
- House of Lords: inflation indices report
- National Statistician / UKSA: award winning success on pre-release
- All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Statistics



# RSS policy effectiveness

Chris Ruane MP (February 2019): "Fantastic meeting with the APPG on Poverty and the RSS this morning. Excellent discussion on the proposal of changing the way we evaluate poverty."

MemCom on our campaign against pre-release access to statistics (May 2018): "This society mobilised its members to work towards ending this abuse of statistics and, as a result, a very significant public benefit was achieved."



# Ongoing policy work ...

Recent / current policy work includes

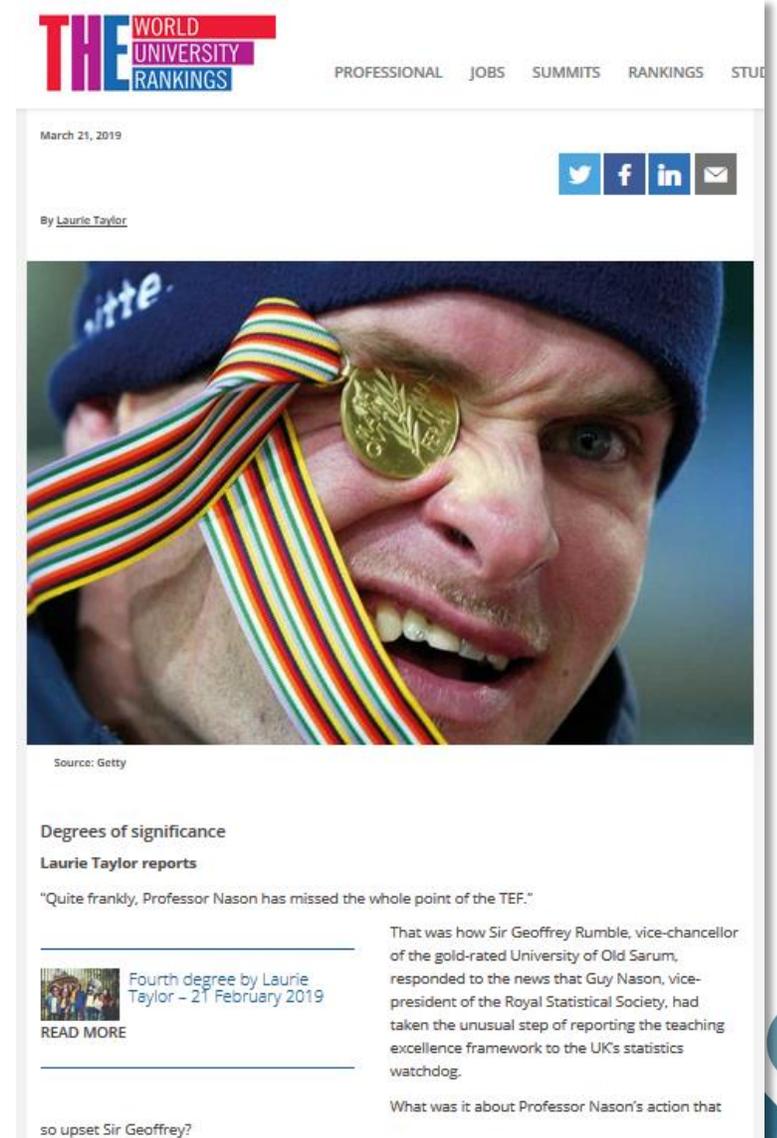
- PACAC inquiry (ongoing)  
governance of UK statistics
- National Data Guardian consultation  
evidence submitted in late March
- Maths and the curricula (ongoing)  
RSS working with ACME contact groups
- Teaching Excellence Framework ...



# Teaching Excellence Framework

RSS actions include

- robust contribution to the Pearce review
- referring TEF to the Office for Statistics Regulation
- media coverage on TEF's flaws (e.g. *Times Higher*, *Research Fortnight* and BBC)
- BBC report: "The Royal Statistical Society said:
  - the measures did not assess quality of teaching
  - the benchmarking procedure does not properly take account of all the differences between universities
- the flagging system is trigger-happy ..."



THE WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

PROFESSIONAL JOBS SUMMITS RANKINGS STUD

March 21, 2019

By Laurie Taylor

Source: Getty

**Degrees of significance**  
Laurie Taylor reports

"Quite frankly, Professor Nason has missed the whole point of the TEF."

That was how Sir Geoffrey Rumble, vice-chancellor of the gold-rated University of Old Sarum, responded to the news that Guy Nason, vice-president of the Royal Statistical Society, had taken the unusual step of reporting the teaching excellence framework to the UK's statistics watchdog.

What was it about Professor Nason's action that so upset Sir Geoffrey?

Fourth degree by Laurie Taylor - 21 February 2019  
READ MORE

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# Academic Affairs Advisory Group

Chaired by Professor Guy Nason (Bristol)

- led RSS's work on the Teaching Excellence Framework
- prompted UKRI's review of 'Data-driven research'
- representation on the new Data Advisory Committee
- liaison with the Turing Institute

RSS: part of the Council for the Mathematical Sciences (CMS)

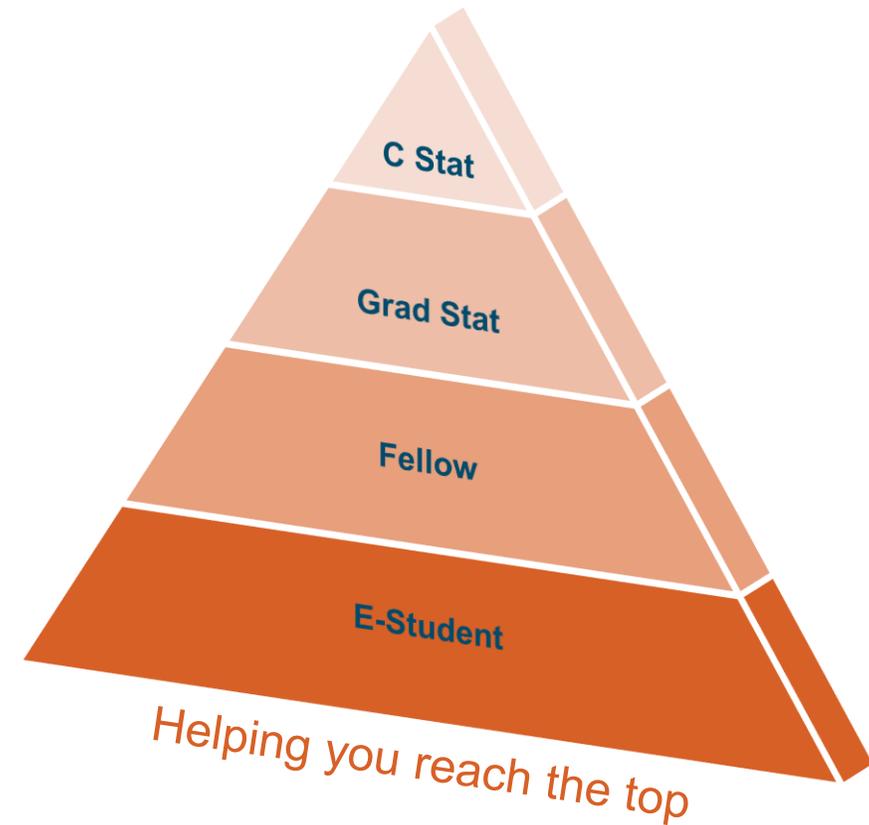
Supporting the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS)



# Professional development

Key elements of the RSS offer

- training discounts
- Graduate Statistician status
- Chartered Statistician status
- course accreditation
- professional awards.



# Prestigious RSS awards

The RSS has been awarding honours for statistical excellence since 1892; most awards are made to RSS fellows. Key awards include:

More junior awards can encourage career young statisticians. Examples include:

- **Guy Medal in Gold:** awarded to a fellow judged to have merited a signal mark of distinction by reason of innovative contributions to the theory or application of statistics.
- **Chambers Medal:** for outstanding services to the RSS.
- **Guy Medal in Bronze:** for excellent work presented at an RSS conference or meeting, or in any RSS journal.
- **Wood Medal:** for excellent contributions to economic or social statistics.



# Examples of RSS award-winners, 2019

- **Guy Medal, Gold.** Stephen Buckland, for his significant and sustained contributions to the development of statistical methods for ecological applications over a 40-plus year period.
- **Guy Medal, Silver.** Susan Murphy, for her methodological, computational and applied work on dynamic treatment regimens.
- **Guy Medal, Bronze.** Jonas Peters, for innovative contributions to causal inference and related statistical methodology and theory.
- **Research Prize.** Tengyao Wang, for his outstanding and diverse contributions to statistical methodology and theory.



## Other RSS awards, etc

- Celebration of good practice
  - RSS journalism awards
  - Campion Award for Official Statistics
- Promotion of statistical insights via Stats of the Year
  - launched in 2017; expanded in 2018
  - UK winner: 27.8% - peak proportion of UK electricity from solar
  - International winner: 90.5% - proportion of plastic waste never recycled
- Huge worldwide coverage from a tiny investment
  - non-staff expenditure: £504
  - advertising equivalence: £4.84 million. *(Source: Meltwater.)*





# Media Coverage



# Looking ahead to the near-term future

## RSS targets for 2019-21

- aim to have paying members in 100+ countries worldwide
- target of 1,000-plus e-teacher members (plus more e-students)
- need better male / female balance across all demographics
- part of our ongoing work on diversity / inclusion issues
- celebrate our first female member, Florence Nightingale, in 2020
- make the most of 2021's census-related opportunities.



# Looking forward to our longer-term future ...

- Revisit RSS's founders' aims - focusing on facts for society / public good
- Still very relevant in our 185th anniversary year
- But what do they mean now, in the twenty-first century?
- Major challenges ahead include
  - capacity-building among statisticians and data scientists
  - upskilling today's workforce for machine learning / big data
  - expanding our capacity to meet increasing needs.



# What would the RSS like from you?

- More members: always keen on more recruits (incl. e-students)
- Support your staff to become engaged (e.g. as committee members)
- Encourage your students to enter the *Significance* writing competition for early-career statisticians
- Nominations for our honours / awards / marks of esteem
- Nominations for our 2019 Statistics of the Year (UK and International)
- Nominations for our first-ever Statistics of the Decade, 2010-19 (new)
- Ideas on how RSS can better serve both members and the public good.



Thank you

[www.rss.org.uk](http://www.rss.org.uk)

