

Beltane Prize

✖ Professor Aubrey Manning, one of the country's most distinguished zoologists and a BBC broadcaster, has been awarded the 2011 RSE Beltane Senior Prize for Public Engagement.

Edinburgh-based PhD student Joanna Brooks has been ✖ announced as the winner of the RSE Beltane Innovator's Prize for Public Engagement.

With these prizes the [Royal Society of Edinburgh](#) and [Edinburgh Beltane](#) aim to recognise and promote excellence in public engagement with research; fostering a culture in which researchers consider good communication an integral part of their work.

Professor Mary Bownes, Vice Principal of the University of Edinburgh and Chair of the Committee that selected this year's winners, explained "Scholarly research is about asking questions, acquiring and developing knowledge and becoming an expert in your chosen field. All the knowledge is only of value once the researchers acquiring it share it in a way that is accessible to those who need it. We were delighted with the large number of people who have shown incredible leadership and innovation in engaging with the public who were nominated for the RSE Beltane Prize. The panel had an exceptionally difficult job selecting winners and would happily have given many prizes. Aubrey and Joanna are outstanding winners of the first year of the award".

An inspiring teacher, Professor Manning's career at the University of Edinburgh spanned four decades, from assistant lecturer in zoology in 1956 to his retirement in 1997 as Chair of Natural History. He had an extensive publication list during that time and his textbook "An Introduction to Animal Behaviour" is just about to go into its 6th Edition.

Following his 'retirement' in 1997 Professor Manning has brought earth sciences to the wider public through a number of series on BBC television and radio, including Earth Stories, Seven Natural Wonders of the South and Sounds of Life. He has continued to put his passion for conservation into action through, for example, acting as Goodwill Ambassador to the UN's International Year of Planet Earth (2007-2009) and as President of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (2005-2010).

University of Edinburgh student Joanna Brooks is studying for her PhD in Psychology and has already proved adept at making science engaging and meaningful for people of all ages. Her innovative UK-wide 'Brainology Tour', funded by the Wellcome Trust, involved travelling to schools across the UK for hands-on workshops on how the brain works. She is currently developing a major science communication project to be rolled out across Europe and will reveal details of this in the coming months.

Joanna commented "I feel incredibly honoured and grateful to have received this award and to have had the opportunity to raise the profile of psychological science in the public domain".

The prizes, designed and crafted by Edinburgh-based artist Karen Akester, will be presented at an event which will be attended by both our winners later this year.