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Geography@Nottingham

School of Geography newsletter 2015

Geography Ambassadors at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)



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Geography on TV

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Welcome to the School of Geography



Professor Andrew
Leyshon.

In the School of Geography we are committed to excellence in both teaching and research.

Our vibrant community has numerous academic and social events filling the year. This newsletter will give you a flavour of some of these and I'm sure you will find it interesting reading.

We offer an exciting student experience. You'll have the opportunity to gain valuable real-world skills with a number of field trip modules. All compulsory field courses are free to attend, and there's no better way to put your learning into practice.

You can also study abroad through the Universitas 21 and Erasmus schemes, which will benefit you in several ways. It's a chance to see your subject from a new perspective while experiencing a different culture and making friends from all over the world. You're also likely to find that living abroad enhances your self-development and increases your independence. When you return to Nottingham to finish your degree, you may well have a stronger sense of your own skills and abilities, and perhaps a more clearly defined career path in mind. When it comes to applying for jobs, your experience will show employers that you're capable of taking the initiative and adapting to new situations.

As a graduate from The University of Nottingham, you'll be highly sought after and by studying a degree in the School of Geography, you will acquire a broad skill set that will lay the foundations for your chosen career. Employability is at the heart of our teaching, and we ensure that all of our degrees will equip you with the essential skills and knowledge that employers are looking for.

The school's dynamic approach to research and teaching will ensure your experience at Nottingham is inspiring and challenging. If you have any questions about studying with us, please get in touch, using the details on page 8.

Professor Andrew Leyshon

Head of School and Professor of Economic Geography

Staff news

Award winning staff



Professor Stephen
Daniels.

The Royal Geographical Society has awarded the prestigious Victoria Medal 2015 to Stephen Daniels, Professor of Cultural Geography in the School of Geography.

The Victoria Medal has been awarded since 1902 "for conspicuous merit in research in geography" and is amongst the highest honour of its kind in the world.

Stephen joins a list of eminent geographers who have been awarded the medal for their outstanding contributions to geography.

The medal is in recognition of Stephen's contribution to the fields of cultural and historical geography at Nottingham, spanning more than 30 years.

Fieldwork fun!

Our field trip modules offer numerous opportunities to travel to inspirational destinations in the UK and overseas.

- The Geographical Field Course module is a four-day intensive residential field trip in the Lake District. It explores the economic geography of the region, as well as the environmental history of a landscape that dates back to c. 500 million years ago.
- The European Urban Geographies module is a five-day residential field course to Berlin, which provides students with an understanding of the evolution, socio-economic, political and cultural dynamics of the city.
- The Landscape History of Liguria module is a one-week residential field course to Varese, Italy. Students devise their own subjects in conjunction with academic staff, to investigate diverse aspects of landscape history as well as cultural and historical geography. Previous projects have included:
 - The effects of WWI on the local society and landscape
 - The importance of rural depopulation
 - The management of "re-wilded" landscapes

"Fieldwork is an integral part of geographical study, and the opportunities to gain valuable practical experience within the School of Geography at Nottingham were fantastic. Whilst learning from passionate experts about practical field methods enhanced both my knowledge and employability, it also gave me the chance to find that all important winter sun in exotic locations like Mexico!"
Jack Starbuck, BSc graduate

Watch our field trip videos at: www.nottingham.ac.uk/geography/field-trips



Students working on their projects in Liguria.

Studying abroad

Broaden your horizons

The University of Nottingham is a founding member of the Universitas 21 consortium, an international network of leading research-intensive institutions offering opportunities for students to study abroad as part of their degree.

You could spend a semester or a year studying at one of the partner institutions in countries including:

- Australia
- Canada
- China
- New Zealand
- Singapore
- USA

We also have an inter-campus exchange programme, which enables you to study at our Malaysia campus.

Situated about an hour's drive from the capital Kuala Lumpur, it offers all the teaching, learning and leisure facilities you would expect as well as a diverse community of students from across the world.

Find out more on our website at:
www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyabroad



Students in Lao Waitan, Ningbo, China.

Royal Geographical Society Ambassador Scheme

The Geography Ambassador scheme recruits, trains and supports undergraduate, postgraduate and graduate geographers from universities and business to act as ambassadors for geography in the classroom and beyond. Lorna Bunnell tells her story about the scheme:

"Having myself studied geography at GCSE, A Level, and now as an undergraduate, I felt very strongly about the need to promote geography and encourage students to pursue their geographical studies further.

There had been a decrease in students taking geography at GCSE and A Level and I wanted to do my bit in changing this, as I know how important it is to have people who understand the geographical aspect of the world around us. Therefore, I decided to train as a Geography Ambassador.

The training session gave me the guidance and skills to then go on and run my own sessions for students, aiming to widen the students' understanding of what geography can be, with a fun and interactive approach.

Alongside other Ambassadors I have run lively sessions on a wide variety of topics, ranging from the geography of festivals to the geography of salt. I have really enjoyed going in to schools and engaging students in a different way to their normal lessons and it has been really rewarding to see the students grow in their understanding of what geography is and can be as a subject.

I have also learnt a lot from my experience so far as an Ambassador and it has provided me with many skills, such as public speaking and quick decision making, which will be very useful in my future career. In the last few years, since the Ambassador programme has been running, there has been a rise in uptake of geography at GCSE and A Level. As Ambassadors we would all like to think we had our part to play in this and that our passion for our subject has rubbed off on the thousands of students that we visit each year.

I look forward to meeting lots of new pupils in the future and hope I can continue my role as a Geography Ambassador for many years to come."

To find out more about the Ambassador Scheme, visit www.rgs.org/ambassadors



Monopoly Madness trip participants.

All the latest from GeogSoc

The University of Nottingham's Geography Society - more commonly known to students as GeogSoc - has been incredibly busy over the last academic year, putting together a broad range of activities for geography students.

Being one of the largest student-led University societies on campus, and the only group that specifically seeks to represent and provide for those who study or have an interest in geography, we have remained busy working to put on a fantastic mix of sporting, academic, employability, and social events and activities for our members.

We kicked off the academic year, as always, with our Crayola-themed social event, which has become somewhat of a tradition for welcoming the new intake of students into the geography student community. It was fantastically supported by our members; a complete sell-out.

The Ropewalk pub was the destination of choice for our infamous Annual Staff-Student Pub Quiz, where students and staff informally battled it out to assert themselves as top of the class. Professor Andrew Leyshon, in his role as our very own Jeremy Paxman, didn't disappoint - there was the usual high standard of general knowledge questioning and evidence of an eclectic taste in music for the 'Name That Tune' round. The event was a roaring success. Although incredibly close, special congrats goes to the events winners - Don't Hassle the Heff!

We rounded off our year of social events with our annual Global, at the Albert Hall in Nottingham city centre. This year's theme was The Great Gatsby, and the Moonlighters Big Band created the perfect atmosphere. Next year's committee was also revealed, providing the perfect ending to the formalities of the evening and a nice way to round off this academic year's activities.

Whilst continuing the tradition of delivering great social events - an aspect of society life that GeogSoc are renowned for - we also had a number of 'GeogSoc firsts'. One of these was the establishment of the Mentoring Support Scheme in conjunction with the School of Geography. The scheme is accredited through the Nottingham Advantage Award and offers support to students, in the transition from school to university study. Many of our members seized the opportunity to get involved, and have worked very successfully over the past year to support and mentor students through their first year at university.

The feedback we have received has been incredibly positive, and we hope to build on this initiative in the future.



GeogSoc Committee Members at Global 2015 (photography courtesy of Martin Sylvester and dgtl events).

We also ran our first trip and Megan, our new Trip Secretary, bravely set about organising a Monopoly-themed outing to London. Equipped with a list of 'chance card' themed activities, we split into teams and were challenged to undertake the activities on the cards, at classic Monopoly board locations around the city. The day was a great success and we even spotted Helena Bonham Carter whilst waiting for the coach driver to pick us up!

We are also forever indebted to Professor Stephen Daniels, who kindly spoke at the first Annual GeogSoc Lecture. Speaking on the theme 'Putting on a show: landscape research and public exhibitions', the event was a perfect opportunity to listen in a relaxed and informal way, about the world-leading research that is being undertaken within the field of geography here at The University of Nottingham. It was extremely well supported and enjoyed by students and staff alike. We look forward to continuing this event next year.

We believe it's extremely important to maintain our focus on careers and employability and to build on the progress we've already made in this area, so we established a programme of careers events. As many of our members have expressed an interest in pursuing careers within conservation - a very competitive career path, we teamed up with Steve, the Highfield's Park Ranger, and the Conservation Society (ConSoc), to organise an 'Insight into Conservation' afternoon.

We have also had a fantastic programme of guest speaker events run throughout the academic year, where members had the opportunity to listen to the first-hand experiences of recent graduates. GeogSoc committee members also helped with the running of the Annual Careers Speed Network Event held at the Ropewalk. This gave our members the perfect opportunity to network with a number of alumni from different fields, in an enjoyable and informal setting. Read more about this on page 8.

This year has also seen the Geography Society increase its commitments to the School of Geography's widening participation agenda. Working in collaboration with the University's Widening Participation Department, Clare, our Charities and Welfare Secretary, has established the GeogSoc Schools Programme.

Visiting local schools and holding workshops on campus, members have had the opportunity to take a leading role in facilitating and running geographical activities with our local community's young people. Sessions covered a range of topics that complimented the National Curriculum: Favelas, Our World and Monstrous Mountains. These events were so successful that we have now introduced a new committee post - Widening Participation Secretary, to better reflect our commitments to the continuation of this programme. This further supplements our existing commitments with the RGS Ambassadors programme and our involvement at University open days.

As President, I would like to take this opportunity to thank a number of people who have been instrumental in helping the smooth running of the society. Firstly, I'd like to thank the committee for their hard work and commitment, making this year so successful. I would also like to thank Professor Andrew Leyshon for his continued support. A special thanks also goes to Sudha Cotterill, Anne Hall and Elaine Watts for their involvement in helping organise events this year. Without your hard work behind the scenes, none of this could have been possible. Lastly, I'd like to thank all of our members for their continued support, and I wish next year's committee all the luck for the future!

Kieran Phelan - GeogSoc President 2014/15

Keep up to date with the Geog Blog

Our blog is produced by members of the school, and covers the latest important geographical issues such as climate change, food security and water resources.

It also provides an ideal forum for recording members' activities such as participation in conferences and policy debates, as well as highlighting our latest internationally-ranked research.

Research Associate, Carry van Lieshout wrote about her research project exploring the soughs of Derbyshire - subterranean canals that drained water from the local lead mines. As a historical geographer, Carry is more used to desk-based research. However, this project introduced her to the fascinating underground landscape of Derbyshire, and she has developed a love of caving as a result!

Dr Simon Gosling - Associate Professor in Climate Risk - has written about his trip to Austria with other environmental modellers from the School of Geography. They presented their research at a major workshop on modelling climate change impacts, at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), in Laxenburg.

The workshop was part of an extensive international project that brought together researchers from 30 institutions in over 90 cities. It aimed to create consistent and comprehensive projections of the impacts of different levels of global warming.

You can read the blog at: blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/geography



Schloss Laxenburg in the grounds behind IIASA.

My student journey

Joseph J. Bailey, PhD Researcher and former undergraduate in the School of Geography tells us about his time at The University of Nottingham.



"I write this article from my desk in the School of Geography, having just been working on a paper and just before I finish writing up a post for the Royal Geographical Society's online blog, 'Geography Directions'.

I truly enjoy being in this department, from both an academic and social perspective, and one of my favourite elements of doing a PhD here is having the opportunity to teach current undergraduates. I have also taken opportunities to help out with school open days (in roles ranging from a Student Ambassador to helping with actually organising the day) to promote our teaching and research to prospective students.

I stayed here at Nottingham because of the range of research topics in the school. I am able to explore and discover new perspectives on my own research interests, which allows me to maintain a well-balanced view on matters beyond the fundamental science (which is my focus), to policy and society."

Visit our website at www.nottingham.ac.uk/geography to find out more about the research undertaken by the School of Geography.

"The sheer range of research topics in the school continues to appeal, consistently offering new perspectives on my own research interests..."

In the media

Exhibition features on BBC Countryfile

Associate Professor Gary Priestnall developed a public exhibition on landscape modelling which featured on BBC Countryfile.

'The Grandest Views: Models of Lakeland from Victorian Times to the Present Day' ran from February to May 2015 at Keswick Museum and Art Gallery in Cumbria. It showcased research exploring a large physical landscape model of the Lake District, which Dr Priestnall created from early Ordnance Survey contour maps by Henry and Thomas Mayson in 1875. Although the actual model can no longer be traced, a set of negative moulds were recovered from storage by Dr Priestnall and have allowed sections of the model to be digitally rebuilt.

The exhibition featured a large floor map at the scale of the original model, several replica model pieces raised above the map, including a larger piece augmented with projected maps and images. The exhibition also featured displays that demonstrated the capabilities of modern digital landscape modelling, including a virtual fly-through projected onto the wall.

Dr Priestnall said: "Digital techniques offer many ways to present landscapes to visitors in engaging ways, and to let them explore dynamic virtual models. Something that can be difficult to convey via a computer screen, however, is the broader landscape overview, which allows people to understand the spatial relationships between places of interest. This is something that physical relief models do very well. Today we have many options for digital survey of the landscape, much of which takes place from aircraft, coupled with 3D printing and milling, so we have a great opportunity to explore the power of physical models again using digital technology to help create them."

The techniques and research featured in the exhibition have also fed into teaching, in particular the module 'Geospatial Technologies: Mobile, Augmented and Virtual'.

For more information email gary.priestnall@nottingham.ac.uk or visit www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/maysonmodel



Ellie Harrison from BBC Countryfile and Dr Gary Priestnall.

Extreme weather in the UK, past, present and future?

In 1952, climatologist Gordon Manley suggested that "if a census were taken of common topics of conversation amongst British people, it is very probable that the weather would take first place".

This statement is probably as true today as it was over 60 years ago, and while in no way being unique in this, it is probably fair to say that the British have a something of an obsession with the weather.

Yet the weather has arguably become an even more popular topic of conversation in recent years. In part, this is a function of narratives highlighting the apparently looming, apocalyptic climate changes that global society faces, but it may also be a result of rising concern over the impacts of anomalous, 'extreme' weather events such as droughts, floods, storm events and unusually high or low temperatures. While social and economic systems have generally evolved to accommodate some deviations from "normal" weather conditions, this is rarely true of extremes. Such events, therefore, can have the greatest and most immediate social and economic impact of all climate changes.

Extreme weather, our fascination with it and, more particularly, our eagerness to write and talk about it, are of course far from unprecedented. In our three year project, we are drawing on a wide range of largely unpublished historical records and conducting community based oral histories to investigate the timing and implications of, and responses to extreme weather in a range of spatial contexts across the UK, dating back to the late 17th century.

Different regional circumstances, particular physical conditions, an area's social and economic activities and embedded cultural knowledges, norms, values, practices and infrastructures all affect the impacts of, and responses to extreme weather. The way in which an extreme event is experienced and perceived in turn determines whether it becomes inscribed into the memory of a community or an individual in the form of oral history, ideology, custom, narrative, artefact, technological and physical adaptation, including adaptations to the working landscape and built environment. These different forms of remembering and recording the past represent central media through which information on past events is curated, recycled and transmitted across generations and into the future.

In our project we are tapping into these different forms of remembering and recording. The archive has been the most obvious place to start and as our own project blog is, the many regional archival collections we are exploring are yielding some fascinating insights into the socio-economic, cultural and environmental implications of past extremes.

We are drawing on a very wide range of sources. Although official meteorological observations rarely extend back beyond the mid 19th century, climate and weather have long been the subjects of private narratives, diaries, chronicles and sermons dating back to the later 17th and 18th centuries. A very diverse group of people were involved in observing and recording weather in this period, either in networks or independently, including farmers, gentlemen scientists, physicians, sea captains, religious figures and naturalist curates, university professors and travellers.

Over and above using such sources for identifying extreme weather and its impacts, our work is revealing much about the people who made these records, the way in which they recorded the weather and what form their observations took, as well as insight into their motivations for weather observation.

Professor Georgina Endfield and Dr Lucy Veale



Floods in The Meadows, Nottingham, 1947.

The project is AHRC funded.

Further details about the project can be found at: www.nottingham.ac.uk/weatherextremes

Read about some of our work so far at: blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/weatherextremes

Follow us on Twitter: [@weather_extreme](https://twitter.com/weather_extreme)
Like us on Facebook: [/weatherextremes](https://www.facebook.com/weatherextremes)

Image courtesy of University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections. Records of the Engineer's Department of the Trent River Authority and its predecessor bodies RE/DOP/H42/89.

New courses: MSci and MArts

The School of Geography has introduced two new degrees, a **Master in Science with Honours in Geography (MSci)** and a **Master in Arts with Honours in Geography (MArts)**.

These exciting four-year integrated masters courses have been designed specifically to provide students with advanced and specialist knowledge in physical geography, human geography and geographical information science.

The new programmes respond to both employers' and students' significant interest in, and demand for an extra year of geographical study that goes beyond the materials covered in a three-year course.

The MSci and MArts offer a convenient option to advance to masters-level study (subject to performance) with an automatic continuation in student loan funding, whereas traditional masters courses require students to secure funding from elsewhere, which is both difficult and highly competitive.

Current second year students have been invited to transfer to the MSci and MArts, meaning they would become MSci/MArts third year students after the summer.

Further details on the MSci and MArts courses are available from the Course Director, Dr Simon Gosling – simon.gosling@nottingham.ac.uk



Career events

School summer internships scheme

The school's new internships scheme for undergraduates was launched in April 2015.

The scheme provides opportunities exclusively to our students for paid summer placements of 8-12 weeks' duration, within a number of organisations in sectors including consultancy and environmental science.

Employers are placing more emphasis than ever on past work experience, so an internship can help to maximise your potential in the competitive graduate jobs market.

Dr Simon Gosling, the school Careers Officer, says "this is an exciting opportunity for our students to gain valuable experience in the environmental sector in roles that can put into practice some of the technical and transferable skills that they are developing throughout their degree."



Careers networking event

The School of Geography's third annual careers networking event was held at the Ropewalk in Nottingham city centre.

As with previous events, the informal atmosphere and small student groups, coupled with the opportunity to speak with several alumni working in different sectors facilitated in-depth, meaningful and helpful discussions between geography students and alumni.

All of the guests were School of Geography alumni, which meant they were in an excellent position to provide friendly advice about career options, employability, and applying for jobs after graduation.

Dr Simon Gosling, the school Careers Officer, says "this was another successful evening – the informality of the event and the



range of speakers resulted in many lively and informative discussions between students and alumni."

One of the students who attended said: "I found the experience both interesting and very valuable in terms of future decisions regarding careers choices. I'm grateful for the diversity of alumni there was to speak to and I think the informality of the event contributed significantly towards its success!"

Get involved

 [UoNGeography](https://www.facebook.com/UoNGeography)

 [@UoNGeography](https://twitter.com/UoNGeography)

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The University of Nottingham has made every effort to ensure that the information in this newsletter was accurate when published. Please note, however, that the nature of the content means that it is subject to change from time to time and you should therefore consider the information to be guiding rather than definitive.

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Produced June 2015. Undergraduate course information is available at:
www.nottingham.ac.uk/ugstudy