



The University of  
**Nottingham**

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# Geography@Nottingham

School of Geography newsletter 2016

“The best experience of my life” –

Students share their views on studying abroad



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Find out more about a PhD student's research trip to the Southern Ocean

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Catch up on the latest activities organised by the Geography Society

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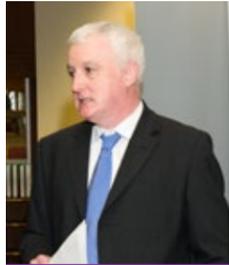
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## Welcome to the School of Geography



Professor Giles Foody.

Based in one of the UK's leading universities, the School of Geography has a reputation for excellence in both teaching and research, producing graduates of an exceptionally high calibre at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Indeed, our graduates are among the best ambassadors for the work we do at Nottingham.

We offer a friendly and inspiring environment in which to research and learn, with teaching at the centre of all of our activities. Our exciting and challenging courses are some of the most flexible in the country and our range of modules spans the full spectrum of the discipline, from the arts and humanities, through the social and natural sciences to engineering and technology.

As a student within the School of Geography, you will benefit from a wide range of field trips to locations such as Italy, Germany and Mexico, where you will develop essential skills. We use a variety of assessment methods across all our courses, focus on providing prompt and effective feedback and have a tradition of establishing excellent relationships with our students.

Beginning university can sometimes be daunting; settling into a new home, making new friends and developing new ways of working makes it all a great deal to take in. Within the school, we are committed to providing pastoral support for all our students, and will do everything we can to support you during your time with us. You will be able to take part in small group tutorials throughout your first and second year and will receive guidance from a personal tutor in your third and/or fourth year. We also run a peer mentoring scheme, with second and third year students on hand to help with any questions you might have about your degree, policies, coursework and submission information.

Nottingham is one of the top institutions targeted by graduate employers, outperforming Oxford, Cambridge and other leading universities\*, and, as a Geography graduate, you'll leave with a broad range of personal and transferable skills that will lay the foundations for your chosen career.

This newsletter will give you some insight into what studying with the School of Geography is like and I am sure you will enjoy reading about our students' experiences. If you have any questions about studying with us, please do get in touch (details on page 8).

### Professor Giles Foody

Head of School and Professor of Geographical Information Science

\* According to a 2016 study by High Fliers Research

## Broaden your horizons

Those who have chosen to study abroad often say that it was the highlight of their time as a student. The University of Nottingham has one of the largest and most diverse study abroad programmes in the UK, with students in the School of Geography getting the opportunity to participate in the following:

- **ERASMUS+** with two European partner institutions in Tübingen, Germany; and Grenoble, France
- **UNIVERSITAS 21** with more than 20 partner institutions worldwide including universities in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore and the USA

Current third year geography student Haroon Ikram (pictured on the cover) travelled to the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, as part of his undergraduate degree.

Speaking of his experience, he said:

"Studying abroad was one of the best decisions I have made, and the best experience of my life. Being exposed to different learning environments and cultures took me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to have a greater understanding of the world and my place in it.

I made new friends from all over the world and, while it was challenging, it helped make me a more rounded person. I've become more open and receptive to new ideas and have the confidence to take risks in learning, work and relationships – in my educational career and, ultimately, my life."

Find out more about study abroad opportunities on our website:

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyabroad](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyabroad)

## School summary

Geography at Nottingham has a long and distinguished history, with the department being officially established in 1934. A number of achievements, expansions and changes have taken place since then and current students benefit from:

- A wide range of flexible undergraduate and postgraduate courses, with strengths across the entire field
- Specialised laboratory facilities for physical and chemical analysis, including research areas specifically designed for undergraduates, postgraduates, geosciences, environmental change and palaeoecology
- The school's partnership with the British Geological Survey (BGS) which includes an undergraduate course in Environmental Geoscience as well as the collaboratively-run Centre for Environmental Geochemistry (CEG) and GeoEnergy Research Centre (GERC)
- Opportunities to study abroad in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Singapore and the USA
- Working with academic staff who are leading researchers in their specialist fields, with 73% of this research rated as 'world leading' or 'internationally excellent' in the latest Research Excellence Framework
- Studying at a university which has been ranked the world's most sustainable four times by the Greenmetric Ranking of World Universities
- Being based on University Park Campus, which has received the Green Flag Award (the national benchmark for parks and green spaces in England and Wales) for 13 consecutive years
- A proactive approach to building careers skills with networking events, talks, peer mentoring and a summer internship scheme

Visit our website for further information:

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/geography/study](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/geography/study)

### Staff news

## A fine Fellow



Professor Mike Heffernan.

The UK's national body for the Humanities and Social Sciences recently recognised the work of a member of our academic team by electing him as a Fellow of the British Academy.

Mike Heffernan, Professor of Historical Geography in the School of Geography, was selected by the British Academy last year. The national body has around 1,000

Fellows, from the UK and abroad, who have all achieved international distinction in their fields.

The Academy elects up to 42 Fellows each year and Mike's election is in recognition of his work in historical geography and the history of cartography. He joins a group of about 40 eminent geographers who are also Fellows.

## Exciting year ahead for MSci and MArts students

We're looking forward to seeing our first cohort of students studying the undergraduate Masters in Science (MSci) and Masters in Arts (MArts) programmes progress into their fourth year of study this September.

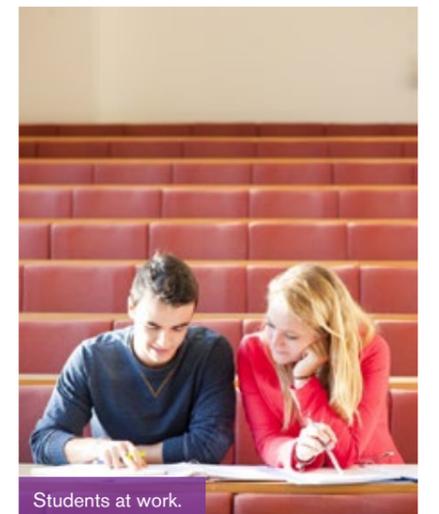
Their year ahead promises to be very exciting as they move more closely into a research culture and environment, working in small groups with their academic supervisors.

They will be able to select from a range of new and innovative modules, including Frontiers in Economic Geography, Environment, Space and Society, and Freshwater Ecology.

One of the most exciting features of the integrated masters course is the 60-credit dissertation, which can be written in the form of a journal article. This will be worked on in close collaboration with an academic supervisor and demonstrates the intellectual shift from level three to level four study, with the students employing a high level of engagement with research in their chosen fields. The students will also attend an MSci/MArts conference where they will present their dissertation research to their peers and academic staff members.

Visit our website for further information: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/ugstudy/courses/geography](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/ugstudy/courses/geography)

Or contact the Director of Teaching and Learning: [louise.crewe@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:louise.crewe@nottingham.ac.uk)



Students at work.



The view of Coronation Island from RRS James Clark Ross.

# Reconstructing 15,000 years: an Antarctic journey

Current student Rowan Dejardin travelled to the Southern Ocean to collect data for his PhD project. Now back in the UK, he shares his experience with us.



PhD student Rowan Dejardin.

**My PhD project endeavours to reconstruct changes in ocean conditions through the last 15,000 years around the Subantarctic island of South Georgia.**

The marine sediment cores that I'm working on were collected in 2012 by RRS James Clark Ross, the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) ship, which sails south every year to conduct a range of scientific projects and provide logistical support to British Antarctic bases. Earlier last year, I successfully applied for funding from BAS to join a scientific cruise so I could collect sediment samples which would help me to calibrate the proxies I am using to reconstruct past ocean conditions.

I joined the ship in the Falkland Islands in early November, meeting up with a group of other scientists on the way. We moored in Port Stanley for a few days while the ship was made ready to

sail and this gave us the opportunity to explore the surrounding area, meeting king penguins on windswept white-sand beaches and watching tiny Commerson's dolphins play in the surf. This gave us just a hint of the incredible landscapes and unique animals we would encounter on our journey into the Southern Ocean.

After leaving the Falklands we headed south across the Drake Passage to Signy Island in the South Orkneys. As we gradually got further south, icebergs started to sporadically appear, becoming more and more frequent until the whole horizon turned white. It was then we knew that we had reached the sea-ice. At times this slowed the ship to a crawl and at one point we virtually stopped.

Eventually we made it to Signy, which sits underneath Coronation Island and was the most southerly place the ship would reach on this trip. Indeed, at one point we were the second most southerly ship in the world! The cloud then lifted and the sun shone on an incredibly rugged landscape of jagged peaks and blue glaciers, which surrounded the ship on all sides.



A penguin on Bertha's Beach, East Falkland.

We spent a couple of days unloading supplies for the Signy summer season and digging out the base from the winter snow, before beginning to sail north towards South Georgia, deploying scientific instruments at a number of locations on the way. The main purpose of this scientific cruise was to collect data on krill population dynamics in the Southern Ocean, which is important as they form the base of an ecosystem which supports spectacular animals such as humpback whales and orcas. At one of the locations, we were lucky enough to pique the curiosity of a pod of humpbacks, which swam around us for a couple of hours.

In addition to the main scientific objective, a number of smaller projects were also undertaken, including work on lantern fish, seaweed and pteropods (microscopic snails, which are also known as sea butterflies and have modified their foot so that they 'fly' through the sea).

In between resupplying two other bases, on Bird Island and at King Edward Point on South Georgia, we were able to deploy the box corer to sample the sediment on the South Georgia shelf. This piece of research was the reason I joined the cruise and the corer is essentially a large box with a shovel that closes when it hits the seafloor, collecting surface sediment.

We were able to deploy the box corer at two locations and recovered sediment from a depth of about 250 metres. Initial analysis indicates that the sediment contains abundant foraminifera (the microscopic organisms that I study) and this will inform how I interpret the data I am gathering from longer cores that stretch back up to 15,000 years.

**Rowan Dejardin**  
*PhD student*

This project is funded by the Centre for Environmental Geochemistry and supervised by:

- Dr Sev Kender and Dr George Swann from The University of Nottingham
- Professor Melanie Leng from the British Geological Survey
- Dr Victoria Peck and Dr Claire Allen from the British Antarctic Survey

The British Antarctic Survey funded Rowan's participation in this cruise.

Further details on the project can be found at:  
[www.environmentalgeochemistry.org/blogs.html](http://www.environmentalgeochemistry.org/blogs.html)

## My student journey



PhD student Sarem Ugoh.

Final year PhD student Sarem Ugoh tells us about her time at The University of Nottingham.

"Pursuing a PhD in the School of Geography has been an interesting experience. It's been quite challenging and occasionally the question 'why am I doing a PhD?' comes to mind. However, at these times I lean back and envisage the bigger picture. I started studying for a PhD because I felt its vigorous nature would equip me with the skills needed to become a symbol of change for my country, Nigeria, which is where the beauty of studying with the School of Geography at Nottingham comes in. My research has not been restricted by subject-specific boundaries as its multidisciplinary nature has enabled me to engage with other areas of research as well as become an expert in the area of my study.

My PhD is on studying the citrus value chain in Benue State, Nigeria. It is aimed at understanding the causes of citrus postharvest losses from the perspectives of key stakeholders such as farmers, middlemen and traders, as well as the underlying dynamics of the value chain. 'The lack of political willpower' is one phrase which came up a lot during my fieldwork as most of the stakeholders and the private sector felt that the government might not be doing enough to improve the agricultural sector. This is because Nigeria produces over 3.9 million metric tonnes of citrus but imports concentrates for local fruit juice production. There is a lack of concentrate processing facilities and as a result Nigeria loses 30-50% of its oranges to postharvest losses.

That is where my research fits in as it provides a comprehensive analysis of the intricate links between food production and management, food security, poverty eradication, environmental protection, policy, economics, and sustainable development. I hope my research will pave the way for more research and development in the Nigerian horticultural sector on both a local and global scale. It would raise awareness of the level of citrus produced – and lost – in the country and the importance of using locally produced fruits to build its economy, also guiding Government officials, politicians, and the private sector into investing in processing facilities to improve the livelihood of small-scale farmers."

To find out more about the research undertaken by the School of Geography, visit our website:  
[www.nottingham.ac.uk/geography/research](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/geography/research)

# All the latest from GeogSoc

The Geography Society at The University of Nottingham (or 'GeogSoc' for short) is the society for anyone and everyone interested in all things geographical. A 'Gold' society boasting nearly 400 members, GeogSoc offers a wide array of social, academic, careers-based, charitable and sporting events.

As I write, the GeogSoc committee and I are mid-way through our time 'in office' and are incredibly proud of everything we've achieved so far this year with the help of our members. An integral part of a society is its socials, and GeogSoc certainly delivers. We started the year with our famous Crayola social to welcome the geography freshers to Nottingham. This was a success and we were delighted to see it sell out.

We are now preparing for our upcoming boat cruise down the River Trent, with the fancy dress theme being 'countries'. I'm considering representing Italy as a life-size pizza, but have also heard that some 'Tie-land' and 'Czech-board Republic' outfits are in the works – you certainly can't fault geographers for their creativity!

Now, I don't want you thinking that all of our socials involve inventive outfits or colouring pencils. We offer lots of ways for our members to meet like-minded students and make friends throughout their time at Nottingham and one of these is through the peer mentoring scheme, which is organised in collaboration with the School of Geography. The scheme has now been accredited for two years through the Nottingham Advantage Award, and aims to offer help and support to first year students making the transition from school to university. We have had fantastic feedback and an overwhelming number of second and third years have volunteered to become mentors this year, which I think really speaks volumes.



Members of the GeogSoc Committee promoting the society to new students.

The highlight of our GeogSoc academic calendar was, without a doubt, the second annual GeogSoc lecture in collaboration with the School of Geography. We were lucky enough to welcome Professor Linda McDowell, from Oxford University, as she presented a lecture entitled 'Working lives and moving stories: Feminist generations and geographies'. I'll be the first to admit that Linda is a bit of a celebrity in the geography academic world, so we were very excited about her visit. It was extremely well received with over 100 members and staff attending. On GeogSoc's behalf, I would like to say a huge thank you to Linda for taking the time to come to Nottingham.

This year has also been the second of our GeogSoc initiatives to widen participation in schools. Six primary school sessions have been organised, with our keen GeogSoc volunteers ready to inspire the children to study geography at university. We hope to grow this scheme and continue promoting geographical studies to the next generation of undergraduates.

Some further GeogSoc achievements that are definitely worth a mention include the netball and football teams (netball are still unbeaten and football are sitting pretty at third in their league) and the food bank collection. The latter was organised by our Charities and Volunteering Secretary, Richard Adams, with members and School of Geography staff donating six large boxes of food and £50 to local charity, *Hope Nottingham*.

We have done so much already but – never fear – there is still a semester left for us and we're in the process of organising even more events for our members to get involved with. We're planning the next round of the highly-competitive annual student-staff pub quiz, a careers talk on routes into the Third Sector with the University's Careers and Employability Service and, of course, our annual Geography ball, 'Global!'.  
As President, I would like to take this opportunity to thank both my committee and School of Geography staff for their dedication, hard work and consistent help in the smooth running of the society so far this year and for helping GeogSoc reach new heights; without you none of this would have been possible.

Finally, to our members – thank you for enjoying GeogSoc as much as we do and for your continued support!

**Sarah Rafferty**  
*GeogSoc President 2015/16*



The GeogSoc Committee 2015/16 (courtesy of Martin Sylvester and dgtl events).

# Looking at luxury



Paul Smith: Nottingham's global luxury pioneer.

**Professor Louise Crewe conducts research within the fashion industry, specialising in consumption, retailing, exchange and value. Here, she shares her viewpoint on the remarkable resilience the luxury fashion market has displayed in the face of global recession.**

The UK luxury fashion sector is forecast to almost double in size from £6.6 billion to £12.2 billion from 2012-17, according to a 2013 survey by Ledbury Research and Walpole British Luxury. A number of luxury fashion houses are continuing to grow in spite of the difficult economic climate – Burberry, for example, saw global revenues triple (from 2006-13) and opened their largest Asian flagship store in April 2014.

The rate of growth in the luxury sector has been driven by a variety of factors, including a desire on the part of consumers for more responsible investment purchasing rather than chasing the latest 'fast-fashion fix'. There has also been an increase in the number of high-net-worth individuals (HNWI) with the emotional desire and economic capacity for luxury brand consumption.

However, one of the most significant reasons for the dramatic and sustained growth of the world's largest luxury fashion conglomerates is geographic expansion – for example, Hermes, Kering, Richemont and Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton (LVMH) have all grown ten-fold in the past two decades. This is particularly the case in emerging markets such as China, India, and Brazil as well as more generally in Asia and the Middle East. It is predicted that 85% of all luxury retail stores will be opening in emerging markets over the coming decade.

Rising GDP in emerging middle-class markets has increased the demand for luxury goods. The 'new' middle classes are being targeted as a key consumer group who see luxury products as aspirational commodities that can increase social status via their associations with affluent, cosmopolitan Western lifestyles. Global luxury firms are maintaining scarcity and continually raising their prices at rates that are significantly above inflation. This can be thought of as an exclusivity tax which is quite extraordinary given current global economic conditions.

One way of achieving a strong geographical presence is through the symbolic and authoritative presence of the flagship store which acts as the material expression of the brand and offers a place of seduction and desire. For the retailer, a flagship store serves to showcase the entire brand story to the consumer under one roof and makes use of all of the tools available to highlight the brand statement and philosophy.

**“Branded luxury products seem to be immune to the more deleterious effects of global crisis.”**

Situated in prestigious retail sites within global cities, flagship stores are characterised by their large scale and cutting edge architecture. Brand names are embossed on store fronts, buildings and canopies and flags displaying company logos hang authoritatively from the store fronts, a stark mechanism through which to quite literally brand the city. The brand flags allude to the notion of expedition and colonisation, suggesting that the brand has physically and metaphorically marked its territorial claim on the exclusive retailscape.

In spite of claims that retail stores will become irrelevant given the rapid rise of online commerce, the luxury flagship store remains as an important space through which to communicate brand messages and maintain retail power. Luxury fashion, it would seem, is actively using geography to maintain its competitive advantage.

**Louise Crewe**  
*Professor of Human Geography*

Find out more about the research undertaken by the School of Geography on our website: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/geography/research](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/geography/research)

# Unique partnership with the British Geological Survey



Environmental Geoscience students undertaking field research.

The University of Nottingham is the only educational institution to offer an undergraduate programme in collaboration with the British Geological Survey (BGS).

Students who are studying towards our Environmental Geoscience bachelor's degree draw on natural and social science expertise to look into people and their interaction with the environment.

Based at our University Park Campus with opportunities to spend time at the BGS in nearby Keyworth, students benefit from the expertise of internationally-renowned academics from the School of Geography and staff from the UK's premier centre for earth science information.

The three year course includes field study in all years as well as specialist modules such as Sedimentology and Palaeontology, and Mineralogy and Petrology.

Visit our website for further information: [www.nottingham.ac.uk/ugstudy/courses/geography](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/ugstudy/courses/geography)

Or contact the course director: [paul.nathanail@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:paul.nathanail@nottingham.ac.uk)



## Careers

### The next step

As a school, we work closely with students to engage them to think about and work on career-related opportunities, actively connecting them to brand ambassadors and employers.



Students visiting the Careers and Employability Service.

We arrange networking events and talks in collaboration with the University's Careers and Employability Service and the Geography Society (GeogSoc) and, last year, launched a new summer internship scheme.

This initiative provides opportunities for our students to be placed with a variety of participating firms including those in the resource management, environmental science and consultancy fields.

We aim to extend this scheme further in 2016 and are working to expand the number and range of participating firms on offer.

### Meeting the alumni

The School of Geography's fourth annual careers networking event was held at the Ropewalk pub in central Nottingham.

Bringing together current students and alumni members who have embarked on different career trajectories, the event provided an excellent platform to exchange ideas, address questions and obtain advice.

Feedback from attendees was positive with one student saying that they were "given plenty of time to talk to the representatives from each field". A first-year student also commented that the event had given them "an interest in sectors which wouldn't have crossed my mind beforehand".



Students and alumni at our recent careers networking event.

Dr Kean Fan Lim, the school's Careers Officer, said: "The positive responses from the students reflect the success of the event and it has an additional bonus in that it enables us to reconnect with our alumni network. Our invited speakers are stellar models, and we hope students can be inspired to do just as well, if not better."

#### Get involved

UoNGeography

@UoNGeography

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