

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP

*Royal Geographical Society
with the Institute of British Geographers*

Newsletter **May 1998**

In this edition

New committee for the HPGRG

Extracts from the Annual General Meeting 1998

Conference Report

- Medical Geography Research Traditions

Calls for Papers

- RGS-IBG Annual Meeting 1999
- Space, Technology and Modernity

Forthcoming Meetings

- Postcolonial Geographies
- Around the World
- Medicine, Science and Enlightenment
- Space: Narrative and Image
- IGU Workshop
- John Ray and his Successors
- Drawing from Nature

Book Announcement

Please send any material for inclusion in the Newsletter, and any suggestions for future content, to the editor

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Hard copy is fine but a version on disc (Word or ASCII files please) or as an email attachment would be preferable. The Newsletter is published twice a year; copy deadlines are April 1st and October 1st.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1998

Extracts from the Unconfirmed Minutes

Chair's Report

David Livingstone reported that the special edition of the Scottish Geographical Magazine, which includes papers from the HPGRG session at the 1996 Annual Meeting, was still available. The forthcoming University of Chicago Press volume of papers from the 1996 Geography and Enlightenment Conference was progressing well and papers had been favourably reviewed. Three HPGRG sessions had been convened for the 1998 Annual Conference: *Darwinism and Geography, Exploring the Geographies of Science, Technology and Nature* (with SCGRG) and *Medical Geography Research Traditions: Histories and Perspectives* (with GHRG). Two HPGRG guests - Janet Browne (Wellcome Institute) and James Moore (Open University) - were presenting papers in the Darwinism session. David Livingstone ended his report by thanking the other Committee members for their help during his term as Chair. In particular he thanked Charlie Withers for transforming the HPGRG Newsletter into its current, highly regarded form.

Secretary's Report

Alison Blunt reported that details of the RGS-IBG Strategic Review had been published in the RGS-IBG Newsletter. A longer document would be circulated in February. Three papers were being prepared for the RGS-IBG Council meeting in April: on governance, fundraising, and implementation. £60,000 will be available for the first year of the Strategic Review's implementation. The RGS-IBG is keen to foster greater liaison between the centre and research groups. The importance of publicising geographical research had been stressed by the RGS-IBG and a press office will help achieve that goal. It has been proposed that research groups should produce a poster and perhaps a paper on research in their area by 2000. The Research Register of the RGS-IBG will be published in April and includes c.900 entries. It will be available on the Internet and only a limited number of printed copies will be produced. Ron Martin had been in post as editor of *Transactions* since January 1st 1998. The 1999 Annual Conference will be held in Leicester and has the theme 'Geographies of the Future'.

Treasurer's Report

Mike Heffernan produced accounts for 1997. A £500 grant had been received from the RGS-IBG towards the costs of the Postcolonial Geographies conference. The annual subvention from the RGS-IBG had not yet been received and Mike was pursuing this matter. The closing balance was £1,294.16, and it was agreed that a minimum balance of £1,000 was desirable.

Newsletter Editor's Report

Charlie Withers reported that during his three year tenure six issues had been produced as well as the Register of Member's Research Interests. He thanked members for their contributions. The high quality of the Newsletter was praised. Charlie Withers stressed the importance of departmental printing facilities to assist in the publication of the Newsletter. Postage costs had been included in the total expenditure.

Election of New Officers and Committee Members

David Livingstone (Chair), Mike Heffernan (Treasurer), Charlie Withers (Newsletter Editor), Elspeth Graham and Avril Maddrell (Committee Members) were all due to leave the committee. Felix Driver was nominated as Chair, Mike Heffernan was nominated to continue as Treasurer, Pyrs Gruffudd was nominated as Newsletter Editor, and Noel Castree and Ron Johnston were nominated as Committee Members. As no other nominations had been received, Felix, Mike, Pyrs, Noel and Ron were appointed and welcomed to their new posts.

Conference Planning

Two sessions are planned for the 1999 Annual Conference: a joint session with the WGSG entitled *Feminisms and Geographies: Theoretical Orientations and Future Directions*, and a possible joint session with the ERG tentatively called *Pastoralism and the Modern*. [A Call for Papers for the former appears in this issue. Please contact Mark Bassin for any details of the latter: Editor]. Felix Driver proposed a day-conference on the cultural history of fieldwork during 1999 to be held at the RGS-IBG in London.

Home Page

Alison Blunt suggested that a HPGRG home page should be developed during 1998 as part of the RGS-IBG website. The home page could include the letter to new members, the latest Newsletter, conference details, Committee details and postgraduate news. The possibility of electing a Publicity Officer onto the Committee was suggested.

Any Other Business

Felix Driver suggested that the HPGRG should maintain its pressure on the RGS-IBG to safeguard its archival collection and to appoint an archivist. These archives are a vital resource for research on the history of geography and the history of the RGS.

On behalf of all members, Felix Driver expressed thanks to retiring Officers and Committee Members for all their work for the HPGRG. In particular, he thanked David Livingstone for his excellent work as Chair and Charlie Withers for his excellent work as Newsletter Editor.

Date of Next Meeting

The next AGM of the HPGRG will be held in early January 1999 at the Annual Conference in Leicester.

CONFERENCE REPORT

MEDICAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH TRADITIONS: HISTORIES AND PERSPECTIVES RGS-IBG Annual Conference, Kingston, January 8th 1998

Tim Brown and Graham Moon of the University of Portsmouth and Michael Dorn of the University of Kentucky organised this session for the Geography of Health Research Group and the HPGRG. Gerry Kearns (Cambridge) gave a paper on how the work of Michel Foucault could act as a resource for thinking about the concerns of medical geography and the boundaries of its history. Particular attention was drawn to three tactics of Foucault's writings: the emphasis on the relations between discourses and practices; the role of formal knowledges in the creation of self-reflective subjects; and the place of politics in the writing of histories which render problematic the conventionally self-evident. Susan Craddock (University of Arizona) gave an account of the way geographical understandings of disease operated at a variety of scales to reinforce a xenophobic construction of plague in turn-of-the-century San Francisco. Craddock drew upon Foucault to open up issues about the relations between conceptions of the spaces of the body and conceptions of the spaces of the city. Craddock also related these tactics to modern debates about AIDS and about resurgent tuberculosis where similar forms of racialised geographical reasoning prevail. Graham Moon and Tim Brown presented a paper on Jacques May, an individual who is often taken to be a founding figure in American academic medical geography. Moon and Brown related May's version of 'disease ecology' to his practical involvement with military and colonial medicine. This official capacity gave May the status to present himself as reshaping the sub-discipline after the practical concerns of government, although in terms of methodology and approach little that he wrote was particularly novel.

Michael Dorn and Vincent DelCasino (University of Kentucky) argued that medical geography continues to be structured around a division between physical and moral concerns which dates from the late Enlightenment and the abandonment of the holistic Hippocratic tradition. The paper suggested that the separation was continually reasserted by those on both sides of the divide. The disease ecologists kept their distance from the moral concerns of the health-services researchers while the latter in turn stood apart from the primarily physical concerns of the former. Felicity Callard (Johns Hopkins University) presented a paper on the psychological aspects of urban unease in late-nineteenth century London. Callard was concerned to describe how 'anxiety' was discursively constructed as a distinct syndrome. Anxiety, Callard suggested, was made to stand as a critique of the excessive and traumatising stimuli of the metropolis.

This lively session showed how completely studies in the history of medical geography and historical studies in medical geography have escaped the confines of either disease ecology or health services research. Moon and Brown return the disease ecology tradition to an altogether messier political context than exponents of its practicality usually intend. Craddock implies that the spatial gaze of medical geographies needs to be subjected to postcolonial critique if we are to understand its power within societies where its ability to put people in the right place is basic to racist medical policies. Callard documents the way 'medical' concerns about the urban environment were reconfigured during the rise of the psy-disciplines. Here we have a conception of the city that departs radically from the

physicality of the disease ecology tradition. It is not surprising that it was in medicine that Foucault found much of the subject matter with which he could think through the links between power, discipline, subjectivity and governmentality. Dorn and DelCasino are surely right to imply that the physical/moral division needs to be set aside if medical geographers are to have a clear view of the sorts of challenges represented by papers such as those given in this session.

Gerry Kearns, University of Cambridge

In addition to the above session, the HPGRG sponsored or co-sponsored two other sessions at the Kingston Annual Conference. David Livingstone (Queen's University Belfast) convened a half-day session on *Darwinism and Geography* and Judith Gerber (Nottingham) co-convened a half-day session on *Exploring the Geographies of Science, Technology and Nature* with Mike Crang and Simon Naylor of the SCGRG.

CALLS FOR PAPERS

1. RGS-IBG ANNUAL CONFERENCE, UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER, JANUARY 1999

Feminisms and Geographies: Theoretical Orientations and Future Directions
A one day session organised jointly by the HPGRG and the Women and Geography Study Group.

For many feminists, clear tensions exist between recognising both gender and subjectivity as constructed and the strategic need to assert gendered subjectivity. Such tensions are increasingly articulated in spatial terms whereby gendered subjectivity both repeats and yet denies its grounded confinement. Spatial notions of subjectivity have inscribed gender in more contingent, unstable and decentred terms. At the same time, spatial notions of subjectivity have also led to an increasing call for materially grounded representations of subjectivity and feminist politics. This session will trace the interplay of feminisms and geographies by focusing on representations of subjectivity both in place and across space. Papers should address theoretical concerns with reference to material examples and might include studies of bodies, homes, and worlds; transnational representations of subjectivity; images of mobility and displacement; and the spatial performativity of subjectivity. The session will consider the ways in which spatial inscriptions of subjectivity can be grounded and located in ways that resist confinement. As such the session will examine the theoretical orientations and future directions of feminisms, geographies and the crucial links between them.

Please send a title and 150 word abstract to one of the convenors by June 1st 1998. The convenors are Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan, whose details are given on page 2 of this newsletter.

Life Histories/Life Geographies Organised by the HGRG

Questions of self-hood, subjectivity and personal identity have been central to recent developments in social and cultural theory. Also there is renewed interest in biography and autobiography as modes of empirical research and interpretation in demography, social survey and cultural history. As some of this research has shown, lives are told and selves defined geographically, in terms of the places and spaces in which a person lives and works, the journeys they make, the worlds they dream about. This session focuses on the intersection of life histories and life geographies. Speakers from a wide range of perspectives are invited to explore the diverse ways in which charting the life paths of people can illuminate past and present geographies, and what biography means in the processes of research, interpretation and writing.

Abstracts of 300 words should be sent to the convenors by May 31st 1998. They are Dr Stephen Daniels, Department of Geography, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD, Stephen.Daniels@geography.nottingham.ac.uk; and Dr Catherine Nash, Department of Geography, University of Wales Lampeter, Lampeter, Ceredigion SA48 7ED, C.Nash@Lampeter.ac.uk

Institutional Geographies A half day session organised by the SCGRG

This session aims to interrogate the term 'institutional geographies' and asks general questions such as what are institutional geographies, how can they be identified and what do they mean? Papers are sought which explore such notions and they may focus upon a variety of theoretical and empirical materials. Particularly relevant are thoughts upon whether there are identifiable institutional identities, performances, cultures or bodies and do these make, or are they made by, particular spaces. Using the term 'institutional' does not necessarily imply that these questions have to be answered with reference to conventional (and material) understandings of institutions (such as hospitals, universities and prisons - though these are not excluded here). Rather we are seeking a broader conceptualisation of the 'institutional' when thinking about (for example) social relations, gender, ethnicity, health, citizenship and relationships to space and place.

Abstracts of 200 words by June 1st 1998 to Hester Parr, Department of Geography, University of Dundee, Dundee DD1 4HN, H.Parr@Dundee.ac.uk

2. SPACE, TECHNOLOGY AND MODERNITY, Gregynog, Mid Wales, October 9th-11th 1998

Contributions are invited for this symposium organised by the Centre for the Study of Spaces in Modernity, a research initiative by the Departments of Geography at the University of Wales in Lampeter and Swansea. Although technology and modernity have traditionally formed an ensemble - to the point of interchangeability - surprisingly little research has focused on the consequences of modern (e.g. electricity) and contemporary (e.g.

internet) technologies. The purpose of the symposium is to ask some key questions: how has technology mediated between urban and rural manifestations of modern space? What new opportunities and freedoms have various technologies fostered? What can we learn at the end of the twentieth century from the previous experiences of technological development? Addressing these and related questions will be four keynote speakers: Christoph Asendorf (Viadrina University), Leo Marx (MIT), Paul Rabinow (UC Berkeley) and Kristin Ross (New York University).

In addition, we invite contributions centred around the themes mentioned. Please send a 200 word abstract no later than June 15th to the convenors: Dr Prys Gruffudd, Department of Geography, University of Wales Swansea, Swansea SA2 8PP, R.P.Gruffudd@Swansea.ac.uk ; or Dr Ulf Strohmayer, department of Geography, University of Wales Lampeter, Lampeter SA48 7ED, U.Strohmayer@Lampeter.ac.uk

We anticipate a fee - including 2 days' room and board - of approximately £90 for the waged and £70 for postgraduates. If you do not wish to submit a paper but wish to be sent booking details then please contact the convenors as soon as possible.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

1. POSTCOLONIAL GEOGRAPHIES

Members are reminded about the HPGRG's conference to be held in the University of Southampton and convened by Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan. The conference addresses the following themes:

- Imaginative geographies of empire
- Destabilizing imperial power and knowledge
- Decolonizing minds and bodies
- Geographies of decolonization
- Subaltern spaces
- Transnational politics

The plenary speaker is Dipesh Chakrabarty (Chicago).

Late bookings may still be made by contacting Dr Alison Blunt (see page 2).

2. MEDICINE AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE Society for the Social History of Medicine Annual Conference University of Edinburgh, July 17th-19th 1998

It may still be possible to make a booking to attend this conference. For further details contact Steve Sturdy, Science Studies Unit, University of Edinburgh, 21 Buccleugh Place, Edinburgh EH8 9LN, email S.Sturdy@ed.ac.uk

3. AROUND THE WORLD: THE CIRCULATION OF IDEAS IN THE HISTORY OF GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT

A meeting of the International Geographical Union Commission on the History and Philosophy of Geography, Lisbon, Portugal, July 27th-29th, 1998.

This meeting, previously announced in the November 1997 Newsletter, draws attention to the importance of understanding geography's participation in, and contribution to, the main intellectual currents that have characterised international exchanges. Three sub-themes will structure the meeting: the contribution of geographical ideas to the streams of the world's intellectual currents; the transfer of ideas from one country to another; and the contribution of travel to the development of geographical ideas. For further information contact Vincent Berdoulay, Laboratoire SET (CNRS), Domaine Universitaire, F-64000 Pau, France; Fax + 33 5 59 80 83 39; email Vincent.Berdoulay@univ-pau.fr

**4. MEDICINE, SCIENCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT, 1680-1789
University of Edinburgh, August 10th-14th 1998**

An international conference including sessions on Possessing Science and Medical Knowledge in the 18th Century; Culture and Science in France and Britain; Science and the Public Sphere; Improvement and the Enlightenment; Representation and Science. The registration fee for the full conference is £80 (£30 for students) and the daily rate is £35 (£10). For further details contact The Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh, Hope Park Square, Edinburgh EH8 9NW; Tel: 0131 650 4671; email IASH@ed.ac.uk

5. SPACE: NARRATIVE AND IMAGE

**European Group for the Study of Geographic Representations
Université François-Rabelais of Tours, December 4th-5th 1998.**

The last meeting of this group was held in Royal Holloway in 1996 on the theme Centres-Margins-Networks. This meeting will address more general questions concerning the ways in which narrative, graphic images and diagrams represent and mobilise space in the context of social action. The objective of the symposium is to stimulate epistemological and theoretical reflection and discussion. The symposium will have three strands:

- Iconic space/textual space
- New imageries/new spaces
- Contestations and conflict: the image in action

For further details on the programme contact Michel Lussault, Maison des Sciences de la Ville, 4 allée du Plessis, 37000 Tours, France; email Lussault@aol.com

**6. SPECIALIST WORKSHOP, INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION COMMISSION ON THE HISTORY OF GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT
Leipzig, January 1999**

A specialist workshop is planned on the use of archival material for research in the history of geographical thought. This will be held in Leipzig in January 1999. The programme is to be co-ordinated by two full members of the Commission - Ute Wardenga and Patrick Armstrong. It is hoped that there will be papers on such topics as:

- Archival resources for the study of the history of geography
- Techniques of archival use
- Problems of access
- Interpreting the sources
- An inventory of geographical archives: where now?

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive. As well as formal papers it is hoped that there may be opportunities for 'hands on' sessions, and suggestions for such activities will be particularly welcomed. The proposed dates of the meeting are Friday January 15th (arrival) to Monday January 18th (departure) 1999. Those who have suggestions for papers or workshop sessions should contact one of the organisers:

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7. JOHN RAY AND HIS SUCCESSORS: THE CLERGYMAN AS BIOLOGIST

**A joint conference of the John Ray Trust, the Society for the History of Natural History, and the Institute of Biology's History Committee.
Braintree, Essex, March 18th-21st 1999**

John Ray (1627-1705) was one of the most important biologists in the history of the subject and this conference will celebrate all aspects of his life and work. He was ordained and his religious beliefs informed his work and were widely influential. The conference will go on to consider the British clergy (or their families) who were biologists and their distinctive contributions to both church and science. This would include theology, social roles and individual biographies. The third focus of the conference will be the current experience of people who are both clerics and biologists. Keynote addresses will be given on each of these three themes.

The fee is likely to be under £100 (including lunches). Further details are available from Rev. Nigel Cooper, the Rectory, 40 Church Road, Rivenhall, Witham, Essex CM8 3PQ, email cooperns@email.msn.com

8. DRAWING FROM NATURE: ART AND ILLUSTRATION IN THE NATURAL HISTORY SCIENCES

Society for the History of Natural History, and the Natural History Museum Conference, Natural History Museum, London, April 14th-17th 1999

Conference themes are provisionally entitled:

- Why illustrate?
- From picture to diagram
- Authors and illustrators
- Museums on paper

Further details are available from Paul Cooper, Zoology Library, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, email P.Cooper@nhm.ac.uk

NEW BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

MODERN GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT BY RICHARD PEET

The following message was posted on the Critical Geography Forum's email discussion list by Blackwell's Publishers. It is reproduced here for the benefit of those who are not members of this list:

"Professors of geographical thought and the history of geographical thought might be interested to hear that a comprehensive survey of recent and contemporary human geographical scholarship is now available. In *Modern Geographical Thought*, Richard Peet integrates all of the major approaches in geographical research with broader philosophical arguments, social theory and political contexts. Beginning with existential phenomenology and humanistic geography, the book goes on to lead the reader through the post-positivist debates that have dominated human geography during its progressive engagement with social theory. Topics covered include:

- Marxism, Radical Geography and Marxist Geography
- Structuralism and Structural Marxist Geography
- Structuration, Realism and Locality Studies
- Poststructuralism, Postmodernism and Postmodern Geographies
- Feminism and Feminist Geographies

Peet's concise, accessible and passionate writing draws the reader into the text and will not fail to stimulate further debate.

To receive a complimentary examination copy, contact Laura Montgomery at

Khicks@Blackwellpublishers.co.uk

Please remember to include your postal address, your course title, level and number of students, and your course start date."

