

# History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG)

**Royal  
Geographical  
Society**  
with IBG



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# NEWSLETTER

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## Welcome

Dear HPGRG members

Our last newsletter was dated February 14, 2020, and was blissfully unaware of COVID-19 which was soon to overwhelm the world and led to the postponement or cancellation of nearly everything that was discussed in that newsletter. Particularly, the wonderful set of sessions and interactions we were planning to have in London for the yearly RGS-IBG meeting and the anniversary of our research group. This newsletter is very much an announcement how we picked up the pieces and re-assembled those initiatives for this year. Unfortunately, as it stands right now, both our 40 year anniversary and the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference are still set to be (largely) online due to the repeated resurgence of the pandemic. Nevertheless this is all the more reason to make sure everybody is able to find their way through the maze of online sessions and hopefully, this will lead to more people being able to celebrate our birthday together.

That birthday will be celebrated with a full day online symposium on Tuesday, 7 September 2021. This newsletter contains a preliminary programme of the symposium and information how to register.

Another important celebration in this newsletter is that of our 2020 HPGRG Undergraduate Dissertation Prize Winner, Daisy Nichols (University of Bristol), whose achievement also did not yet properly get celebrated in the HPGRG newsletter. We will also look forward to this years' HPGRG awards, and we are proud to announce a new one which will be awarded for the first time this year: the HPGRG Engagement Award.

Another item in this newsletter is the section "from our peer institutions", presented for the first time here. There are many peer organisations around the world that also care for and curate the history and philosophy of our discipline and here we hope to introduce the activities of some of them.

As you've come to expect of us, this newsletter provides the full overview of this year's HPGRG-sponsored sessions at the RGS-IBG annual conference on August 31-September 3, 2021. For more information on the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, please see <https://www.rgs.org/research/annual-international-conference/>.

We do hope you enjoy reading this newsletter, plan to attend our anniversary event, come along to HPGRG sessions at the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, or virtually attend our Annual General Meeting on September 8. For period updates between these newsletters follow the [HPGRG Twitter feed](#) and/or HPGRG website: <https://hpgrg.org.uk/>.

With best regards

Michiel

Michiel van Meeteren  
HPGRG Communications officer  
Geography & Environment  
Loughborough University



Michiel van Meeteren

## In memoriam Ron Johnston (1941-2020)

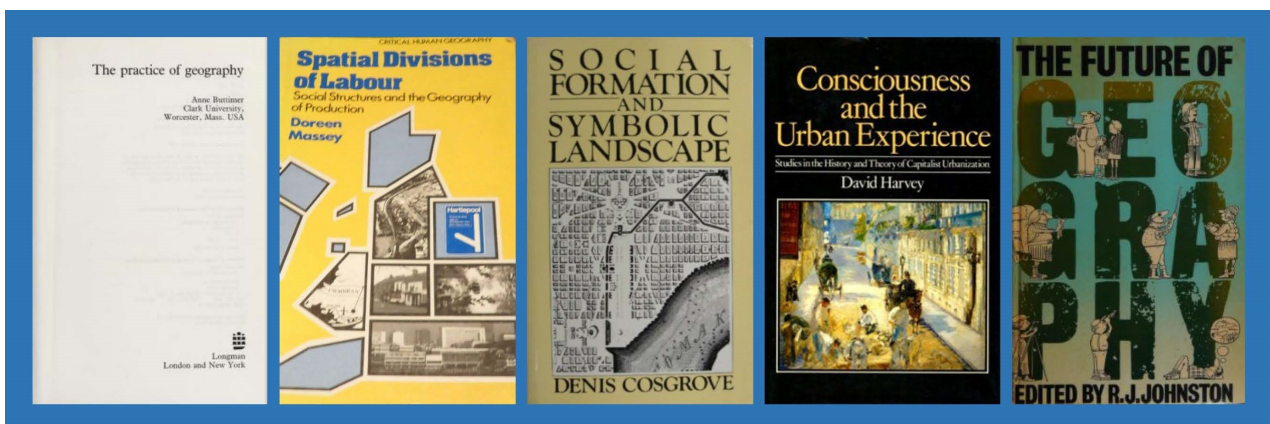
It is with sadness that we have to acknowledge the passing of one of our founding members, professor Ron Johnston. During our last in person Annual Meeting in 2019, we had the pleasure of welcoming Ron to several HPGRG sessions on textbooks and autobiography, see our [2020-1 Newsletter](#). His towering presence in geography in general and in the history and philosophy of geography in particular will be irreplaceable. Tributes have appeared, amongst elsewhere, in [Progress in Human Geography](#), [The Geographical Journal](#), [Geographical Research](#), [GeoJournal](#), with more forthcoming.

## 40 Years of HPGRG

### Looking Back and Looking Forward

A one-day symposium of the  
History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG)  
Tuesday, 7 September 2021 on Microsoft Teams  
(in-person elements tbc)

Registration for free online attendance is [requested here](#).



We are delighted to invite attendance at our 40 years of HPGRG anniversary event. HPGRG was founded as a Working Party in 1981, became a fully-fledged Study Group in 1985 and was renamed as a Research Group in 1996. Two keynote lecturers, Professors Audrey Kobayashi (Queen's University, Kingston, Canada) and Tim Cresswell (University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom), and c. 15 geographers from across different career stages reflect on biographies, philosophies and impacts in the context of the history and philosophy of geography. Q&A sessions and interactive discussions will enable attendees to contribute to the event (for full details, please see [the event programme](#)).

In these volatile times of an ongoing COVID-19 global health crisis, the registration process might proceed in two steps. The online only event will go ahead in any case. [Please register your free online attendance here.](#)

We have scheduled our event in line with most RGS-IBG conference sessions in the previous week as an online event, but in-person contributions might still go ahead. Therefore, we might invite in-person attendance based on a small fee in a second step.

In any case, all speakers and delegates could contribute and attend online, if they wish to do so and prefer to plan with this mode of participation.

We look forward to a fascinating day of reflections and discussions!

The HPGRG committee

## PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

09:45	Arrival of the speakers and delegates
10:00	Welcome address by the HPGRG chair
10:15	KNOWLEDGE, HOPE, POWER, AND RISK: 40 YEARS Audrey Kobayashi, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada
11:15	Coffee break
11:30	REFLECTIONS I: BIOGRAPHIES RT Harrison, R Powell, H Clout, E Baigent, M Bruinsma, E Hayes
12:45	Lunch break with optional interactive discussions and socialising
13:30	HOW GEOGRAPHIC THOUGHT HAPPENS Tim Cresswell, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
14:30	Coffee break
14:45	REFLECTIONS II: PHILOSOPHIES P Daley, M Doel, B Greenhough, J Brigstocke, M van Meeteren
16:00	Coffee break
16:15	REFLECTIONS III: IMPACTS G Tobin with H Lorimer & S Naylor, M Boyle, F Ferretti, P Couper, IM Keighren
17:30	FAVOURITE BOOKS & FUTURE EVENTS Small group discussions
18:00	Close of the HPGRG anniversary symposium

## KEYNOTE LECTURES ABSTRACTS

### KNOWLEDGE, HOPE, POWER, AND RISK: 40 YEARS

Audrey Kobayashi, Queen's University, Kingston

Four decades ago, the question of geographical knowledge arguably centred on the debates between so-called 'humanistic' and 'Marxian' approaches. This tension echoed both philosophical and sociopolitical issues of the time, particularly in continental Europe. The last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, marked socio-politically by the effects of the end of some socialist regimes and the rise of neoliberalism, saw geographical knowledge become increasingly but unevenly politicized, Marxism, anti-racism, and feminism (most notably) lurching and receding, like jazz chords, sometimes in harmony, sometimes discordant, often unfinished. In the process, the quest for geographical knowledge in itself became less relevant than understanding how geographical knowledge is powerfully deployed. Most of our knowledge, after all, stems from the hubris of the Enlightenment, forms the basis of colonial dispossession and oppression, and has become commodified as a tool of neoliberalism. These observations do not imply that the quest either for knowledge or for understanding of knowledge has been forgotten by geographers; rather, it has become more and more difficult to emerge from the sheer weight of accumulated taken-for-granted knowledge (especially as technology pushes that accumulation exponentially), and more difficult to get past the political dilemmas that the power of knowledge mandates. The question emerges: in a time when it is more and more clear that power and knowledge are inextricably intertwined, is it worth asking whether it is more important to further epistemological questions about knowledge itself – especially when recent approaches push us to recognize the fungibility of knowledge according to geographical/political/social context – or, as some recent approaches suggest, should we be concerned with the more practical questions of understanding knowledge in action, the flux and movement of social actors in a world where nothing remains in place? Can or should we do both? Both approaches carry epistemological risks.



Audrey Kobayashi

### HOW GEOGRAPHIC THOUGHT HAPPENS

Tim Cresswell, University of Edinburgh

In the presentation I reflect on a series of moments when 'geographic thought' - or, possibly just, 'theory', has intersected with all the other things that form of part of being this geographer (me) in particularly productive ways. I will make a case for geographic thought/theory as being an enlivening and meaning-making exercise through which our discipline is made to matter. Along the way I will share my encounters with humanistic geography, new cultural geography, post-modern



Tim Cresswell

geographies, and black geographies as well as the new mobilities paradigm and creative geo humanities - all of which occur in coffee shops, post-graduate offices, the living room of a tutor/mentor, departmental corridors, on trains, and over lunch at a conference. In other words, a kind of geography of geographical theory.

### WELCOME ADDRESS: CONVERSATIONS IN GEOGRAPHY

Heike Jöns, Loughborough University

The guiding dictum for my reflections as HPGRG chair is the observation by Ron Johnston and James Sidaway that 'we are making the future of geography as we practise it' (2016: 399). My commentary centres on three main themes to illustrate how conversations in geography have developed over time. The first theme discusses institutional networks—from the foundation of the History and Philosophy of Geography Working Party in 1981, via the group's elevation to a fully-fledged study group in 1985, to HPGRG's double anniversary in 2020-21. The second theme addresses research—argumentative-interpretative, empirical, experimental and/or theoretical, and preferably novel, creative, detailed, rigorous, critically reflective and well contextualised in order to enable 'progress' in geographical knowledge production, sometimes in rather surprising ways. The third theme reflects on theory and paradigmatic change—from the discussion of geodeterminism and possibilism in H.C. Darby's 1931 PhD thesis, the first in Geography in the University of Cambridge, to the proliferation of conceptual resources in what has evolved into a productive epistemological pluralism across sub-disciplinary specialisms, even if some geographers prefer conceptual orthodoxy within their own work. Looking back and looking forward therefore enables us from time to time to assess how institutional networks, research practices, and geographical writings have been shaped by and are shaping the making of geography, including the possibilities for future research on the history and philosophy of geography.



Heike Jöns

FOR THE ABSTRACTS ON THE 10-MINUTE STATEMENTS, PLEASE SEE [THE EVENT PROGRAMME](#)

# History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG) Prizes

## HPGRG Undergraduate Dissertation Prize

Each year the HPGRG committee looks forward to welcoming submissions to its annual Undergraduate Dissertation Prize (deadline 15th July 2021). It is a pleasure to be one of the assessors of this award as it effectively offers a cross-section of the excellence of our vibrant community of UK undergraduate geographers.

Further information about the history of the award, a list of previous winners and their dissertation titles, as well as details of the assessment matrix used by the group to assess the award, can be found on our HPGRG website here: <https://hpgrg.org.uk/dissertation-prize/>. Alternatively, please contact Dr Emily Hayes (Oxford Brookes University) ehayes@brookes.ac.uk for submissions or should you have questions about the award.

The aim of our HPGRG Undergraduate Dissertation Award is to foster geographers' efforts to nurture and contribute to the historical and philosophical fundamentals of our discipline and discourse. In seeking to sustain various forms of excellence and originality, we welcome submissions which showcase thematical, methodological as well as theoretical originality and innovation. The HPGRG committee acknowledges the need for greater representation of minority groups in academia; students from diverse, and under-represented, backgrounds are therefore encouraged to apply.

## Winner of the 2020 Undergraduate Dissertation Prize

This year the prize was awarded to Daisy Nichols (University of Bristol) for her dissertation titled, *The micropolitics of filmmaking Otherwise: The Karrabing Collective*. Daisy identified a gap in Geography's visual preoccupations and gave us a dissertation which evidenced her ability to grapple with critical theory. Her study enriches our discipline by bringing the grassroots activism of the indigenous cinematic and media Karrabing Film Collective from Northwest Australia, with whom Professor Elizabeth Povinelli has collaborated over several decades, to geographers' wider attentions. In doing so she affirms her, and the HPGRG's belief, that we live in, and study, a world of many worlds. Daisy has given us permission to make her dissertation available to the public and it can be downloaded [here](#).



## HPGRG Public Engagement Award

The year 2021 also saw the launch by the HPGRG of a new initiative, a bi-annual HPGRG Public Engagement Award, intended to support creative ways of communicating knowledge to diverse audiences by early career researchers (broadly defined) in Geography and related disciplines. Complementing the Undergraduate Dissertation Award, it is hoped that this new initiative will help scholars at the start of their careers to develop their powers of imagination, confidence to explore and share new methods of presenting research, as well as widen the geographies of geographical knowledge, by encouraging engagement with new audiences across an array of spaces. Applications, written in English, should detail engagement activities that have been completed. However, the award is open to scholars around the world. Further details can be found on the HPGRG website here: <https://hpgrg.org.uk/engagement-award/>.

We were thrilled that the award was so positively received by international early career and senior scholars across the humanities and social sciences. We are grateful in advance for any help that you can lend in circulating details of this award and encouraging your students to consider applying for the next round in 2023.



Stay tuned to HPGRG Twitter updates @HPGRG-RGS for details of the first recipients of these awards which will be announced at the group's AGM or the HPGRG 40-year anniversary celebration in early September.

Emily Hayes, HPGRG Awards Coordinator

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### From our peer institutions:

In this new section we intend to relay information and messages from institutions that have a similar or related role as the HPGRG in the curation of the history and philosophy of geography. The message for this instance was written by the HPGRG's secretary, Federico Ferretti (University of Bologna, Italy), who doubles in that role at the IGU Commission on the History of Geography. If you have any suggestions for partner organizations to introduce in this space, please contact the HPGRG communications officer at [m.vam-meeteren@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:m.vam-meeteren@lboro.ac.uk)

The Commission on the History of Geography of the International Geographical Union and of the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology IUHPST/DHST

Suffering for the consequences of the pandemics like everybody, our Commission <https://ugihg.hypotheses.org/> performed its latest in-person gathering in Dublin, in July 2019, in time at least to pay an utterly due tribute to the memory of one of our great



inspirations, Anne Buttimer (1938-2017). Yet, this situation did not prevent us from continuing our international work and networking for the history of geography. While a recently-published collective book <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783030495152> now displays the results of our double symposium that took place in Brazil in 2017, we are resuming in 2021, in online format, nothing less than four of our previously scheduled symposia.

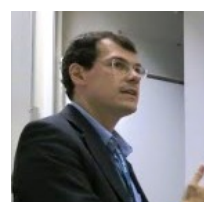
The first, 'Southern thinking, heritage, migration and Mediterranean cultures', took place last May within the International Geographical Union Thematic Conference on Heritage geographies, politics, uses and governance of the past, originally scheduled in the wonderful Italian town of Lecce. Among the next ones, 'Bridging differences: East, west, seas and Mediterranean worlds', organized in collaboration with the IGU Commissions Gender and Geography and Political Geography to take place within the International Geographical Congress, has the declared aim to bring a critical, feminist and decolonial perspective to that meeting. Likewise, we are contributing to the 26th International Congress of History of Science and Technology with the session 'Crossing the borders between meteorology, climatology and geography'.



Most importantly, at least from the standpoint of these notes' author, we are among the promoters of the International Conference on the Centenary of Peter Kropotkin, which had to take place in Brazil also as a symbolical demonstration of the new 'centrality' of the Global South in radical and anarchist debates in geographical scholarship. However, the new online programme to be live-streamed in the channel of the São Paulo FFLCH-USP is likewise inclusive and multilingual <https://kropotkin2021.com/> and promises to be a great gathering of scholars and activists, looking anxiously forward to organising the next ones in presential format.

Philosophy and history of geography matter.

Federico Ferretti  
University of Bologna  
([federico.ferretti6@unibo.it](mailto:federico.ferretti6@unibo.it))



Federico Ferretti

## A quick guide to all things HPGRG at the 2021 RGS-IBG

Below we present a chronologically-ordered table of all the HPGRG sponsored sessions at this year's RGS-IBG. It shows the date and time, title, organisers, and online link. Click on the title to be linked to more information at the RGS-IBG programme website.

TUE Aug 31	
09:00-10:40	<a href="#"><b><u>EURODAC, hotspots, repatriation routes: (trans)formations of socio-technical assemblages of the European border regime</u></b></a>
	Organised by: Jacopo Anderlini (Genoa) & Silvan Pollozek (European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder))
11:00-12:40	<a href="#"><b><u>Transgressing disciplinary borders in the production of knowledge: Exploring the power of pragmatism</u></b></a>
	Organised by: Jane Wills (University of Exeter) & Robert W Lake (Rutgers University)
13:00-14:40	<a href="#"><b><u>On Methods of Following (1): Where to Follow? Scales, Paths, Positionalities</u></b></a>
	Organised by: Peter J. Forman (Northumbria University) & Angeliki Balayannis (Exeter University)
13:00-14:40	<a href="#"><b><u>Rethinking Distance (1)</u></b></a>
	Organised by: Tauri Tuvikene (Tallinn University), Louise Sträuli (Tallinn University & Université Libre de Bruxelles) & Aleksandra Ianchenko (Tallinn University, Abo Academy)
15:00-16:40	<a href="#"><b><u>Rethinking Distance (2)</u></b></a>
	Organised by: Tauri Tuvikene (Tallinn University), Louise Sträuli (Tallinn University & Université Libre de Bruxelles) & Aleksandra Ianchenko (Tallinn University, Abo Academy)
15:00-16:40	<a href="#"><b><u>On Methods of Following (2): Where to Follow? Scales, Paths, Positionalities</u></b></a>
	Organised by: Peter J. Forman (Northumbria University) & Angeliki Balayannis (Exeter University)
WED Sep 1	
9:00-10:40	<a href="#"><b><u>On Methods of Following (3): How to Follow? 'Gaps', Traces, Abstractions</u></b></a>
	Organised by: Peter J. Forman (Northumbria University) & Angeliki Balayannis (Exeter University)
9:00-10:40	<a href="#"><b><u>Unknowning Geographies: Situating Ignorance, Inattention and Erasure</u></b></a>
	Organised by: Jeremy Brice (University of Oxford)

WED Sep 1	
9:00-10:40	<b><u><a href="#">Speculative Thinking (1)</a></u></b>
	Organised by: Nina Williams (UNSW Canberra)
11:00-12:40	<b><u><a href="#">Speculative Thinking (2)</a></u></b>
	Organised by: Nina Williams (UNSW Canberra)
11:00-12:40	<b><u><a href="#">On Methods of Following (4): Why Follow? Politics, Ethics, Dangers</a></u></b>
	Organised by: Peter J. Forman (Northumbria University) & Angeliki Balayannis (Exeter University)
11:00-12:40	<b><u><a href="#">Going public: Activism and the public agenda for geographers. Keynote by Audrey Kobayashi (Queens University, Canada)</a></u></b>
	Reflections by Jane Wills (University of Exeter) & Pauline McGuirk (University of Wollongong)
15:00-16:40	<b><u><a href="#">Non-representational geographies: approaches, methods and practices</a></u></b>
	Organised by: Amy Barron (University of Manchester) & Andrew Maclaren (University of Aberdeen)
THU Sep 2	
9:00-10:40	<b><u><a href="#">Drawing the line. Theories and Practices of Boundary Delimitation (1)</a></u></b>
	Organised by Federico Ferretti (University of Bologna), Jacobo García-Álvarez (Carlos III University of Madrid) & Paloma Puente-Lozano (Carlos III University of Madrid).
11:00-12:40	<b><u><a href="#">Drawing the line. Theories and Practices of Boundary Delimitation (2)</a></u></b>
	Organised by Federico Ferretti (University of Bologna), Jacobo García-Álvarez (Carlos III University of Madrid) & Paloma Puente-Lozano (Carlos III University of Madrid).
11:00-12:40	<b><u><a href="#">Geography and public policy: The past and present borders of applied geography (1): Panel 1</a></u></b>
	Organised by: Mark Boyle (University of Liverpool), Tim Hall (University of Winchester), Shaun Lin (National University of Singapore), James Sidaway (National University of Singapore) & Michiel van Meeteren (Loughborough University)
15:00-16:40	<b><u><a href="#">Geography and public policy: The past and present borders of applied geography (2): Panel 2</a></u></b>
	Organised by: Mark Boyle (University of Liverpool), Tim Hall (University of Winchester), Shaun Lin (National University of Singapore), James Sidaway (National University of Singapore) & Michiel van Meeteren (Loughborough University)

THU Sep 2	
15:00-16:40	<a href="#"><u>Friedrich Engels and Geography</u></a>
	Organised by: Camilla Royle (Kings College)
15:00-16:40	<a href="#"><u>Bound by Craft: Material Culture and Bordering within Histories of Geography</u></a>
	Organised by: Peter R Martin (University of Cambridge) & André Novaes (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro)
FRI Sep 3	
9:00-10:40	<a href="#"><u>Worlds of wisdom: ontologies of geography, philosophy and geosophy (1)</u></a>
	Organised by: Emily Hayes (Oxford Brooks University)
11:00-12:40	<a href="#"><u>Worlds of wisdom: ontologies of geography, philosophy and geosophy (2)</u></a>
	Organised by: Emily Hayes (Oxford Brooks University)

## Agenda HPGRG 2021 Annual General Meeting, 8 Sept, 2021

14:00 to 16:00, Wednesday, 8 September

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2021 AGM (HJ)
3. 40 years of HPGRG anniversary event 2021 – Reflections and feedback (HJ)
4. HPGRG Sessions for 2021 (FF)
5. HPGRG Research Group Guests for 2021 (FF)
6. HPGRG Accounts (JB)
7. HPGRG Dissertation Prize (EH)
8. HPGRG Public Engagement Award (EH)
9. HPGRG Membership (FG)
10. HPGRG Website (MvM)
11. HPGRG Communications and Newsletter (MvM)
12. Committee Membership Terms and Elections (HJ)
13. Possible Research Group Activities (ALL)
14. Call for Sessions for 2022 RGS-IBG Annual International Conference (HJ)
15. Any Other Business