

History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG)

**Royal
Geographical
Society**
with IBG

NEWSLETTER

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1. Welcome

Dear HPGRG members,

With our summer newsletter, I would like to take a chance to introduce myself. I am delighted to have taken over as Chair of the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group, from 2021-2024. During my time as Chair my emphasis will be continuing to develop the sense of community within the Group, reaching out in particular to early-career researchers. I also hope to promote work building bridges between human geography and physical geography in relation to histories and philosophies of geography. I would like to thank the outgoing Chair, Prof. Heike Jöns, for her extraordinary dedication to the committee over 14 years. The enormous success of the 40th Anniversary symposium in September 2021, which Heike organised, is a fitting finale to her time on the



Julian Brigstocke

committee. I would also like to offer sincere thanks to other members of the committee who stepped down at the 2021 AGM, for all their contributions to the intellectual life of the HPGRG: Federico Ferretti (Secretary) and Mette Bruinsma (Postgraduate Liaison Officer).

I would like to extend a warm invitation to you all to attend the Annual General Meeting of the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG). We are holding the AGM online, over Zoom, on Monday 5th September at 14-1530. If you wish to attend, please sign up at the Eventbrite page: shorturl.at/gkq15. I will then send you the Zoom login details.

Over the last year the Group has hosted various research activities. Most important of these was the delayed 40th Anniversary Symposium. Despite the online format, the event was hugely convivial, stimulating, and raised lots of fascinating ideas about both the past and the future of work on the philosophy and history of geography. The HPGRG also hosted a series of reading groups on the geophilosophy of Michel Serres. At this year's AGM we will be discussing a rich programme of activities for 2022-23, including a symposium, more study-groups, and a series of online events aimed at building up the community of researchers in this area of the discipline.

In 2021 we were also able to welcome four new committee members: Flora Parrott (Secretary); Maximillian Gregor Hepach (Treasurer); Alice Oates (Postgraduate Liaison Officer); and Amy Barron (Ordinary Member). I am delighted to be able to extend a warm welcome to all of them. In the 2022 AGM four committee positions will become vacant: Secretary; Communications Officer; Awards Officer; and Postgraduate Liaison Officer. If you are interested in standing for any of these roles, feel free to get in touch with me if you have any questions about them. Or, just come along to the AGM.

Finally, it remains to offer thanks to members of the committee who have indicated they are planning to retire from the committee at the 2022 AGM. Michiel van Meeteren has been on the committee of the HPGRG since 2018 and has made an exemplary contribution to the group through his work maintaining the twitter feed and website and putting together the newsletter, as well as making rich contributions to the intellectual direction of the group. My sincere gratitude also goes to Flora Parrott (Secretary) and Alice Oates (Postgraduate Liaison Officer) for all their contributions to the Group over the last year.

I hope to see many of you at this year's RGS-IBG annual conference, where the HPGRG has sponsored several exciting sessions (see details below). The diversity and range of topics sponsored by the Group is a very encouraging sign of the vibrancy and intellectual life of the HPGRG.

Julian Brigstocke
HPGRG Chair
School of Geography and Planning
Cardiff University

2. Introducing the Committee

In september 2021, a new Committee of the HPGRG was installed. Here we outline the current roster, and highlight the profiles of a few committee members.

Chair: [Dr Julian Brigstocke](#) (Cardiff University), 2021-2024

Secretary: [Flora Parrott](#) (Royal Holloway, University of London), 2021-2022)

Treasurer: [Maximilian Gregor Hepach](#) (University of Potsdam), 2021-2024

Membership Secretary: [Dr Franklin Ginn](#) (University of Bristol), 2020-2023

Communications Officer: [Dr Michiel Van Meeteren](#) (Utrecht University), 2021-2022

Awards Officer: [Dr Emily Hayes](#) (Oxford Brookes University), 2019-2022

Postgraduate Liaison Officer: [Alice Oates](#) (University of Cambridge), 2021-2022

Ordinary Committee Member: [Dr Amy Barron](#) (University of Manchester), 2021-2024

Maximilian Gregor Hepach (Treasurer)



Maximilian recently submitted his PhD on the phenomenology of climate and its changes in Geography at the University of Cambridge. He is currently based in Potsdam, Germany, as a post-doc with the AHRC & DFG funded research project "Weather Reports: Wind as Model, Media, Experience". His research interests are the history and philosophy of geography, media theory, and phenomenology."

Julian Brigstocke (Chair)

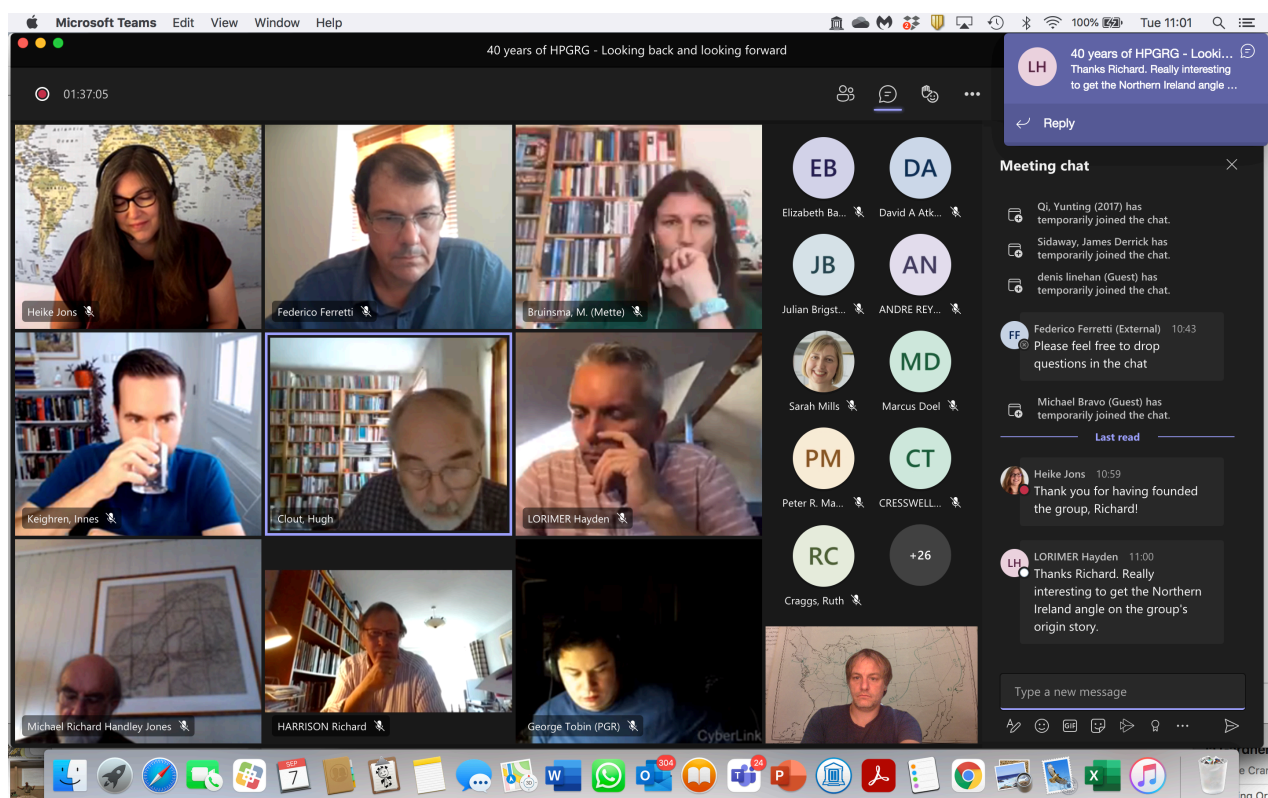


Julian is a cultural and historical geographer with broad empirical interests in cities, urban culture, and the spatial politics of aesthetics. He took an undergraduate degree in Philosophy, but soon concluded that philosophical ideas cannot adequately be explored in the abstract, and need to be understood through concrete engagements with social and spatial practices. He then moved into human geography, maintaining a broad interdisciplinary focus around the geohumanities and urban humanities. He is particularly interested in geo-philosophical debates around authority, power, embodiment, materiality, and violence. His research has focused mainly on historical and contemporary issues in Paris, Hong Kong, and Rio de Janeiro.

3. 40 YEARS OF HPGRG – LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

A one-day symposium of the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG) of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) with the Institute of British Geographers (IBG) held online on Tuesday, 7 September 2021

At one of the RGS-IBG Research Group Forum meetings for RGS-IBG research group committee members, we were encouraged to celebrate our research groups' anniversaries. In the case of the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG), the initiative to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the elevation from a working party to a fully-fledged IBG Study Group in 1985 had to be postponed by one year because of the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic for restrictions of personal meetings in the summer and autumn of 2020. Since the pandemic continued into the year 2021, the HPGRG committee eventually made the decision to hold this anniversary event online on Teams on 7 September 2021.



Screenshot from the virtual event, taken shortly after Richard Harrison's contribution

Postponing the anniversary event by one year meant that we were able to celebrate '40 years of HPGRG – Looking back and looking forward', taking as a point of reference the year in which the first conference session at the IBG in Leicester on *History and*

Philosophy of Geographical Thought was convened by Richard Harrison and David Livingstone in the afternoon of Tuesday, 6 January 1981. Harrison and Livingstone had been fellow PhD students at Queen's University Belfast and just started publishing together on the philosophy of geography when taking the initiative to found an IBG Working Party at the IBG Conference in Leicester in January 1981. We were honoured that Richard Harrison presented at the 40 years of HPGRG anniversary event and that David Livingstone sent his good wishes via a video message.

The inaugural conference session that resulted in the HPGRG was chaired by Ron Johnston (Sheffield) and lined up six other male colleagues, all human geographers, as speakers, who delivered – just as the 15 colleagues at the HPGRG anniversary event 40 years later – 10-minute statements: J. Bird (Southampton), T.W. Freeman (IGU), D. Gregory (Cambridge), A. Hay (Sheffield), W. Kirk (Belfast) and J. Silk (Reading). For the anniversary event, Ron Johnston had submitted the following paper title and abstract with an important agenda to discuss, but sadly he could not present because he passed away in May 2020, and therefore he was very much missed at the event:

HISTORY & PHILOSOPHY OF GEOGRAPHY: SINGULAR OR PLURAL?

Ron Johnston, University of Bristol

The Study Group's title has always implied a singular conception – of 'the' history and 'the' philosophy. And yet by the 1980s that could have been contested; different histories were being constructed and different philosophies promoted. In that context, perhaps the Group should celebrate its birthday by changing its name? 'Histories and philosophies' would be a better representation? (Email communication by Ron Johnston to Heike Jöns, 20 March 2020)

The HPGRG anniversary event was organised by the HPGRG committee 2020-21 with Heike Jöns (Loughborough) as the Chair, Federico Ferretti (Bologna) as the Secretary, Julian Brigstocke (Cardiff) as the Treasurer, Franklin Ginn (Bristol) as the Membership Secretary, Michiel Van Meeteren (Loughborough) as the Communications Officer, Emily Hayes (Oxford Brookes) as the Awards Officer and Mette Bruinsma (Utrecht) as the Postgraduate Liaison Officer. The programme resulted from a call for contributions among HPGRG members, resulting in 15 colleagues presenting ten-minute statements and Tim Cresswell delivering a keynote lecture.

This exciting programme enabled excellent reflections on the history and philosophy of geography from very diverse positionalities of British and other European geographers at different career stages, ranging from PhD students to emeritus professors. The online

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

PROGRAMME

- 09:45 Arrival of the speakers and delegates
- 10:00 WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE HPGRG CHAIR
- 10:30 REFLECTIONS I: BIOGRAPHIES
RT Harrison, H Clout, E Baigent, M Bruinsma, E Hayes
- 12:00 Coffee break
- 12:15 HOW GEOGRAPHIC THOUGHT HAPPENS
Tim Cresswell, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
- 13:30 Lunch break with optional interactive discussions and socialising
- 14:00 REFLECTIONS II: PHILOSOPHIES
P Daley, M Doel, B Greenhough, J Brigstocke, M Van Meeteren
- 15:30 Coffee break
- 15:45 REFLECTIONS III: IMPACTS
G Tobin with H Lorimer & S Naylor, M Boyle, F Ferretti, P Couper, IM Keighren
- 17:15 FAVOURITE BOOKS & FUTURE EVENTS
Small group discussions
- 18:00 Close of the HPGRG anniversary symposium

Programme of the 40 years of HPGRG anniversary event

as Brazil, Singapore and New Zealand. A journal special issue is currently in the making that will discuss histories, philosophies and impacts in regard to four decades of history and philosophy of geography from a British perspective and document the great variety of histories and philosophies of geography discussed during our informative and enjoyable anniversary event. From time to time, it is therefore valuable to meet up for looking back and looking forward in order to appreciate the research that has been done, the knowledge and understanding that have been gained and the professional relationships that constitute epistemic communities.

Heike Jöns, Loughborough University

format was more engaging than anticipated and enabled wonderful discussions and interactions between 59 attendees. Limitations of the inclusivity of the programme related to the absence of physical geographers other than Pauline Couper, who has published on physical geography, and from the expectedly large degree of Anglocentricity. This situation arguably reflects the history and membership of the HPGRG in 2020-21, thus providing scope for future events with different agendas.

The HPGRG committee members were very grateful for the time and effort that so many geographers invested into this event, either as supporters in the RGS-IBG, especially Catherine Souch and Sarah Evans, as presenters or as online participants, including women geographers involved in the early history of the HPGRG and colleagues from as far



Heike Jöns

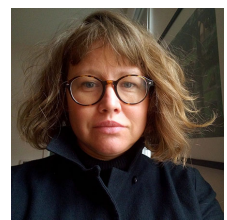
4. History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG) Prizes

Each year the HPGRG committee looks forward to welcoming submissions to its annual Undergraduate Dissertation Prize. 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.

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, this initiative wis intended to 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/>.

In this newsletter we announce the winners of the 2021 awards. The 2022 undergraduate dissertation award will be announced on the website shortly after the RGS-IBG annual conference. The next edition of the Public Engagement Award will be in 2023.

Further information about the history of the awards, 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/>. Alternatively, please contact Dr Emily Hayes (Oxford Brookes University) ehayes@brookes.ac.uk for submissions or should you have questions about the awards



Emily Hayes, HPGRG
Awards Coordinator

Chiara Ruggieri-Mitchell is winner of the 2021 Undergraduate Dissertation Prize

The HPGRG is pleased to announce that the 2021 HPGRG Undergraduate Dissertation Prize has been awarded to Chiara Ruggieri-Mitchell for her dissertation titled "The More

Things Change, The More They Stay The Same: Trends in Conservation Focus, 2010-2019”. The dissertation, completed for a degree at Royal Holloway University, London (<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/research-and-teaching/departments-and-schools/geography/>) provides a longitudinal in-depth analysis of the field of conservation studies publications.

Dr Emily Hayes (Oxford Brookes University), the HPGRG Awards officer and one of the assessing panel consisting of three HPGRG Committee members describes the thesis as:

“an amazingly diligently executed study of three leading anglophone conservation journals. The dissertation is a biogeographical study which investigates the locations of conservation studies, the animal subjects discussed, and the location and the genders of the authors of the articles published in these three journals over a nearly ten-year period. It forms the basis for many important historical and philosophical questions about conservation, research, publishing and geography.”

The dissertation was completed in difficult conditions because of the pandemic: Chiara was obliged to abandon her original plan of conducting practical field-work for this study of metadata analysis. The thesis is under embargo and therefore not downloadable from the HPGRG website at this point. However, we are delighted that Chiara has plans to publish her research. We will therefore update our site once the embargo is lifted or when the study’s findings are successfully published.

Harriet Walters winner of the 2021 Public Engagement Award

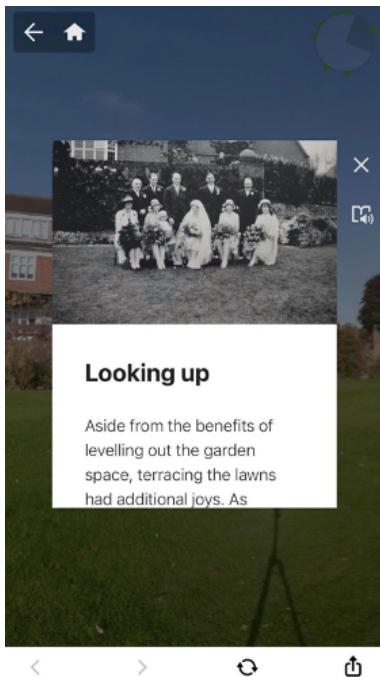
The inaugural (2021) History and Philosophy of Geography Engagement Award goes to Harriet Walters who is completing a PhD in English literature at the University of Birmingham for her project „Mapping Winterbourne: Digital Tours of the historic garden”.

The still ongoing design project, a collaboration between Walters, Winterbourne House and Gardens Museum, and the University of Birmingham’s Higher Education Futures

Institute (HEFI) is to create interactive, virtual Garden History tour of Winterbourne Gardens, with the aim of making historic garden-making practices and changing garden spaces digitally accessible to visitors to the site. Using navigable 3D photography, the virtual “tour” is intended to provide a user-friendly, complementary guide to the history of the garden’s making. This offers visitors the opportunity to compare the way the garden space has changed from 1902 onwards.



First visual impression of the virtual tour application



The jury was impressed by the project's potential to highlight the relevance of geographical knowledge in an interdisciplinary setting. Moreover, it is a good example of how rigorous research can be joined up with digital technologies and societal partners. The potential for this project to further grow is significant and the HPGRG will be curiously watching this come to future fruition. Harriet's project provides a model which might assist the design of others' research projects as well as methods of communicating existing scholarship.

If you are interested to know more about the further development of this exciting project, you can follow [Harriet Walters](#) and the [Winterbourne House and Gardens](#) on Twitter.

5. HPGRG Michel Serres reading group report

From May to June 2022 the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG) began a new venture by running its first reading group. Led by Emily Hayes (Oxford Brookes) and the HPGRG Chair, Julian Brigstocke (Cardiff University), the group ran online via Zoom for three sessions in order to discuss sections of texts by the late French philosopher, Michel Serres (1930 -2019).

Serres was famously prolific. Participants' explorations of his texts proceeded in reverse order from those most recently translated into English, from the *Incandescent* (2018) and *Hominescence* (2019), to the *Foundations* (2014; 2015; and 2017) trilogy and the *The Birth of Physics* (2000) and Serres' *Conversations* (1995) with Bruno Latour.

The sessions, which often over-ran their allocated one-hour slot, attested to the enduring, and transdisciplinary, appeal of Serres's thought. They attracted practitioners, at various career stages, in geography, philosophy, classics, history of science and literary studies. Discussions were lively, generous and rich.

The HPGRG plans to run further sessions through autumn 2022. This will add constructively to the existing scholarship by historians and philosophers of geography about this somewhat controversial thinker who rebelled against the moeurs of academia. It also tallied with recent, notable, activity about Serres. For example, the Michel Serres conference at the Maison Française in Oxford (June, 2022) and important publications about his work which have recently appeared (Bühlmann 2020; Watkin 2020; Simons 2022).

Contact Dr Emily Hayes for further information: ehayes@brookes.ac.uk

Engaging with the HPGRG Community

We are planning a series of virtual events in 2022/2023 to reach out to the broader geographical community, especially early career researchers. In many of these we will invite eminent researchers in the field to join an informal discussion where they will explore one key aspect of developing a research career in philosophies and/or histories of geography. If you would like further information about these, or have ideas for topics that might be interesting to explore, please get in touch with Julian (BrigstockeJ@cardiff.ac.uk).

6. A quick guide to all things HPGRG at the 2022 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.

WED AUG 31	
09:00-10:40 (Online Only)	<u>91: Teaching geographical thought in the world: purposes, practices, experiences</u>
	Organised by: Pauline Cooper (York St John University, UK)
11:10-12:50 (Hybrid)	<u>114: Author meets Critics: A Panel on Jessica Dubow's 'In Exile: Geography, Philosophy & Judaic Thought' (2021, Bloomsbury)</u>
	Organised by: John Wylie (University of Exeter, UK) & Mitch Rose (Aberystwyth University, UK).
14:40-16:20 (Hybrid)	<u>244: Rethinking the (Post-)Human in Geography (1) - HPGRG</u>
	Organised by: Thomas Dekeyser (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK) & Casey Lynch (University of Nevada, Reno, US)
16:50-18:30 (Hybrid)	<u>245: Rethinking the (Post-)Human in Geography (2) - HPGRG</u>
	Organised by: Thomas Dekeyser (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK) & Casey Lynch (University of Nevada, Reno, US)
THU Sep 1	

14:40-16:20 (Hybrid)	<u>120: Lyrical Geographies: Experimental Forms, Styles, and Languages of Geographical Writing (1)</u>
	Organised by: Julian Brigstocke (Cardiff University, UK)
16:50-18:30 (Hybrid)	<u>121: Lyrical Geographies: Experimental Forms, Styles, and Languages of Geographical Writing (2) - HPGRG</u>
	Organised by: Julian Brigstocke (Cardiff University, UK)
FRI Sep 2	
11:10-10:50 (in-person only)	<u>85: Geographies of Parrhesia: Resistance, Critique, and the Formation of Self and Other</u>
	Organised by: Stephen Legg (University of Nottingham, UK) & Federico Ferretti (University of Bologna, Italy)