

RGS-IBG Social and Cultural Geography Research Group

Annual Report 2009

The group membership email list currently stands at 459 members. The SCGRG is currently £3327.96 in credit. In the Calendar Year 2009, the group sponsored 12 sessions at the RGS-IBG conference, provided support for conferences on the 'Geographies of Education', 'Material Geography', 'Visuality/Materiality' and 'Reinvigorating Social Geography', as well as sponsoring the production of an Artist's Book for the RGS session on Art and Geographical Knowledge. The SCGRG has improved its web presence through a new website at <http://scgrg.org/>. Future planned activities include support for a conference on the 'Geographies of religion', a postgraduate conference, and undergraduate dissertation prize. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to these events and provided information for this report.

1. AGM and Committee Membership 2009

The AGM was held at the RGS-IBG Conference, Room 1.218 University Place, University of Manchester, on Thursday August 27th August 2009, 13.10-14.20. The meeting was well attended. The minutes of the meeting are available on-line at <http://scgrg.org/meetings/>.

There were several changes to the committee at the summer meeting. The committee thanked Phil, in his absence, for his work as chair of the committee from 2006-2009. New appointments were confirmed with Gail Davies as Chair and Russell Hitchings as secretary. Those present thanked the following for their committee work over the last 3 years: Ben Anderson, Kezia Barker, Amanda Claremont, Russell Hitchings, Elaine Ho, Peter Hopkins, Jamie Lorimer, and Emma Roe. Emma Roe and Ben Anderson were re-elected to the committee for a further three years. In addition, Emma Roe has agreed to take on the new role of Dissertation co-ordinator (see below). The following committee members are continuing in post: Louise Holt (Treasurer) for one further year, Jo Norcup (education co-ordinator) for two further years, Harriet Hawkins for two further years, David Crouch for one further year. The following new appointments were agreed: Chris Bear as Membership secretary, Alex Tan as Postgraduate co-ordinator, Amanda Rogers, Kate Boyer, Shannon Hensley, and Lynn Gunter as committee members. Those present thanked and welcomed these new members to the committee.

A continuing theme of discussion for the SCGRG is the relationship between the group and the development of new working groups on specialist areas of geography, which might, in the past have fallen under the wider remit of the SCGRG. Two examples are the proposed Spatiality and Social Justice Research Group and the Working Group on Geographies of Religion, Spirituality, and Faith. While we are delighted to see the growth and vibrancy of these areas of geography, these developments do raise questions about the boundaries of the SCGRG's identity and activities. The SCGRG is still one of the largest, best resourced and based on conference sessions and other events supported one of the most vibrant groups. This size has drawbacks as well as strengths, including the personal networking around specific themes that smaller groups are able to offer. Nevertheless, we hope that as research in these specific areas continues to develop, the role of the SCGRG in identifying and addressing high quality research questions across these thematic areas will grow as well.

2. Website

The SCGRG launched its new website in October 2009. After several years of shifting the location of this site and personal responsibility for content, the SCGRG agreed at the August AGM to invest in a permanent site at www.scgrg.org. This is hosted by the 'just host' for a small fee of around £70 for three years.

A new site, based on a contents management system accessible to all committee members was developed by Richard Milne (postgraduate at UCL). The web content is now maintained by Gail Davies with assistance from committee members. The blog run by Phil Hubbard (see: <http://scgrg.blogspot.com/>) has been retired, with news and comments now posted on the website.

The site has allowed us to make further information about the groups activities accessible to members, with details of support offered as well as information on past meetings. It also has a special section dedicated to developing links between developing networks between educators and geographical researchers, using information provided by Jo Norcup. The site now readily appears on Google, and other, searches and appears to be well used, especially in the run up to RGS conference session deadlines.

3. RGS Annual Conference Sessions, Manchester 2009

Twelve sessions were sponsored or co-sponsored at the 2009 RGS-IBG Conference in Manchester. These were: Life going on and on: time, embodiment, ageing; Seasonal Geographies; Sensewalking: sensory walking methods for social scientists (Wednesday 27th August). Art and Geographical Knowledge; Follow the Things: New Cultural/Economic Geographies; Geographies of the End of the World; Geography and Memory; Intersections of English- and German-Speaking Social and Cultural Geographies; Language and space: Intersections and exchanges between socio-cultural linguistics and human geography; Negotiating Spaces: The Impact of New Migration at the Local Scale (Thursday 28th August). Alternative Spaces of Ethno-Consumption: Beyond Home and Family; Geographies of the passenger (Friday 29th August)

The majority of these sessions were co-sponsored with other groups. The SCGRG has been delighted to sponsor a wide variety of sessions over the last few years, and would like to thank other groups and the RGS in allowing this flexibility to represent the wide and diverse interests in the SCGRG. However, from 2010, we agreed we would also look to solicit high profile, distinctive SCGRG sessions in our call for sessions.

Session organisers were asked to provide feedback on the sessions. We are very grateful to all who contributed to making these sessions such a success and providing these. Some reports have been edited for space. For full details of abstracts, see <http://scgrg.org/conference/>.

3.1. 'Life Going on and on: time, embodiment, ageing'

The sessions, organized by Bethan Evans, John Horton and Peter Kraftl, aimed to draw together examples of diverse, innovative human geographical work on ageing, intergenerationality and the lifecourse (Hopkins and Pain, 2007; Horton and Kraftl, 2008) and demonstrate the importance of this work for broader geographical debates. In so doing, the sessions set agendas for geographical work on embodiment in relation to temporality (Dodgshon, 2008; Massey, 2005), agency, responsibility and subjecthood (Colls and Evans, 2008; Ruddick, 2007a, 2007b). Prefaced by an introductory paper by the session organisers, and concluded with a discussion by Sue Ruddick, the sessions included eight papers, presented by researchers from diverse disciplinary positions, each of which explored the notion of 'going on' (Horton and Kraftl, 2006) in relation to a set of striking, novel, and characteristically diverse empirical contexts (health, political activism, mobility, drinking) and theoretical concerns (intergenerationality, development, embodiment, affect, memory, temporality) within human geographical scholarship. Across these different contexts, the papers were connected through three broad lines of enquiry: (i) intergenerational geographies of difference and solidarity; (ii) bodies-in-flux; and (iii) methodological and ethical challenges posed by ageing, intergenerationality and the lifecourse. As Sue Ruddick identified in the discussion, the papers in the session highlighted the potential for attention to the 'child' within geographical work to push the discipline in terms of debates on affect and embodiment; to further critical debate about the notion of 'development' in a context where simplistic understandings of the term continue despite being challenged elsewhere in the discipline; through attention to

intergenerational relations to offer opportunities to re-imagine political subjectivities and open possibilities to think about connections; and to make evident the potential dangers of problematising 'ongoingness' without offering alternative means to 'go on', both theoretically and methodologically. The sessions were well attended (approx. 30 people), and have led to a proposed special issue (proposal currently under review for *Geoforum*) including all the papers except Lury and Jayne *et al.*, which are already committed for publication elsewhere.

3.2. Seasonal Geographies

The aim of this session, organized by Russell Hitchings and Rosie Day, was to consider the value of studying the seasons in geography and to draw out the various ways in which this could usefully be done. There are many reasons to be interested in how people now respond to the seasons and a focus on this topic could span existing disciplinary interests in both cultural geography and climate in a number of interesting ways. These two paper sessions attracted a variety of speakers from across the globe and included speakers from Latvia, Germany and Japan. Their papers also dealt with a variety of geographical contexts to highlight the various ways in which different societies deal with seasonal change and the various factors we might want to consider in researching this topic. Case studies were drawn from places that included Tokyo, Northern Scandinavia, Estonia and others alongside a number of UK based studies. These papers examined topics as diverse as older person adaptation, cultural practices of rural weather experience, the seasons as an experience of waiting and indicator of different cultural values attached to waiting, and the ways in which seasons are incorporated into particular ethics of consuming food sustainably. Overall, we felt these two sessions were a great success, allowing the convenors to establish links with likeminded researchers from various places. These links were strengthened during the meal that we organised in the evening after the formal presentations. A book proposal is now being prepared that marks out the distinct academic and policy possibilities that follow this particular research focus. This is being written by the two convenors and Prof Elizabeth Shove at Lancaster University. Many of the speakers will be invited to contribute chapters to this book and we believe these sessions initiated a potentially very fruitful discussion on this relatively neglected, but thoroughly geographical, topic.

3.3. Sensewalking: sensory walking methods for social scientists

In recent years there has been growing interest in the role of non-visual senses in the relationships between people and places, in particular how 'sense of place' involves complex corporeal encounters with our environments (Wylie, 2005; Butler, 2006; Edensor, 2006; Pink, 2007). This includes an increasing body of work regarding the ways in which senses and sensory perception are caught up in social and spatial in/exclusion and everyday cultural geographies (e.g. Tolia-Kelly, 2007; MacPherson, 2007; Paterson, 2007). An emerging development of such work is the innovative use of 'sensewalking' as *methodology* to investigate how we understand, experience and utilise space. This session, organised by Mags Adams and Kye Askins, aimed to promote critical discussion regarding the different perspectives and experiences of sensewalking as research method: the diversity of approaches; the untidiness, complexity and effectiveness of these methods; issues around rigour and reliability; ethical concerns; and how such research may be disseminated.

The recent surge in interest around this topic was reflected in the initial response to the call for papers, with nearly twice as many submitted as we were finally able to accommodate across three sessions, which ran consecutively from 9am on first day of conference. Papers offered a wide variety of perspectives on sensewalking as methodology, exploring theoretical work, considering empirical rigour and relevance as well as practicalities and ethical issues, dealing explicitly with sound, smell, touch, taste, and/or sight, and offering insight from a variety of disciplines including human geography, architecture, planning, acoustic ecology, sociology, and art. For example, we heard about sensewalking as both artistic compositional practice and urban outreach practice; the issues caught up in route planning a sensory walk and how mobile methodologies afford empirically different data from static research around place; the needs to think carefully and critically about the landscape/environment you are researching in (e.g. concrete urban as opposed to forest city) with regards to the potentials of sensewalking

methods; and the potential of new technologies in advancing such methodologies (e.g. the travel to school wiki and capturing sense of place through and while walking).

There were five stimulating presentations in the first session, with questions for speakers after each paper, then four thought-provoking presentations each in the next two sessions, again with questions to speakers but also leaving 20 mins or so for discussion across all papers up to that point. All sessions were extremely well attended, with participants sitting on tables at the back and on the floor down one side of the room – it wasn't the largest room in the conference! The discussions at the end of sessions 2 and 3 were as wide-ranging as the papers, and critically addressed the role of sensewalking as methodology across the social sciences. Participants raised questions and shared experiences, debating theoretical points alongside data collection, analysis, and dissemination issues. Certainly, growing interest was evident and the convenors received much positive feedback afterwards – the key critique was that we did not get out of the conference and experience any sensory walking in practice!

3.4. Art and Geographical Knowledge

The aim of the four sessions, organised by Harriet Hawkins, on Art and Geographical Knowledge was to survey the relationship between art and geography from an interdisciplinary standpoint. A look at recent publications and conference programs indicates the growing scope of the interrelationship between art and geography and the increasing range of forms this work is taking as boundaries between geographers, artists and curators blur. The intention of these four sessions was to bring together a range of geographers whose research explores elements of art and exhibition with artists and curators whose work engages geographical concepts to consider the ideas, methods and conceptual developments that come from this so obviously fruitful relationship.

From a very positive response to the call for papers 20 were chosen, bringing together UK and International geographers, artists, art historians, and curators. The Social Cultural Geography Research Group was also kind enough to sponsor the attendance at the conference of Professor Lou Cabeen, an art practitioner and theorist from Washington University and Annie Lovejoy, an artist and PhD student from University Collage Falmouth. The four themed sessions were:

As these sessions suggest the relationship between art and geography is one which offers us purchase on many of the important debates within geography today: creative research and writing practices, identity performance and practices, landscape, representation and non-representation, affectual and sensory relations, immaterial labour practices, social and political sculpture, the environment, discourses of new materialisms, to name but a few. The broad appeal and interest in this topic was reflected in the session attendance, all four were well attended, with up to 50 people in the room at some points. Debate was engaged and lively and a number of the participants and the audience remarked on the collegiate and supportive spirit of the sessions. The final 20 minutes of each of the session was allotted for questions and these provided scope for opening up discussion between all participants that was commented to be of especial value given the range of disciplines and practices found within the room. The Art and Geographical Knowledge sessions were also accompanied by a small exhibition in the room as well as a larger on line gallery for viewing the participants work (www.rgs.or/whaston/conferencesandseminars/Annual+international+conference/Art+geograph+or follow the links from the RGS site) and by *Insites: An artists' book*, which was partly funded by SCGRC.

3.5. Follow the things: new cultural/economic geographies?

Convened by Ian Cook, Dorothea Kleine and Mark Graham, three sessions of papers aimed to both take stock of and showcase new work on the borders of, and beyond, cultural and economic geography which 'follow' things as a means to appreciate commodity relations as relations between people, places, processes, etc and/or as a means to contribute to debates and campaigns about trade justice. The papers presented had three main themes: 1)

landscapes and spaces of provision, with papers by Alison Hulme (Sociology, Goldsmiths) and Mark Jackson (Geography, Bristol) reporting on ethnographic research in the banal but spectacular mega exhibition-markets of Yiwu, China where dollar store / poundsaver goods are sourced; Ben Coles (Geography, Sheffield) and Lucius Hallett IV (Geography, Michigan-Kalamazoo) reporting on ethnographic research in the small but significant producer-consumer meeting grounds of Borough Market, London and Farmers' markets in Kansas City; and Andy Pike (CURDS, Newcastle) using the iconic brand of Newcastle Brown Ale and its geographical entanglements to reflect on the actors shaping the spatial circuits of value and meaning; 2) *spaces of waste disposal and recycling*, with papers by Farid Uddin Ahamed and Nicky Gregson (Anthropology, Chittagong & Sheffield, Geography) and Josh Lepawsky (Geography, Newfoundland), reporting on ethnographic research into the 'afterlives' / 'after-geographies' and re-valuing / re-use of scrapped ships on the beaches of Chittagong, Bangladesh and of electronic waste mechanically in Canada and by hand in 'developing' Asian and African countries; and 3) *web 2.0 commodityscapes*, with papers by Ian Cook (Exeter, Geography), Dorothea Kleine (RHUL, Geography), Mark Graham & and Håvard Haarstad (Oxford Internet Institute & Geography, Bergen), and Rebecca Ellis (Sociology, Essex) reporting on ways in which new and widespread information technologies can help - and have helped - make following research more public and participatory, through culture jamming, new barcoding technologies, wiki-type co-authorship and e-Bay transactions. A number of presenters had to withdraw from the session in advance, but the time freed up was used fruitfully for discussion. See http://docs.google.com/Doc?id=dzs44v7_225dzx8tcd4 for details of abstracts.

3.6. "Geographies of the End of the World"

As we write, the movie "2012" is about to be released. Once again, the world is being forecast. In this movie, as with so many ways in which the world is supposed to end, the whole of the world ends all at the same time. In this session, Stephan Harrison and Steve Pile wanted to take to task the assumption that worlds end everywhere all at once. More than this, we wanted to explore the science, as well as the culture, of the endings of the world. A packed room (with more than 60 attending), heard five papers along these lines. The first paper, by Peter Adey (Keele), Ben Anderson (Durham), and Steve Graham (Durham) examined the ways in which, as they put it, "threats to life as we know it have been played and replayed by emergency planning exercises which construct and perform multi-hazard scenarios". The world, in their minds, has already ended many times over. The culture of catastrophe prediction is pervasive. The website "Exit Mundi: a collection of end-of-world scenarios" lists 56, classifying them into those that can happen any day now, those possible in the near future, and those in the distant future. Meanwhile, disaster movies continue to explore worlds end by rapid climate change, meteor strikes, alien invasion, deadly viruses, social and economic collapse, terrorism, technological change (especially the rise of robots), the expansion or decline of the sun, nuclear war, infertility, vegetation's revenge and the like. Western society remains fascinated by the horror of doomsday, by the possibility of its own catastrophic downfall. It is however evident that, despite strong arguments to the contrary, the world has persisted -- and pretty much as we know it. But that is a very human story. The session turned towards human-induced climate change and then utterly non-human. Stephan Harrison (Exeter) argued that the magnitude of climate sensitivity plays a crucial role in determining whether climate change is catastrophic or not. He then proceeded to frighten us with some of the possibilities for the course of climate change, which would be faster and more intense than previously thought. Then Nigel Clark (Open University) asked us to consider what it meant to think about the world in which human actions were entirely irrelevant, such as, for example, the event of a large meteor strike (like the one that supposedly wiped out the dinosaurs). Human philosophy is largely built around ideas of agency, and being able to change the world. This assumption may be in error. Science backs Clark's point. David Smith (Oxford) showed that "during the ninth millennium before present, several rapid and major environmental changes of regional or global significance occurred, including rapid but fluctuating rises in sea surface levels and associated major coastal changes, the discharges of Lake Agassiz-Ojibway in North America, the "8200-year event" of cooling in air temperatures in the North Atlantic and a major tsunami which had at least regional significance". Rapid climate change, viewed historically, is geographical in its origins and consequences. Indeed, despite the global ubiquity of much human thinking about the end of the world, there remains a geography. Cities -- certain cities -- get it first. Aliens, as the movie

"Monster versus Aliens" jokes, almost always land in USAmerica first. Not only that, but when the world ends, this is usually a prompt for a new future. In the final paper, James Kneale (UCL) took us through the ways in which science fiction imagines not only the end of the world, but also the new world after the end. The popular fascination with our own extinction paradoxically domesticates it, makes it seem unreal, unworthy of serious thought. The session proved otherwise. And now, partly as a result of the enthusiasm generated by the session, we hope to publish papers from the session as a special issue of a journal.

3.7. Geography and Memory

The aim of the session, organised by Owain Jones, was to open up every day and individual memories in relation to geography, and particularly, non-representational approaches in geography. The exciting new developments of non-representation stress various affective processes in the practice of life such as emotion, embodied practice, but they can tend to a form of 'presentism' were the legacies of the past and memories of that past, are under considered. The session was aimed at helping to redress this balance. The session attracted a pleasingly diverse set of papers which were both international in focus– with papers on US , Malaysia, Germany, Australia, Ireland cases, and from internationally based academics (Germany and Australia) - and interdisciplinary with contributions from fine arts, communications studies and psychology based academics. Also pleasing was the fact that the sessions attracted large audiences; a 50/60 seater (estimate) room was full with people also sitting on the floor, particularly for the first two sessions. These audiences were treated to a remarkably rich set of papers, which included some quite startling and moving moments. As convenor, I would say that wouldn't I, but I do think that is a fair statement – not least because the subject area can throw up some very personal and dramatic (and tragic) stories, as well as very fresh perspectives on what could be termed practices of space.

3.8. Intersections of English- and German-Speaking Social and Cultural Geographies

Over the past decade, English-speaking social and cultural geography has developed sensitivity for geographical voices from other language areas. This includes specific sessions for international conversations at the *RGS-IBG Annual International Conference* (Hudson and Williams 2004) and an ongoing series of country reports on geography's state-of-the-art in the journal *Social and Cultural Geography* (Kitchin 2003). Building on these exchanges, Heike Jöns, Tim Freytag, and Marc Redepenning organized one paper and one panel session that focussed specifically on the multiple relationships between English- and German-speaking social and cultural geographies.

The paper session included four presentations and was attended by an audience of c. 25 conference delegates. Ulrich Best discussed the development of German social and cultural geography in the past decades with a focus on critical approaches and new cultural geography. He pointed to the existence of close interactions between German and Anglophone critical geographers in the 1970s, explored some of the reasons for a discontinuation of these exchanges, and traced the new openness for Anglophone influences in critical and new cultural geography since the late 1990s. Marc Redepenning and Andreas Pott examined the use of Luhmannian systems theory in recent work of German-speaking social and cultural geography. Conceptualising the role of space as the unity of difference between nearness and distance that is expressed in spatial semantics, they worked towards a constructivist and relational understanding of space. Georg Glasze and Annika Matissek introduced the conceptual framework and empirical use of discourse analysis as another approach prominently discussed in poststructuralist German-speaking human geography. They identified the strong link between theoretical questions and empirical operationalisation in discourse analysis as a quite distinct feature of wider debates in German-speaking social and cultural geography. Markus Hesse concluded the paper session with directing the attention towards a range of conceptual developments in Anglophone urban geography that could inspire wider theoretical debates in the discipline but have not yet left a notable mark on German-speaking urban geography. Based on the observation that the latter is mainly committed to pursue either empiricist traditions of exploring population, housing or migration or applied research paths producing planning studies, recommendations or policy appraisals, he suggested an intensified

transnational dialogue between urban, social and cultural geography for the wider benefit of the discipline.

The panel session provided the stage for the presentation of a range of personal accounts regarding the interactions between English- and German-speaking social and cultural geographies as all six-panel members had spent an extended period in both language contexts – as a student, researcher, and/or academic. The 10-minute statements by Tim Freytag (Heidelberg), Matt Hannah (Aberystwyth), Heike Jöns (Loughborough), Annika Mattissek (Heidelberg), Andreas Pott (Osnabruck) and Michael Hoyler (Loughborough) varied in creative ways and stimulated a lively discussion with the audience of c. 20 delegates.

We are very grateful to the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG) and the Social and Cultural Geography Research Group (SCGRG) for their support of our sessions. In order to make the arguments and discussions accessible to a wider audience, we aim to publish a special issue on this event in due course.

3.9. Language and space: Intersections and exchanges between socio-cultural linguistics and human geography.

Stemming from Lauren Wagner's background as a sociolinguist, the aim of this session was to investigate links between linguistic practices and geographic imaginations in discourse as well as interaction. Having noticed that 'space' has become a more widely used concept in studies of language within a variety of subsections of the discipline, Wagner sought to bring sociolinguists and geographers into conversation in a 'geographical' setting. The session was successful in incorporating both work from sociolinguists on geographical concepts and work from geographers on language use. The presentations represented a range of ways that the two intellectual histories interact.

The session began with an invited guest, Professor Lorenza Mondada of Université de Lyon II and the ICAR lab on interaction and corpus linguistics at CNRS, who presented video data from a discussion in which a regional developer led local residents in brainstorming ideas about planning a local public-use grounds. Her analysis demonstrated ways the discussion leader incorporated the interactive space of the room with the audience, the visual aids, and an imagined space of the park under discussion through language and gesture. Next Marsaili MacLeod presented analysis of an ESRC collective research project on use of Gaelic in the workplace in Scotland. She and her colleagues investigated how native speakers of Gaelic negotiate group boundaries in newly created 'Gaelic language industry' contexts. Professor Gerard Debarbieux and Marius Schaffter, both of the University of Geneva, explored the categorization of land use in one part of the greater region of Geneva and its discursive production as unoccupied. In fact, the land has specific agricultural significance, but regional planning commissions debate its fate because of its linguistic positioning as 'empty' in comparison to the urban development around it. Following them, I presented my own paper discussing claims to local identity made in conversation by post-migrant generation Moroccans from France who visit the souk in Marrakech during their summer holiday in Morocco. The analysis explored contradictory ways that the 'Moroccanness' of their identities is communicated through visual, situational and linguistic means, bringing in question their 'local' geographic identity. Finally, Robin Smith of Cardiff University concluded the session with his presentation of a paper co-written with Dr William Housley on interviews with members of the public in Cardiff Bay. Applying ethnomethodological and interactional principles, they investigated how the activities and setting of the developed leisure space are produced in conversation with individuals utilising the space.

Eric Laurier led the subsequent discussion with the twenty audience members in attendance that morning. The different methodologies and research topics represented in the papers produced a range of questions for each of the presenters, but the conversation was cut short because of time constraints. In all, the session achieved its aims, to be a setting for discussion on intersections between language and space.

3.10. Negotiating Spaces: The Impact of New Migration at the Local Scale

The scale and character of immigration to Britain has changed over the last 10-15 years, with new streams of forced migrants and migrant workers bringing a new social and cultural diversity to cities and many rural areas. This new migration has brought a number of challenges for the newly arriving populations, the receiving communities and service providers seeking to meet the needs of both populations with limited resources. Tensions and resentments can arise as new migrants compete for housing and welfare, and negotiate spaces for themselves, particularly as the weight of this negotiation tends to fall disproportionately on the poorest neighbourhoods and the most vulnerable people. These tensions, which are rooted in popular and political discourses on entitlements, citizenship and belonging, reflect and reinforce perceptions of new migrants as outsiders that are undeserving of scarce resources. This has implications for welfare outcomes as well as community relations.

This paper session, organised by Deborah Phillips and Louise Waite explored the experiences and consequences of new migration at the community and neighbourhood level in Britain. We are interested in the antagonisms and the mutualities that can arise between new and settled groups in the struggle for resources, how these are contextualised, and how the new diversity of ethnic difference is negotiated between new and established populations.

3.11. Alternative Spaces of Ethno-Consumption: Beyond Home and Family

Homespaces have been an important focus of research into the interconnections between ethnicity, consumption and materiality, but there is still considerable scope to consider the relationship between these dynamics outside of the domestic spheres of home and family. These two sessions, organised by Kathy Burrell, focused on alternative sites of 'ethno-consumption', providing a range of case-studies which illustrated different configurations of the relationships between space, ethnicity and consumption. The first session considered 'Alternative Spaces, Times and Journeys of Ethno-Consumption'. Lauren Wagner opened these papers with a discussion of the consumption practices and leisure activities of 'post-migrant' Moroccans going to Morocco on holiday, caught between behaving like tourists and the feeling like they had returned 'home', their authenticity as Moroccans challenged by their experiences there. Heng-Chang Chi followed with an exploration of the nature of Thai migrant restaurants in Taipei, analysing the extent to which these restaurants can be considered transnational social fields, offering familiar foods and social contexts to the Thai migrant population. The session closed with a further analysis of restaurants as significant spaces of group identity from Philip Deslippe, who focused on the importance of food and restaurants for different religious 'cults' in the US. This paper underlined the practical importance of restaurants for minority groups – raising revenue, catering to group members – while also emphasising the spirituality of food and the sanctity of foodspaces for these groups.

The second session focused more explicitly on the retailing aspects of ethno-consumption. Kathy Burrell started the session with a paper analysing the roles of shops selling Polish products in the lives of recent Polish migrants in the UK, considering the extent to which Polish shops, and more specifically the dense concentration of these shops on Normanton Road in Derby, offer a public forum for the expression of Polish identity. Mark Donnarumma followed with a discussion of Ghanaian entrepreneurs in London and their efforts to manage and control the distribution and selling of the puna yam, concentrating on the complex transnational operations that take place in order to secure the availability of this important foodstuff for Ghanaians in London. The final paper was given by Jonathan Everts who took a different perspective, using his research in small grocery shops in Germany to challenge the assumption that ethnicity is a central factor in shopping behaviours, and demonstrating how easily ethnic labels can be manipulated in the context of grocery shopping. The session was concluded by Divya Tolia-Kelly, the session discussant, who did an excellent job of picking out key themes spanning across the papers, in particular reminding the panel of the vulnerability of minority groups in these different contexts and emphasising the need to be mindful of the inequalities inherent in these ethno-consumerist practices.

These two sessions generated very interesting discussions and it is hoped that they will inspire further research and interest in this area. Kathy would like to take this opportunity to thank the presenters, discussant and the audience for their contributions to such enjoyable and through-provoking sessions, and the research groups for their support in putting them together.

3.12. Geographies of the Passenger

Bringing together specialists from a range of different disciplinary backgrounds—transport geography, sociology, modern history, social and cultural geography and mobility studies—many from outside the UK—Germany, Italy, Canada, Australia—this set of four sessions (3 paper sessions and 1 panel session) on “Geographies of the Passenger” sought to consider the multiplicity of ways in which the figure of the passenger is attended to. The sessions were organised by Peter Adey, David Bissell, Eric Laurier and Jon Shaw.

First, the papers attended to the sociality of the passenger experience by considering the types of relationship that cohere, condense or evaporate *between* passengers and the various socialities and forms of belonging that emerge and disappear (Burrell; Jain; Vannini). Many considered the moral and ethical topographies and the rights and responsibilities that come with being a passenger (Martin; Wilson; Burrell). Second, the papers considered the various processes and practices in order to become a passenger and to exit from being one (Vannini; Jain). Considering the multiple tensions between activity and passivity some papers probed the qualitative differences between passengering and its apposite counter-forms (be it piloting, driving, steering, directing etc.) (Budd; Bacigalupo). Other papers explored the rites of passage, routines, strategies and tactics associated with becoming a passenger (Höhne; Ogden and Cox; Bissell Middleton, Hitchings) and how they impact on the body. Third, the papers examined how some of the various objects, prostheses and affordances both help and hinder passengers’ experiences of travel (Shin; Martin; Ogden and Cox). Papers explored the complex tensions and juxtapositions that emerge between experiences of comfort and discomfort (Martin; Burrell). In doing so, many papers sought to get to grips with the affective and emotional topographies that are immanent to becoming a passenger (Butcher; Budd; Wilson), involving various experiences of uplift or anxiety, or the affective dimension of travelling spaces that are engineered to make passengers feel and respond in particular ways (Budd; Vannini; Martin). Fourth, the papers explored the cultural-politico-economy of the passenger and its imbrications into various political, economic and technological orderings (Carse; Burrell; Martin; Seedhouse). The papers considered the extent to which the passenger has been controlled through various institutions and governance regimes (Ogden and Cox), how the passenger is accounted for (Carse) and the role of passenger testimony and historical renderings (Höhne). A lively panel discussion (Anable, Laurier, Merriman, McCormack) wrapped up the day’s proceedings.

This very-well attended day of papers (audiences of about 25 for each session) forms the basis of a special issue of the *Journal of Transport Geography*, answering recent calls to bring Transport Geography and Mobility Studies into more productive dialogue.

The group is currently sponsoring or co-sponsoring 10 sessions at the 2010 RGS-IBG in London for which calls for papers have been circulated. See <http://scgrg.org/2009/12/2010-rgs-conference-sessions/>. As ever, we received more session proposals than we were able to sponsor. On this occasion, we have had to make the difficult decision to turn down six groups who came to us for sponsorship. The ones selected by the group were felt to reflect the particular strengths and diversity of the group. However, the committee continues to be concerned that the number of sessions/modules which it is able to sponsor is relatively small in the context of the group’s membership.

4. Support for other SCGRG events 2009

The SCGRG has formerly made small sums of money available to members, supporting ideas and events proposed by its wider membership. After some concerns that this resource was only known to a proportion of our membership, we have now formalised this process, and posted full details on the web.

The aim is to encourage proposals from SCGRG members for a modest resource to support the organisation of conferences, seminars, symposia, workshops, reading meetings or other academic activities and events that advance research in social and cultural geography. There are two deadlines for applications each year: the end of February and the end of August. Applications for amounts over £300 should normally be submitted prior to the summer AGM at the RGS/IBG conference. The amount of funding allocated each year depends on Research Group resources. Session organisers were asked to provide feedback on the sessions and the following reports were received.

Events supported in 2009 include:

4.1. Reinvigorating Social Geography: the politics and praxis of Social and Cultural Geography in the UK, University of Brighton, 30-31 January 2009. Conference convenors Darren Smith, Kath Browne and David Bissell

The aim of conference was to provide a supportive, collegiate and stimulating environment in which to explore 'what' and 'where' are the contemporary social geographies within the context of the Social and Cultural geography nexus. Judging by the interest and attendance of delegates (50+) from an international field, this theme is of significant interest to a wide range of social and cultural geographers from different national contexts. With financial support from the Social and Cultural Geography Research Group, the organisers were able to ensure the participation of six eminent keynote speakers (Bowlby, Conradson, Cresswell, Hopkins, Hubbard, Nayak), to provide rich, personal narratives on the theme: 'Where is the social in Social and Cultural Geography'? Research group funding also allowed the participation of invited discussants from USA (del Casino), Canada (Peake), and mainland Europe (Best) to provide 'international perspectives on social geography', and from the UK to explore the overlaps of: 'Cultural geography in/and social geography' (Harrison, Latham, MacPherson, McCormack, Roe). Six papers were also delivered on the theme of 'contemporary interventions in social geography', which ranged from: transnationalism, class and race (Rogaly and Taylor), sustainable rural development (Leyshon), the poetics of identity in the creative industries (Hawkins), sexual life (Brown, Browne, and Lim), Japanese society (Fielding), and strategic essentialism in social and cultural geography (MacPherson). The conference closed with an 'open space workshop' where delegates pondered the future of social and cultural geography, and discussed some possible directions for the sub-discipline. A particularly pleasing dimension of the conference was the participation of doctoral students (20) – who offered original insights from their on-going research. The key output from the conference will be a series of short commentaries (eight), drawn from the conference, in a special theme within Social and Cultural Geography – provisionally titled: The intersectionalities of social and cultural geography: 'ground-breaking', 'rock-breaking' or 'breaking-up'?

4.2. Material Geographies: interdisciplinary perspectives, Exeter University, 13 March 2009. Conference convenors Ian Cook and John Wylie.

The third workshop in the RGS (IBG) Social & Cultural Geography Research Group sponsored material geographies series took place on Friday 13th March at the University of Exeter (Streatham campus, Exeter). The workshop explored 'Material Geographies: interdisciplinary perspectives' through invited talks by speakers with other disciplinary backgrounds, small group 'hands-on' discussions, and discussant comments by speakers who are now geographers but have brought into the discipline understandings of materiality from their previous lives as artists, curators, and more.

The opening talks featured Robert Foster (Anthropology, Rochester), author of 'Tracking globalisation' in Tilley, C. et al (ed) (2006) Handbook of material culture. London: Sage, and Dan Hicks (Archaeology, Oxford), co-editor of the forthcoming Oxford handbook of material culture studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press (with Mary C. Beaudry). This was followed by Small group discussions, a 'hands-on' object-led discussion involving all workshop participants, using something that demonstrated approaches to materiality. The closing discussion was kicked off by Nigel Clark (Geography, Open University), Caitlin DeSilvey (Geography, Exeter), Kathryn Yusoff (Geography, Exeter) and Angela Last (Geography, Open University).

4.3. Visuality/Materiality: Reviewing Theory, Method and Practice, The Royal Institute for British Architects, London, 9-11 July 2009. Conference convenors Gillian Rose and Divya Tolia-Kelly (£250).

The Visuality/Materiality conference attracted attendees and contributors from over 11 countries including the USA, Finland, Sweden, Australia, and the Netherlands. There were 120 attendees and 90 contributors. The three-day conference aimed to address the apparent exhaustion in much critical theory of the term 'representation' as a means of grasping the effect of the visual in contemporary times. The concept of Visuality/Materiality attends to the relationship between the visual and the material as a way of approaching both the meaning of visual and its other aspects. The image as sign, metaphor, aesthetics and text has long dominated the realm of visual theory. But the material role of visual praxis in everyday landscapes of seeing has been an emergent area of visual research; visual design, urban visual practice, visual grammars and vocabularies of domestic spaces, including the formation and structuring of social practices of living and political being, are critical to 21st century networks of living. The relationship between Visuality/ Materiality here is about social meaning and practice; where identity, power, space, and geometries of seeing are approached here through a grounded approach to material technologies, design and visual research, everyday embodied seeing, labour, ethics and utility.

The organising committee included researchers across the disciplines of politics, visual culture, sociology and geography including Professor David Campbell (Geography, Durham University); Professor Nick Couldry (Media and Communications, Goldsmith's); Dr Mike Crang (Geography, Durham University); Dr Marquard Smith (Art and Design, Kingston University). Plenary speakers included: Professor Elizabeth Edwards (University of the Arts); Dr Paul Frosh (Communication and Journalism, Hebrew University) and Professor Jane Jacobs (Edinburgh, Geography)

Conference Support and Funding was provided by: Members of the Kohanga reo o Ranana, London community; The Royal Geographical Society, Social and Cultural Geography Research Group (£250); The Open University (£1500); Durham University (£1500), Durham Geography's Design and Imaging Unit; Mike Crang; Chien-Chien Wu; Hannah McPherson; Natasha Pederson; Nicholas Rush-Cooper; Berry Cochrane; Kathy Wood; Jan Smith; Gary Penny and the Royal Institute of British Architects.

4.4. An Artist's Book, for the RGS session on Art and Geographical Knowledge. Organiser Harriet Hawkins (£250 for production costs).

The Social and Cultural Geography Research was delighted to contribute £250, towards the printing costs of **Insites: an artist's book**. This book was distributed at the 2009 RGS annual conference as part of the 'Art and Geographical Knowledge' sessions in Manchester.

Insites is a critical reflection on geographical ways of knowing emerging from collaboration between Geographer Harriet Hawkins and artist, Annie Lovejoy. The piece was conceived through their shared experience of a piece of community artwork: *Caravanseri* that Lovejoy was coordinating on the Roseland Peninsula in Cornwall. As a geographer, Hawkins was interested in what sort of ideas of 'local' and community that were being activated by the work and Lovejoy was interested in critiquing existing narratives of community and site specific based art practices which often have a very ephemeral engagement with place. The resulting book forms: 1) a

critical comment on 'ways of knowing' place; 2) a practical exercise in the use of creative cultural practices- in this case art practice for reflecting on geographical knowledges; and 3) a reflection on interdisciplinary collaborations.

1500 copies of the book were printed. 1100 were handed out to delegates at the Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference in Manchester; 25 copies have gone to be a part of the Geography PGCE courses at University of Newcastle and Northumbria; 25 copies have been given teachers of drama and geography in local secondary schools; 30 copies have been handed out to community and environmentally based artist practitioners associated with the BOS Arts network (Cornwall); 100 copies went to delegates of the 'Creativity and Place' conference held at School of Geography, University of Exeter June 2010; the remainder are being distributed amongst the community who are involved in *Caravanserai*.

4.5. Geographies of Education, Loughborough University, 8-9 September 2009. Conference convenor Phil Hubbard (£200 for postgraduate travel).

This conference, organised by the Centre for Research in Community, Identity, Society at Loughborough University, provided a platform for some 50 delegates from the UK, US, Germany, Australia, Norway, and Sweden to discuss the centrality of space in current debates concerning education policy and access. Following keynotes from Susan Robertson (Bristol) on the neoliberalisation of higher education, and Tim Butler (Kings College London) on middle class educational choices for their children, the conference split into streams discussing primary, secondary and tertiary education. Key themes included the globalization of the University and the serialization (or McDonaldisation) of 'world universities'; the decision-making processes of students taking years abroad or choosing to study abroad; the impacts of student housing on University towns; widening participation to Higher Education; parental power and choice within educational spaces; inequality and exclusion within school spaces and the role of schools as 'citizen-making machines'. The conference benefited from contributions from both geographers and those in cognate disciplines (architecture, education and sociology) and emphasized the current levels of interest in education as focus for debates connecting social theory with social policy. It is anticipated that papers from the conference will be published in a series of special issues focusing on student cities; educational mobility and the design of school spaces respectively. SCGRG kindly provided two grants of £100 to allow postgraduates (Amy Tucker and Jo Sage) to attend. The conference also received funding to support new career and unwaged researchers from the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (£300) as well as the Children, Youth and Families of Working Group (£300).

4.6. Drinks reception in memory of Duncan Fuller, Thursday August 27th August 2009. Organised by Kye Askins.

The SCGRG was honoured to contribute to the drinks reception organised in memory of Duncan Fuller on the Thursday evening of the RGS/IBG conference.

5. Support for future events

The SCGRG is delighted to provide support for the forthcoming conference on 'Geographies of Religion: a new dialogue', at Newcastle University, 8-9 March 2010. Conference convenor Peter Hopkins. The SCGRG has agreed to provide £350 for low wage bursaries, and has secured matched funding from the RGS Research Group Grant for speaker travel expenses.

6. Other future activities

6.1. Undergraduate Dissertation Prize

The SCGRG is keen to support and encourage new researchers in social and cultural geography, including undergraduate students. We have therefore agreed to launch an Undergraduate Dissertation Prize from summer 2010. This will be administered by Emma Roe, and details will be posted on the website in spring 2010.

6.2.

The SCGRG is planning to develop a postgraduate conference for 2010. This is currently planned for the autumn term 2010.

7. Financial reporting

The SCGRG is currently working to reduce its relatively large reserve. We are agreed this could comfortably be reduced to around £1000, increasing the group's activities in the short term, but also leaving the group flexibility to respond to requests for support and other group activities over the longer term. However, we do not want to reduce this reserve too quickly, as we have introduced two annual deadlines for applications for support from the SCGRG, and we are increasing recurrent commitments through the development of undergraduate prizes. In addition, the last calendar year accounts are slightly misleading in that the group received the subventions for 2008 and 2009 within a twelve month period.

Research Group financial reporting form

Research Group Name

Social and Cultural Geography

Period

1.1.09-31.12.09

INCOME

RGS-IBG subvention (£600 for 2008/9 - arrived Jan 09; £650 for 2009/10)

1250

RGS-IBG grant(s)

350

Other grants

0

Subscriptions

0

Conference income

1165

Meetings income

0

Royalties

0

Interest

1.79

Other income (please give details)

Total income

2766.79

EXPENDITURE

0

Committee expenses

0

Conference costs (for Brighton conference)

1165.8

Meetings costs

0

Newsletter costs

0

Grants and awards (for details see section 4 of report)

800

Other costs (please give details) Duncan Fuller

Memorial reception

100

Website design and hosting

341.28

University of Brighton Conference extra support

249

Total payments

2656.08

Net surplus/deficit

110.71

Opening balance(s) - 1.1.09

3217.25

Closing balances - 31st December

3327.96

Closing balances comprised of:

treasurer account

3327.96

deposit account

It would help if you gave the additional information for BACS payments

Address of branch where accounts are held

The co-operative bank

Account number(s)

65292523 50

Sort code

89299

Name of treasurer

Louise Holt

Email address of Treasurer

L.Holt@Reading.ac.uk

Phone number of Treasurer

0118 3786728

Dr Gail Davies, Chair SCGRG, January 2010.