

RGS-IBG Social and Cultural Geography Research Group

Annual Report 2012

Summary

- As of January 2013 the group membership email list stands at 611 members. This is up from 526 members last year.
- The SCGRG is £1853.15 in credit as of January 2013. This has been part of a longer-term planned reduction.
- In 2012, the group sponsored and co-sponsored 6 paper sessions (nearly all multiple slots), 2 chair's plenaries and 2 special sessions at the RGS-IBG conference in Edinburgh.
- The annual undergraduate dissertation prize was awarded to Chris Goodman, University of Oxford and second prize to Nicholas Speechley, Loughborough University.
- The SCGRG has continued to improve its online presence and communication with its members via the dedicate website <http://scgrg.org/>, a face book page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Rgs-lbg-Social-and-Cultural-Geography-Research-Group/122405437827911> and our twitter account https://twitter.com/#!/SCGRG_RGS which has c.450 followers.
- At the 2013 RGS/IBG conference, the SCGRG will be sponsoring 10 paper sessions, plus a co-sponsored special session at the Dana Centre, Science Museum.
- The committee would like to thank everyone who has contributed ideas, information and their energies to the group's activities for 2012.

1. AGM and Committee Membership 2012

The AGM was held at the RGS-IBG Conference, University of Edinburgh on 2nd July 2012 at 19.30pm. The meeting was well attended. There were several changes to the committee at the summer meeting. The committee thanked Gail Davies, our outgoing Chair; Russell Hitchings, Ben Anderson, Emma Roe and Jo Norcup for their service to the committee. New appointments were confirmed for Peter Adey (Chair), Sarah Mills (from Membership Secretary to Secretary), James Ash (Communications Officer), Paul Simpson, Leila Dawney and Tara Woodyer. The committee welcomed the new members and thanked the existing committee for their work over the last year. In addition to meeting at the summer AGM, the largely new committee also met at Royal Holloway, University of London in August 2012 for an EGM to plan SCGRG activities and direction. Rhys Dafydd Jones was voted as Membership Secretary at this EGM in August.

The current full committee is as follows:

- Peter Adey (Chair) (2012-2015)
- Sarah Mills (Secretary) (2012-2015, membership secretary 2011-2012)

- Chris Bear (Treasurer) (committee 2009-2011 [inc. acting treasurer 2011-2], treasurer 2012-2015)
- Franklin Ginn (Dissertation Prize co-ordinator) (2012-2015)
- James Ash (Communications officer) (2012-2015)
- Rhys Dafydd Jones (Membership Secretary) (2012-2015)
- Amanda Rogers (2009-2012; 2012-2015)
- Harriet Hawkins (2009-2012; 2012-2015)
- Owain Jones (2010-2013)
- Hannah Macpherson (2011-2014) *currently on maternity leave (2013)*
- Paul Simpson (2012-2015)
- Tara Woodyer (2012-2015)
- Leila Dawney (2012-2015)
- Mia Hunt (Postgraduate Representative) (2011-2012; 2012-2013*)
- Rebecca Sandover (Postgraduate Representative) (2011-2012; 2012-2013*)

* According to RGS rules, postgrad representatives are appointed on a one-year basis, but these two individuals have been voted on for another term.

2. RGS Annual Conference, Edinburgh 2012

The RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2012 took place at the University of Edinburgh from Tuesday 3 to Thursday 5 July 2012. The chair of conference was Professor Chris Philo (University of Glasgow). The conference theme was 'Security of Geography/Geography of Security'. The SCGRG had a large number of applications for conference sponsorship for 2012. The final list of sponsored session was as follows:

- Ludic Geographies (2 sessions)
- More-than-human geographies: from coexistence to conflict and killing (2 sessions)
- Home Unmaking (2 sessions)
- Licensing spaces, things and people (2 sessions)
- 'Policing' geographies: engendering securities and insecurities (2 sessions)
- Writing and doing human geography research in Greece during a turbulent decade (1 session)

We were also delighted to co-sponsor two conference Chair's plenary sessions.

i) (In)secure spaces

- Food (in)security: the new geopolitics of food *David Nally (University of Cambridge)*
- Biosecurity: securing circulations from the microbe to the macrocosm *Kezia Barker (Birkbeck, University of London)*

- Health in/security: from crisis to diplomacy? *Alan Ingram (University College London)*
- ii) (In)secure peoples
- Asylum-seekers, immigrants and new governmentalities: global securitescapes and the regulation of marginal flows *Patricia Noxolo (University of Sheffield)*
 - Multiply vulnerable/precarious populations: creating a politics of compassion from the 'capacity to hurt' *Louise Waite (University of Leeds); Gill Valentine (University of Leeds)*
 - Insecure selves/feeling insecurities: exploring boundaries, spaces and liminalities psychoanalytically *Liz Bondi (University of Edinburgh)*

Finally, the SCGRG organized two successful 'in-house' events for this conference

i) Social and Cultural Geographies of Impact

This was a two-part innovative interactive session exploring the emerging social and cultural geographies of 'impact'. Whilst currently understood (or conceived) in terms of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), a small group of the SCGRG (Amanda Rogers, Chris Bear, Sarah Mills, Mia Hunt and Rebecca Sandover) aimed to create a forum to unpack and expand understandings and conceptualizations of impact, generating discussion and debate through two innovative sessions.

The first session involved speakers from a range of academic and non-academic backgrounds presenting 5-minute statements on impact, whether it was useful to them and what they felt needed addressing. The second took a workshop format to focus more directly on how we might address challenges presented by the impact agenda and to delve deeper into questions that emerged in the first session. These questions included: *What is 'impact'?*; *How do we evidence 'impact'?*; *What makes 'impactful' research?*; *How do those outside the academy understand 'impact'?*; and *What are the stakes of 'impact' for postgraduates and academia?* Overall, the sessions aimed to generate a critical forum for discussing, debating, supporting and listening to ideas about impact as we navigate through the current landscape of geography in higher education and in society more broadly.

Several of the impact statements from AC2012, and some further contributions, are currently under review for a special intervention in *ACME: An International Journal of Critical Geography* co-edited by the committee members listed above. Here we present a wide-ranging and polemical series of

'impact statements', fleshing out some emerging themes from those statements, as well as provide a sense of the wider discussions in both sessions.

ii) Social and Cultural Geographies in a Time of Crisis (discussion panel):

This panel was another special session hosted by SCGRG for AC2012. It aimed to address the following series of questions and provocations:

How should social and cultural geography respond to a world that is either in crisis or where various events and situations are now framed in terms of crisis? How do social and cultural geographers understand the material and imaginative geographies of crises? And how does responding to crisis demand or invite social and cultural geographers to change their habits of thinking, research and action?

The panel – consisting of Prof. Rachel Pain (Durham University), Dr Peter Adey (Royal Holloway, University of London) and Dr Alex Vasudevan (Nottingham University) explored these and other options in a bid to think through what social and cultural geography might do in a time of crisis and how its existing practices of thinking and modes of research can engage with the contemporary condition. Three dominant themes were discussed around emotion/affect, context, and temporality. Rachel Pain discussed the difficulties posed in researching and articulating the relation between fear and crisis in the particular context of domestic violence, while Adey drew upon phenomenological studies of excess and crisis in practices of self-immolation. Alex Vasudevan made some particularly important points about how we then think through and take account of the historical and political contexts of the theory and work we draw on. Alex is deepening these concerns to excavate some of the 'blind spots' of radical geography at sessions proposed for the 2013 RGS-IBG conference. Some of the later discussion focused on the temporality of crisis for social and cultural geographies and response, especially what styles of thinking and researching times of crisis might impute for faster or even slower forms of research, and what kind of response we might mean.

For further details of all these sessions see <http://www.scgrg.org/conference/>

The group was pleased to provide day passes for three research group guests, all taking part in the 'Social and Cultural Geographies of Impact' session at AC2012. Unfortunately, one recipient could not attend on the day. Our two non-academic recipients of guest passes who spoke and participated in the discussions were:

- *Katriona Carmichael, Policy Adviser, Public Service Reform, Local Government & Communities Directorate, Scottish Government.*

Trained as a Geographer at undergraduate and postgraduate level, she began her career as a research and teaching assistant in the departments of Geography and Land Economy, University of Aberdeen. After completing her postgraduate research, she joined the Scottish Executive as a social researcher, where she brought academic research to bear on a number of social issues to inform policy making. For example, she co-managed a joint research programme with the ESRC on Scotland's demography. Since moving to her current role in mainstream policy work within the Scottish Government's Local Government and Communities Directorate, links with academic research have remained critical in her development and evaluation of policy programmes. For example, she has actively involved academics in programme advisory groups and funding and has hosted knowledge transfer activities, maintaining links to Government Social Research.

Katriona played a central role in this session, providing an impact statement, drawing on her experiences of linking academic research with Government priorities. The presence of a Government representative was central to the success of the session, which was designed to produce dialogue between academics and potential 'research users' about the meaning of, and routes to, impact.

- *June Graham, Project Manager, Sniffer (Scotland & Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research)*

Sniffer (Scotland & Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research) are knowledge brokers who aim to connect people and ideas around topics of sustainable cities, climate change and environmental challenges. Locally based in Edinburgh, Sniffer were enthusiastic about attending this session. The guest pass enabled June to join our two sessions on 'Social and Cultural Geographies of Impact' and participate by providing a short 'impact statement' from the perspective of a locally based environmental knowledge 'hub'. June directly contributed to our session aims of bringing academic and non-academic speakers together, drawing on her expertise in this area on impact, knowledge exchange, and the wider relationship between academia, research and communities.

4. RGS/IBG Annual Conference 2013 London

The RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2013 takes place at the Royal Geographical Society, London from Wednesday 28th to Friday 30th August 2013 (opening reception evening of Tuesday 27th August). The chair of conference is Professor Jonathan Rigg (Durham University). The conference theme is 'Geographical Frontiers'. We are delighted to be sponsoring the following submitted paper sessions:

- *New frontiers of geographical knowledge and practice? Exploring creative methods and encounter*
Liz Bondi (University of Edinburgh), Hester Parr (University of Glasgow), Olivia Stevenson (University of Glasgow), Alette Willis (University of Edinburgh)
- *Migration, Mobility, Border Spaces and Affective Childhoods*

Stuart Aitken (Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Youth and Space [ISYS], San Diego State University) *co-sponsored by the Geographies of Children, Youth and Families Research Group*

- *Writing Geography*
Innes Keighren (Royal Holloway, University of London) and Fraser MacDonald (University of Edinburgh) *co-sponsored by the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group*
- *Connecting elements*
Isla Forsyth (University of Nottingham) and Will Hasty (University of Edinburgh) *co-sponsored by the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group*
- *The emotional geographies of natural disasters*
Stephanie Morrice (Royal Holloway, University of London)
- *Immunitary Geographies*
Gail Davies (University of Exeter), Jamie Lorimer (University of Oxford) and Steve Hinchliffe (University of Exeter)
- *Comforting Geographies*
Danny McNally and Laura Price (Royal Holloway, University of London) *co-sponsored by the Women and Geography Study Group*
- *Affecting Heritage: revisiting the geographies and politics of heritage through affect and emotion*
Divya P. Tolia-Kelly (Durham, Geography), Emma Waterton (University of Western Sydney, Institute for Culture and Society) and Steve Watson (York St Johns University, Business School)
- *The re-making of the national in the age of migration*
Marco Antonsich and Elizabeth Mavroudi (Loughborough University) *co-sponsored with Population Geography Research Group*
- *Creativity and transition: exploring social reintegration and rehabilitation into civilian life*
Kim Ward (University of Exeter) and Agatha Herman (University of Plymouth)

In addition, we are sponsoring a special session at the Dana Centre, Science Museum entitled '**Participatory Science: museums, things and reasons to participate**' organised by Hilary Geoghegan (UCL). This event is being co-sponsored by HGRG, PyGyRG and GIScience.

For further details of these sessions see <http://www.scgrg.org/conference/>

5. SCGRG 'Events Fund' 2012

The SCGRG has, over the last few years, made small sums of money available to members, supporting ideas and events proposed by its wider membership. The aim was 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. Only one event was supported in 2011 and no

applications were received in 2012. This prompted a lengthy discussion at our 2012 EGM after a new committee had been voted in at the AGM. We considered a variety of options and, after continuing protracted discussions, plan to launch a new and more widely advertised events fund in 2013 which will kick-start a greater number of smaller events as well as a flagship reading weekend tentatively scheduled for the beginning of the summer.

6. Undergraduate Dissertation Prize

From 2010, the SCGRG has offered an annual prize of £100 for the best Undergraduate Dissertation in Social and Cultural Geography and £50 for the Runner-Up. In total we received 14 submissions for the prize, which was administered by Emma Roe and subsequently Franklin Ginn over the course of the 2012 competition. These spanned the breadth of social and cultural geography interests and the committee were impressed with the high-quality of the submissions. The dissertation award prize winners for 2012 was Chris Goodman, University of Oxford, for his dissertation "Walking with lions: reconfiguring 'wild(er)ness', 'domestication' and 'captivity' through ALERT's lion rewilding project". The committee were impressed by the depth of theoretical engagement with ideas of the wild and wilderness, and commended the breadth of empirical research undertaken. Nicholas Speechley, Loughborough University, received second prize for his highly commended dissertation entitled "'Keeping them together', University Accommodation and the 'International' Student: A Case Study of Loughborough University, UK". Both prize-winners also received a year's personal subscription to the journal *Social & Cultural Geography* published by Taylor & Francis. We are grateful to Taylor and Francis for this support. We are also grateful for both students for allowing us to post full copies of their dissertations on-line. We look forward to continuing with the prize in 2013.

6. SCGRG Textbook Project

During the AGM the committee received a presentation from Robert Rojek of Sage publishers in regards to developing a landmark textbook in Social and Cultural Geography that would be authored by the research group. Despite the initial hesitancy on taking on further writing projects given the pressures of REF and departmental performance management, during the committee's EGM in August a working group was setup to discuss the feasibility, direction and scope of a discipline-defining, accessible and innovative textbook aimed primarily at the UK and European market. This development work is on-going and ways of including the wider SCGRG membership in the project are being explored, as is potential structure, thematics and authorship.

7. Financial reporting

The main incomes item for 2012 was the subvention. The main expenditure items were committee costs for an Extraordinary General Meeting in September 2012 (£228.10), the dissertation prizes (£150) and the fee for hosting the Research Group's website for a further three years (£237.50). Other items of expenditure included deferred committee costs for an AC2012 planning meeting in December 2012, and the cost of materials for the SCGRG-organised *Social and Cultural Geographies of Impact* sessions at AC2012. Given the costs of website hosting are significant, we will be looking for alternative hosting when the next period is elapsed.

Research Group financial reporting form	
Research Group Name	Social and Cultural Geography
Period	1.1.12-31.12.12
Receipt and payments account	
INCOME	
RGS-IBG subvention	500
RGS-IBG grant(s)	0
Other grants	0
Subscriptions	0
Conference income	0
Meetings income	0
Royalties	0
Interest	0.27
Other income (please give details)	0
EXPENDITURE	
Committee expenses	331.2
Conference costs	25.84

Meetings costs	0
Newsletter costs	0
Grants and awards	150
Other costs (website hosting fee)	237.5

Total payments	744.54
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Net surplus/deficit	-244.27
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Opening balance(s) - 1st January (or alternative date)	2097.42
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Closing balances - 31st December	1853.15
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Closing balances comprised of:	
treasurer account	1853.15
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 00
Sort code	89299

Name of treasurer	Christopher Bear
Email address of Treasurer	bearck@cardiff.ac.uk
Phone number of Treasurer	029 2087 6181

The SCGRG has been slowly seeking to reduce its relatively large reserve. This has been reduced steadily, but significantly over the past three years. We are agreed this could comfortably be reduced to around £1000/£1500, increasing the group's activities in the short term, but also leaving the group flexibility to respond to requests for support and build other group activities over the longer term. The fall in overall balance for 2012 is planned and as detailed in the 2010 annual report.

However, we would also note that the RGS/IBG subvention continues to be less than our yearly commitments. We therefore may need to review alternative ways of balancing our potential income and outgoings over the longer term. The December bank statement will be forwarded to the RGS as soon as it is available.

Dr Peter Adey, Chair SCGRG

January 2013