

# **RGS-IBG Social and Cultural Geography Research Group**

## **Annual Report 2015**

### **Summary**

- SCGRG currently has 555 members, comprised of 523 members who are Fellows of the RGS-IBG and a further 32 non-fellows.
- The SCGRG is £2686.67 in credit as of 31 December 2015.
- In 2015, the group sponsored and co-sponsored 13 paper sessions at the RGS-IBG Annual Conference.
- The annual undergraduate dissertation prize was awarded to Emma-Mai Eshelby (Leicester), and high commendations for Grace Burchell (Nottingham) and Amelia Davy (Oxford).
- The SCGRG has adopted an informal mentoring initiative, and is currently being trialled among the committee.
- At the 2016 RGS-IBG conference, the SCGRG will be sponsoring 14 paper sessions, including another postgraduate session in collaboration with the Postgraduate Forum
- The committee would like to thank everyone who has contributed ideas, information and their energies to the group's activities during 2015.

### **1. AGM and Committee Membership 2015**

The AGM was held at the RGS-IBG Conference, Exeter on Thursday 3rd September 2015. The meeting was very well attended and covered some wide ranging topics (see minutes). There were several changes to the committee (see below) and SCGRG thanked outgoing members of the committee for their work over the last few years.

The current full committee is as follows:

- Peter Adey (Chair)
- Rhys Dafydd Jones (Secretary)
- Mark Holton (Treasurer)
- Lizzie Richardson (Membership Secretary)
- Richard Scriven (Dissertation Co-ordinator)
- Rebecca Sandover (Conference Officer)
- Kimberley Peters (Education Officer)
- James Robinson (Social Media Officer)
- Jamie Halliwell (Website Officer)
- Phil Emmerson and Katie Ledingham (Postgraduate Representatives)
- James Ash, Leila Dawney, Hilary Geoghegan, Franklin Ginn, Suzanne Hocknell, Lucy Jackson, Dan Swanton, Tara Woodyer (Ordinary Committee Members).

### **2. RGS Annual Conference, Exeter 2015**

The SCGRG had a large number of applications for conference sponsorship for 2015. The final list of sponsored sessions is as follows:

- Elemental experiments (2 sessions)
  - Geo-aesthetics in an Anthropocenic World (1 session)
  - Surfaces of Distinction: materiality and viscerally knowing foods (1 session)
  - Domesticating geopolitics (1 session)
  - Software-sorting the Anthropocene (1 session)
  - Water in the Anthropocene: creative approaches to understanding and re-thinking human-water relationships (1 session)
  - Water-worlds: living with eventful and continually reforming waters (1 session)
  - Attentive Geographies: materials, processes, creations
  - Geographies of Amateur Creativities: spaces, practices and experiences (1 session)
  - Post-disaster cultures (1 session)
- The group also devoted a dedicated sponsored slot to our post-graduate membership, organised by our post-grad reps. This session was titled: “*Provocations and possibilities ‘in’ and ‘of’ the Anthropocene: Postgraduate Snapshots*”

The group was pleased to provide day passes for six research group guests (non-geographers based in the UK, and geographers and non-geographers from overseas):

- Jess Burford, PIDGE Theatre
- Sapphire Unwin, PIDGE Theatre
- Andy Bragg, West Town Farm, Exeter
- Oliver Dowding Shepton Farms Ltd
- Dr Richard Barbrook, University of Westminster
- Fabian Tompsett, London Psychological Association

### **3. 2015 Activities, Events and Outputs**

#### **i. Food Matters Symposium – AC2015 pre-conference event**

A one-day pre-conference symposium was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2015 at West Town Farm, Exeter. The symposium examined how food becomes perceived as ‘waste’, and brought opportunities to co-create research for future research collaborations. It included a panel session, group discussions, accounts from food activists and producers, and hands-on practical sessions (including producing lunch from ‘waste’ food).

The event was well attended, and received some highly positive feedback. An account of the event can be found on the SCGRG Postgraduate blog:

<https://soculq.wordpress.com/2015/09/07/good-to-eat-knowing-food-in-practice/>

Thanks are extended to Suzanne Hocknell and Dr Rebecca Sandover for organizing the event.

#### **ii. Mentoring scheme**

Kim Peters initiated an informal mentoring scheme for committee-members. This will involve bi-annual 'checking in' via telephone with discussion around publishing, teaching, grants, and jobs. This was aimed at supporting early career academics in the transition to lecturing, but also includes supporting postgraduates completing their studies and academics in taking more senior roles. Sometimes this kind of support can be lacking within busy academic departments. It was agreed to trial the scheme within the committee this year before deciding whether to continue or expand the scheme. The scheme has resulted in 13 committee members' involvement in the trial.

### **iii. SCGRG @ RGS-IBG PGF mid-term conference, University of Sheffield**

Suzanne Hocknell, one of the Group's postgraduate representatives, organised a workshop on innovative methodologies at the annual RGS-IBG Postgraduate Forum Mid-Term Conference, held at the University of Sheffield on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2015.

### **4. Undergraduate Dissertation Prize 2015**

The annual undergraduate dissertation prize was awarded to Emma-Mai Eshelby (Leicester). Emma-Mai's dissertation was titled "*Gown and town: the unfolding presence of studentification in Clarendon Park, Leicester*". Due to the high volume of entries received and the high quality of scholarship, it was agreed that alongside the first place, two commendations would be awarded (rather than 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places). These were awarded to Grace Burchell (Nottingham), and Amelia Davy (Oxford). Grace's dissertation was titled "*Breeding Frankenstein's Bulldog: reimagining the Pedigree in Nineteenth Century England*", while Amelia's was titled "*Temporal worldings: an exploration of how time was implicated in the experiences of American Soldiers during the Vietnam War*".

Overall the standard of competition was very high, with 18 entries from universities across the UK. The winner receives £100 and the winner and the two commendations receive a free subscription to the journal *Social & Cultural Geography*, this has been newly renegotiated with the journal.

We intend on continuing with the practice of uploading the dissertations once the website has been migrated to the RGS-IBG's server. We are grateful for all three students for allowing us to post full copies of their dissertations on-line: <http://scgrg.org/dissertation-prize/>

Last year, the SCGRG posted short interviews with the dissertation prize winners on the website. This has been continued this year, and we seek to develop it, possibly within a pedagogic-based geography journal.

We look forward to continuing with the prize in 2016.

### **5. RGS/IBG Annual Conference 2016 London**

The RGS-IBG Annual International Conference takes place London in August-September 2016. The chair of conference is Professor Peter Jackson and theme is 'Nexus Thinking'. We are delighted to be sponsoring (and co-sponsoring in some cases) the following submitted paper sessions (a mixture of single and double sessions):

1. Sacred stuff: material culture, and the geography of religion
2. Encountering austerity
3. Cultural geologies: working with stone in the geological turn (1 session only)
4. Geographies of outer space
5. Urban public arts and collaborative production: revisiting the role of universities the Triple Helix
6. Nexus-thinking the network: social network analysis, digital data, and complexity in cultural and media production networks (1 session only)
7. Geographies of human trafficking and smuggling: navigating the traffic of migration, mobility and justice studies
8. Scholar activism and the Fashion Revolution: 'wo made my clothes'?
9. Re-imagining tree health and plant biosecurity: a more-than-human approach (2 sessions)
10. Geographies of faith, volunteering, and the lifecourse
11. Geographies of loss, grief and carrying on: the nexus of death, diversity and resilience
12. 'On edge' in the city: precarious urban lives

As with last year, there will also be a SCGRG special session entitled "*Provocations and possibilities 'nexus thinking': Postgraduate Snapshots*"

## **6. Website**

The re-design of our website which started in 2014 has now largely been completed. We appointed a new website officer, Jamie Halliwell, in January 2016, who will continue to update the website and build on the work undertaken in previous years. New pages for the website are currently being designed, these include a substantive focus on education, led by our education officer Kim Peters which will include 'in-conversation' profiles with our membership in key teaching and administrative positions; as well as teaching materials.

## **7. Financial reporting**

The main income stream over the past year was the RGS subvention of £470. Expenditure related to sponsoring the "*Food Pathways*" pre-conference event (£250) the Undergraduate Dissertation Prize (£100) and to the payment for postage (£12.26). As a result, the Group recorded a surplus of £109.13. This is the second consecutive year that the SCGRG has been in surplus, and will permit funding for additional events over the coming year.

These planned events for 2016 include: 3x£50 bursaries for postgraduate members of the SCGRG to attend the PGF mid-term conference, a contribution towards an RGS-IBG 'PGR Engaging in qualitative methods' symposium (co-organised by postgraduate representatives Phil Emmerson and Katie Ledingham), co-sponsorship (with the Population Geography Group) of an international conference on Migration and Mobilities, to be held in Loughborough, and another event aimed at postgraduates/early-career researchers involved in teaching and learning.

**Prof. Peter Adey, Chair SCGRG**

**January 2016**