

## **RGS-IBG Social and Cultural Geography Research Group AGM 2017**

**Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August, 18:45, Sunley Room, RGS Building**

### **MINUTES**

**Present:** Harriet Hawkins (Chair), Rhys Dafydd Jones, Mark Holton, Lizzie Richardson, Richard Scriven, Laura Prazeres, Jamie Halliwell, Phil Emmerson, Maddy Thompson, Tara Woodyer, Suzanne Hocknell, Leila Dawney (present committee); Kawtar Najib, Sofie Narbed, Jen Owen, Sophie Yarker.

**Apologies:** Hilary Geoghegan, Franklin Ginn, Lucy Jackson, Kim Peters, James Robinson, Rebecca Sandover.

Harriet Hawkins (HH) welcomed everybody to the meeting. Apologies were noted.

1. Minutes of AGM 2016 and the 2016 December committee meeting

Minutes of these meetings were approved.

2. Chair's report.
  - a. Vacant committee position reshuffle

HH noted she wished to raise the vacant committee positions. She noted that nominations received but extend the opportunity. HH suggested the creation of a new ECR and mentoring role, which would allow Kim Peters (KP) to concentrate on the education remit.

- b. Membership

It was noted that membership on 31<sup>st</sup> August stood at 525 RGS-IBG affiliates and 38 non-affiliates.

HH remarked that this is in the upper echelons of the res groups. Noted that only a fraction of the membership attends the meeting; this may be down to how people identify themselves – S&CG is a broader label

A net loss of 6 members was noted. It was suggested that this was likely down to postgraduate fellowships lapsing. Leila Dawney (LD) noted that some institutions refuse to pay for RGS-IBG Fellowships, and this could be a factor. Mark Holton (MH) noted need to keep membership high to keep subvention at the same level. HH asked whether we need to consider what comes with membership, as there is no list serv and we may need to consider what people would like to get. The December 2016 meeting noted the need for a working group. MH noted that looking over the last decade, most of the money has gone on initiatives set up by committee membership. He suggested a competitive funding bursary from broader membership, beyond the committee; this may be a way of getting mid-career and more senior people involved and build on their experience.

Maddy Thompson (MT) suggested that if mentoring kicks off that then this may be a benefit – i.e. open to research group membership.

Phil Emmerson (PE) asked what progress there had been on the working group. HH asked anybody interested in joining the working group to let her know.

PE asked is it a question on what members want: may be a way of engaging members more.

LD asked are people aware of what we do already? May be a way of communicating what we don't and how people can get involved?

**ACTION POINT 1: HH, RhDJ, and LR to draft and send email to the membership.**

c. Medals and awards

The list of RGS-IBG awards and medals was circulated. HH asked people to consider nominating people; SCGRG haven't tended to nominate people. She noted success of Ian Cook's nomination in 2017. She suggested, too, that people who do the vital work which don't have the high profile is important, particularly when their work is not closely aligned to particular fields. HH urged people to think beyond the 'usual suspects'. Non-UK residents can be nominated, but UK-based scholars seem to be more successful.

Jen Owen (JO) asked if there a longer description available of the criteria: MT noted that this is on the website. Tara Woodyer (TW) asked if unsuccessful nominees can be nominated a second time. HH to check on this and on non-UK residents.

d. Mentoring

Discussed under 4. Education Officer's report.

e. Events.

HH noted events and outputs, e.g. the new empiricism.

KP and RhDJ in the process of organising a teaching event. HH noted a resource or output: e.g. a special issue on teaching social and cultural geography. Need to maximise efficiency: doing less well.

HH noted a bigger themes for a bigger research event – there is match funding for £500 from the RGS-IBG.

S&CG in Schools – noted later, but A-level curriculum contains some more 'esoteric' aspects of cultural geography in the new A-level curriculum; opportunity to engage and develop resources.

3. Treasurer's report.

A balance of £2420.91 was noted, up from £2265.91 at the 2016 AGM. Subvention of £475 was received. MH noted no additional expenditure was incurred during 2016-17, and noted that we're now where we were 2-3 years ago, which is a good place to be, but is dependent on active members funding subventions. The group recorded a net surplus of £155.

Expenditure was limited to the dissertation prize, and bursaries for postgraduates. 4 bursaries (@£55) for the PGF Mid-Term Conference rather than 5; this was down to complications and miscommunication. Payment of £71.20 to the RGS-IBG was due in September for co-sponsorship of the *Reflecting on qualitative methods postgraduate workshop* held on 21<sup>st</sup> July.

MH noted the advantages of co-funding with other research groups, but nothing has developed yet in this regard.

The migration of the website was also noted, bringing a saving of £150 a year, which can be channelled elsewhere.

It was suggested that we spend the money to feed back the value of what we do. E.g. events. Need to note if we give £500 that we spend our subvention for the year. However, there is a need to be mindful: the group has money to spend, but this can't be unsustainable. RGS match-funding is a great opportunity.

Committee changes – MH need to contact LR to take details of those leaving committee. MH noted need for new committee members to fill in mandate forms.

HH thanked MH for his report.

#### 4. Education officer's report

HH read KP's report in her absence. 5 interventions over the next year hoped for.

##### a. 1 S&CG in schools.

KP has been in touch with the RGS staff about engaging on global governance and changing places.

Laura Price, RGS officer, suggested producing 60 second guides, which can be about how your work intersects with the curriculum.

Database of people wishing to give a lecture – either regionally or at the RGS. Tendency to use the same people, and would be good to have a variety of topics and presenters. HH asked people interested to email her and KP.

The group will produce a guide to the 60-second guides, but this will also include research methods. Tendency to be limited to in-street surveys, and would be good to emphasise breadth of methods to A-level students.

KP wanted to know if anybody wanted to co-author piece on changing places. She is happy to lead, but looking for co-authors from 2-3 institutions. Contact KP. HH suggested maybe that there could be others in a series.

KP and RhDJ planning to organise a one-day teaching workshop 'creative teaching', probably early 2018, probably Blueschool in Liverpool. Bursaries will be available. TW - CGYRG are planning to run an event around 10<sup>th</sup> January would be good to avoid a clash.

##### b. Website

Resources since 2015. Would be good to update. KP keen to hear from people wishing to contribute.

##### c. Mentoring

Will be moved from Education and create a new portfolio. RGS-IBG starting to think more about this – AAG and Canadian Geographers are doing things. Research sub-committee discussed this in May, but noted this tended to be fairly informal. HH asked if anybody had any strong views.

LD asked what resources are available, and what is the nature of mentoring: Is this a chat only, or will there be coaching (e.g. Institute of Leadership)? Would the RGS support this? HH asked if anybody had received any training? LD noted that particular leadership organisations were better than in house. HH: RGS may take this if we make more of an issue of it.

MH – need to have a mentoring champion in each group; otherwise, it would be [be what?]

HH – Committees – need to centralise? AAG – Women’s network has been hard to administer – many more wanted to be mentored than to be mentors. LD that many people will show a demand, but, in practice, if people had to commit to training and turning up, then that may come down.

**ACTION POINT 2: HH to contact other research groups and gauge interest of raising this with the RGS.**

5. Undergraduate dissertation prize.

Richard Scriven (RS) thanked everybody for their involvement. Around 20 entrants were received, as per other years. RS outlined the judging process. RS acknowledged that this is into holiday time, but it also shared the load. RS noted that this made a difference to people, and noted that it recognised excellence similar to prizes and medals.

Winner: £100 + subscription to S&CG – Anna Knowles-Smith (UCL)

Runner-up: Thomas Paulsen (Exeter)

RS noted that these were both timely pieces, and these winning entries did not detract from the other entries.

The committee were asked to observe an embargo until RS has noted winner. RS will conduct interview with a winner, but asked if we want to do more with that? Could link more with KP’s textbook. What does the prize mean? We have winning entries on the website, and this can be used as a learning and teaching tool. RS suggested need for follow-up conversation with KP to disseminate information.

RS asked whether we should consider whether some publications could go on – with appropriate editing and transformation – to be published. If this is something we should contact student and past supervisor – what does the student want? What is the role of the supervisor, and how should they be credited? Mary Gilmartin (S&CG managing editor) noted in correspondence that they publicise the prize. Agree that worthy of publication doesn’t mean that it will be published, and quality may vary; not every winner would be worthy of publication.

MH asked if time was better spent trying to focus on pedagogy rather than trying to liaise with people and systems, which may not lead to publication after peer-review. Showing this to students can be inspiring. Is it possible to profile some past winners?

HH noted that PhD increasingly competitive – firsts and distinctions no longer enough to guarantee success – more ‘value needed’, and a publication would help here. HH felt that it would be difficult to formalise; LD agreed.

PE asked whether there were other ways to disseminate, such as through anthologies with commentary? HH felt that a deal of editing would be required.

**ACTION POINT 3: incoming Dissertation Prize coordinator (Sofie Narbed) to liaise with RS and KP to consider this further.**

HH thanked RS for overseeing the prize in this and previous years.

#### 6. Committee changes

HH noted RGS-IBG were keen to have succession, and explained the committee terms of office.

HH thanked RS for his many years of service, both as Postgraduate Representative and as Dissertation Prize Coordinator. Franklin Ginn was also thanked for his long years of service (as Dissertation Prize Coordinator and then as ordinary member). Thanks were extended to Phil Emmerson for his two years as Postgraduate Representative.

HH noted the roles to be filled.

Postgrad rep:

Maddy Thompson (Prop: MH, Sec: HH)

Jen Owen, PhD student at Cardiff (Prop: MT; Sec: HH)

It was resolved that Sophie Yarker and Sofie Narbed were to decide between them who gets which role. Suzanne Beech (not present), who was nominated for the Dissertation Prize Coordinator role, was co-opted as an Ordinary committee member.

[n.b. Dissertation Officer: Sofie Narbed (Prop: Pat Noxolo; Sec: Phil Crang); ECR and Mentoring Officer: Sophie Yarker (Prop: RS; Sec: MH); Ordinary committee member: Suzanne Beech (Prop: Dave Atkinson; Sec: Sophie Cranston)].

HH welcomed the new members to the committee.

#### 7. AOB

HH extended thanks to Jamie Halliwell (website officer) and James Robinson (Communications Officer) for their communications roles.

PE asked whether they don't go ahead with a separate stream for PGs, and would support the mainstream communication.

**ACTION POINT 4: JH, JR, MT, Jen Owen, KP and Sofie Narbed to liaise about website content.**

#### 8. Conferences:

HH extended thanks to LP for arranging the sponsored sessions and guest passes.

MH – GCYPRG asked whether we showed what we sponsored, and what the organisers felt was the benefit of this. HH asked whether events funding could be tied in?

#### 9. Matters arising:

It was suggested that we revive the old events fund, which was previously £200. HH asked what is an appropriate amount with which to do things: is it better to have a bigger one-off fund? MH noted that there is around £1,500 available.

MH suggested a biennial event. If it were ticketed some money could be recouped. TW Wondered whether a stipulation of match-funding from the institution is worth considering; MH added that this could also be approached cross-group. HH noted that every member may want to do an event, in which case having £1k + £500 would mean that a lot could be done. MH suggested that it was worth returning to this in December: £1,500 would be 3 years' subvention. HH emphasised a need to fully consider the impacts on other commitments. Do we want to go for something big, or a more drip-feeding? PE suggested that this may be a question for wider membership.

#### 10. Future Dates

The next AGM takes place at the AC2018 in Cardiff. HH asked whether people thought it worth trying to book a lunchtime slot. TW suggested a lunchtime slot may bring more people.

The meeting closed at 20:20.