

Geography Department News

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Royal Holloway, University of London

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STAFF AND STUDENTS

Alison MacLeod successfully defended her PhD thesis on 23rd February, with minor corrections. The examination was held at the HQ of the Geological Society in Piccadilly; the external examiners were Professor David Smith (Oxford University) and Professor Jaap van der Meer (QMUL), who commented that the thesis was one of the best they had ever examined, in terms of the quality of the science it reported. Her PhD was the product of a Tied NERC PhD Studentship, an important component of the recently-completed NERC-RAPID project.

Marije Geldof successfully defended her doctoral thesis entitled "Literacy and ICT: social construction in the lives of low-literate youth in Ethiopia and Malawi" on 5th February 2010. Her distinguished examiners were Rose Luckin (Professor of Learner Centred Design at the London Knowledge Lab, Institute of Education, University of London) and Dan Wagner (Professor of Education and Director of the National Center on Adult Literacy/International Literacy Institute, University of Pennsylvania), who required no revisions to the thesis.

Welcome to **Veronica Chuma**, an academic visitor on the EduLink programme who is working on ICT and gender with Tim Unwin as part of the EduLink exchange programme.

Umar Haira'u, RHUL gave a presentation at The Green Week Campaign on 25th February. The title of his presentation was "Five Major Threats to the Planet".

OUTSIDE ENGAGEMENTS

David Simon presented a research seminar to DPhil students at the School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford on 2 February on the subject of 'The challenge of global environmental change - research and policy advocacy'.

Dr Vandana Desai, was an invited panel member last week on 18th Feb 2010 at a round table discussion at the House of Lords, hosted by Baroness Sandip Verma, Shadow Minister for Children, Schools and Families. The debate explored new ways of fighting and alleviating poverty. Chaired by Professor Syed Ferhat Anwar of the University of Dhaka, panel members along with Dr Desai included Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, who received a Knighthood last week for his outstanding contributions to social improvement, poverty alleviation, and empowerment of the poor in Bangladesh (BRAC) and overseas; Professor Robert Chambers of the Institute of Development, University of Sussex; Professor Mushtaq Khan, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; and Peter Fowler, the ex High Commissioner to Bangladesh. Dr Desai concentrated on her research areas of urban poverty in the Indian sub-continent, particularly focusing on housing the poor, ageing, gender and NGOs. The panel aimed to raise the level of debate and of awareness of issues in provision of aid to Bangladesh and to address emerging issues in the context of economic growth in South Asia.

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NOTICES

📍 Departmental Seminar - Professor Jin Ming Sha, Fujian Normal University - 'Monitoring Eco-environment Using Remote Sensing' - 11.3.10, 1pm - QLT.

📍 CEDAR Seminar - Sha Jin Ming, Fujian Normal University - 'Rural Development Challenges in China' - 8.3.10, 1pm - Q171.

📍 CEDAR Seminar - Branswen Gruffydd Jones, Goldsmiths, University of London - 'Tales of the African city in neoliberal times' - 17.3.10, 1.15-3pm - Q171.

📍 PERG Seminar - Sara Fregonese, RHUL - 'Geopolitical Discourses in Western Diplomacy Towards Lebanon, Intra-state Conflict, and Non-state Actors During the Cold War' - 15.3.10, 1pm, IN245.

📍 CQR Lecture - Professor Takeshi Nakagawa, University of Newcastle - 'Lake Suigetsu, Japan, a 70,000 Year Varved Sediment Record: A History and a New Project' - 10.3.10, 5.30pm, Q136.

📍 CQR Lecture - Dr Simon Armitage, RHUL - 'Panacea or Plaything? Single-grain OSL Dating of Dryland Archaeology' - 18.3.10, 5pm, Q170.

Dr Desai emphasised the right of the poor to the city and to adequate housing and the need for more creative informal financing in resolving the issues involved in sustainable urbanisation.

Tim Unwin was Panel Chair of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) Bridging the Gaps 4 initiative selection panel.

Thomas Stevens gave a 1 hour talk on 'The uplift of Tibet and the Himalayas: tectonics and climate change' at the High Weald Branch of the GA on the 19th of January 2010.

Ed Derbyshire visited the Geological Society in London on 8 February to work with a professional staff member on aspects of Foreign and External Relations affairs.

Marije Geldof gave a talk on her PhD thesis 'Literacy and ICT: social constructions in the lives of low-literate youth in Ethiopia and Malawi' at Microsoft Research in Cambridge on 15 February.

Luiza Bialasiewicz gave an invited talk on "The EU and its borderwork" to students in the Department of Geography, University College Dublin, on February 25th. She also participated in a seminar on 'quasi-states' at NUI Maynooth on February 26th.

Clive Gamble gave an invited lecture Out of Africa and into the world to the Archaeology 2010 Conference at the British Museum on February 28th .

Clive Gamble gave the Henry Stopes memorial Lecture Breaking the time barrier to the Geologists' Association on February 5th.

Philip Crang gave a talk on 'Fashioning Diaspora Space' at the AHRC Diasporas, Migration and Identities Research Programme's Final Event, at Tate Britain, Feb 10th

Philip Crang gave a seminar on 'Cultural Geography: After a Fashion' in the Departments of Geography at Exeter (Feb 18th) and Kings College London (March 2nd).

Philip Crang and **Ben Coles** gave a seminar on 'Placing Alternative Foods' at the SOAS Food Forum, run by the Department of Anthropology at SOAS, on February 26th.

Katie Willis, **Francisco Ferreira**, **Rob Kemp** and **Frank Meddens** (RHUL Honorary Research Associate) were part of the Inca Ushnus team who met Professor Stephen Daniels and Charlotte Lloyd from the AHRC Landscape and Environment Programme on 17 February at the British Museum. Other project members attending the meeting were **Nick Branch** (Reading), **Colin McEwan** and **Gabriel Ramon** (British Museum). The team provided an overview of the project's progress, including the new exhibition case on ushnus which has just opened in the Wellcome Gallery of the British Museum. This display case is a direct output of the Inca Ushnu project and is part of a series of project-related activities and events that will run over the next year.

PUBLICATIONS

David Simon is co-author of 'Establishing a marine protected area in the Chagos Archipelago: socio-economic considerations; report of workshop held 7 January 2010, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK', published in February 2010 by the sponsoring organisations, including RHUL (26pp).

Vandana Desai and **Matthew Tye** (2010) *Aging Asia in Geography and You* (a development and environment magazine in India) Vol. 10, Issues 58, Jan-Feb 2010, pp. 6-11.

Vandana Desai (2009) *Globalisation, Socio-Cultural Change and Household Strategies in The Urban World* (a quarterly publication of the Regional Centre for Urban and

Environmental Studies (RCUES), All India Institute of Local Self Government, Mumbai), Vol: 2, No:4, October-December. pp. 26-36.

Marksoo, U., Bialasiewicz, L. and Best, U. (2010). The Global Economic Crisis and Regional Divides in the European Union: Spatial Patterns of Unemployment in Estonia and Poland. *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 51(1):52-79.

Luiza Bialasiewicz has joined the Editorial Board of *Eurasian Geography and Economics*.

Crang P. and **Ashmore S.** 2009, 'The transnational spaces of things: South Asian textiles in Britain and The Grammar of Ornament', *European Review of History*, 16, 655-678 (Routledge).

Bradley L. Garrett, 2010, Introduction to *Detritus: a portrait of human waste* edited by **David Clayton**. Blurb Publishing, San Francisco, California.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Scott Elias has been awarded a small grant of \$4,349 from the National Park Service of the USA. The project is entitled 'Paleoenvironmental Reconstruction of the Little Takli Island Peat Record.' Little Takli Island This is an island near Katmai National Park in southern Alaska. A coastal bluff on the island has an exposure of Holocene peat, associated with local archaeology. The aim of the project is to reconstruct the local climate and vegetation cover since the end of the last glaciation, through the analysis of insect fossils extracted from the peat. Scott will fly to the site next summer to take samples that will be shipped back to London for insect fossil analysis.

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Peter French successfully applied to the RHUL Research Strategy Fund for £3,289.31 for the project entitled 'Geochemical Phases and Stability of Metal Contaminants in Intertidal Sediments of the Severn Estuary'.

Anny Neves (MSc PSD) is the first recipient of the Paula-Ann Award to support her dissertation field research in Maputo, Mozambique.

Katherine Brickell has been awarded a British Academy Small Grant (£7500) for a 2-year project entitled 'Cooking up Change? Housekeeping Competitions as Gendered Development Interventions in Vietnam'.

Katherine Brickell has been awarded an Overseas Conference Grant (£700) from the British Academy to present at the seminar 'Contextualising Geographical Approaches to Studying Gender in Asia', University of Delhi, India.

January 2010 - **Thomas Stevens** has been awarded a NERC FSF (NERC Field Spectroscopy Facility) ASD fieldpro probe loan in order to study the spectral reflectance properties of loess - £1980 equivalent. The equipment and operator visited the department in February 2010 and was used on archived samples of loess from the northwest of the Loess Plateau. Certain reflectance absorption features may be tied to mineral/clay mineral contents in loess and so may function as palaeoclimate proxies.

VISITORS - MEETINGS IN THE DEPARTMENT

Christina Archer, Senior Buyer with the Body Shop's Community Trade team, visited the department on 1st February to give a CEDAR/CRIS seminar on "Clash or Collaboration: The Private Sector and Development Practice". Christina Archer and **Dorothea Kleine** then met to discuss future research collaboration over a project in El Salvador. 1st Feb, 2010

Elisa Bignante, Dept of Geography, University of Torino

presented the CEDAR Seminar entitled 'From Indigenous to Situated Territorial Knowledge: Health Remedies Among the Maasai and Meru of Uwiro, Northern Tanzania' on 15th February 2010.

Alison Evans, Director, Overseas Development Institute (ODI) presented the CEDAR Annual Lecture entitled 'Aid in Development - What's Old, What's New?' on Tuesday 23rd February 2010

Federico Caprotti, UCL presented the PERG Seminar entitled 'Between Discourse & Materiality: The Discursive Logic of Sectoral Emergence in the Cleantech Sector, 2003 -2010' on 8th February 2010.

David Grimshaw, Senior Research Fellow, Emerging Technologies, Department for International Development; and Practical Action presented the Centre for ICT4D/CEDAR Seminar entitled 'Sharing Local Content in Local Voices' on 2nd March 2010.

Alasdair MacArthur (NERC-FSF) and Mike Smith (Kingston University) visited **Thomas Stevens** and operated a NERC FSF spectral reflectance probe on archived loess samples on the 4th-8th of February. The results will be used to investigate reflectance spectra in Chinese loess as proxies for palaeoclimate.

FIELDWORK - CONFERENCES-OVERSEAS

Sara Fregonese delivered a paper presentation at the opening conference "Fratricide and Fraternite'" of the John E. Sawyer Seminar Series 2009-2010 /Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, held at the School of Advanced Studies, University of London on Friday 26th February. The title of her presentation is: "The Urbicide of Beirut: Political Violence, Geopolitical Discourse, and Built Environment during the Two Years' War (1975-76)" see <http://www.sas.ac.uk/709.html> for details.

Ed Derbyshire visited the UK Ambassador to UNESCO in Paris on 18 February to discuss aspects of Earth sciences within the UNESCO Sciences Sector, with special reference to the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP). On the following day, he attended the open session of the Annual Meeting of the Scientific Board of the IGCP as Chair of the UK National Committee for the IGCP.

Bradley L. Garrett spent 4 days in Paris, leading an exploration of 4 miles of the Paris Catacombs. He also was taken for explorations of the Paris underground cinema, an abandoned WWII military bunker and a former Nazi command centre.