

STAFF AND STUDENTS

Felix Driver has been appointed as our next Head of Department and will take over from Rob Kemp from 1st January 2005 for three years.

Chris Stringer has been awarded an FRS which is the highest award in Science. This is a great achievement especially as very few Geographers have become Fellows of the Royal Society. The 2004 list is published in the current edition of THES and RHUL is named as Chris' affiliation.

Glenys Owen-Jones, who is doing a PhD on geographical fieldwork and the A-level curriculum, has been invited to join the Field Studies Working Group of the Geographical Association.

Peter French acted as external examiner in the Geography Department, University of Portsmouth for a PhD thesis entitled 'The effects of artificial barriers on adjacent shorelines within the littoral cell'.

Welcome to **Dr. Karen Till** who has joined us from the University of Minnesota as a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography.

OUTSIDE ENGAGEMENTS

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development, has endorsed the recommendation of the Selection Board that **Tim Unwin** should be appointed a member of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission for a three year period commencing 1 July.

There are 15 members of the Commission, and as well as General Scholarships, the Commission also administers Academic Staff Scholarships, Commonwealth Academic Fellowships, Split-Site Doctoral Scholarships, Scholarships by Distance Learning, Professional Fellowships and the DFID Shared Scholarship Scheme. For further information, see: <http://www.csfp-online.org/hostcountries/uk/>

Tim Unwin attended the British Council's Education and Training Advisory Committee meeting on 18th June.

Tim Unwin attended a reception given by Canon Robert Wright, Rector of St Margaret's Westminster on 15th June

Rob Kemp attended the International Workshop on Soil Micromorphology and Archaeology at the University of Stirling on June 3-6. He chaired the session on Landscape Histories and gave the 'after-dinner speech' at the conference dinner.

David Simon attended the editorial board meeting of the Journal of Southern African Studies in London on 18 th June

David Mandiyanike attended the two day research conference hosted by the Zimbabwe-Britain Society at St. Anthony's College, Oxford Univeristy. David presented a paper titled: 'The Historicity of Zimbabwe's local government - current crisis and implications on capacity.'

David Mandiyanike held a feedback meeting with Paul and Mary Slawson at the Royal Geographical Society Offices. David as a recipient of the Slawson Award was reporting back on his fieldwork to Zimbabwe. The deputy Director - Nigel Winsel and some members of staff also attended this meeting.

Ed Derbyshire attended a meeting of the External Relations Committee of the Geological Society in Burlington House, Piccadilly on 3 June.

Mark Stephens attended the International Worskshop on Soil Micromorphology and Archaeology at the University of Stirling from 3-6 June. Mark presented a paper on 5 June entitled "Post depositional alteration of cave sediments from the West Mouth of the Great Cave of Niah, Sarawak, Borneo".

PUBLICATIONS

Unwin, Tim (2004) ICTs for education in Africa, *Review of African Political Economy*, 31, 150-160

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Rob Imrie has been awarded an ESRC/ODPM PhD studentship on the topic of "Disability and liveable environments: a comparative study". While the studentship is wholly based at RH, the project is collaboration with the Department of Geography, University of Lund and the student's adviser there will be Dr Guy Baeton.

VISITORS/MEETINGS IN THE DEPARTMENT

Ben Wisner (Oberlin College, Ohio) visited **David Simon** on 11 th June to discuss mutual interests, possible future research collaborations, and Ben's essay on Jim Blaut that will be included in a book edited by David.

Rob Imrie organised a Geography Taster Day on Tuesday, 22 nd June for 38 students from 11 different schools in years 11 and 12. The topic was Sustainable development : The management of the earth and Tim Unwin , Scott Elias, Simon Blockley and his team, Peter French, Rebecca Edwards, Conor Linstead, Don Thompson, and David Simon and Justin Spinney were all involved on the day.

Scott Elias hosted Prof. Alan Cooper and Dr. Eske Willerslev of the Henry Wellcome Ancient Biomolecules Centre, Dept of Zoology, University of Oxford, on 14 June. Scott is collaborating with this group on the submission of a grant proposal to NERC, concerning the extraction and identification of fossil beetle DNA from frozen Pleistocene sediments in Alaska and northwest Canada.

Tanya Mennie (née Van der Elst) (MA Third World Development 1999) visited David Simon on 24 th June. She now works for SEEDA in Guildford.

Professor John Shepherd (Birkbeck) and Dr David Evans (Glasgow) visited the Department on 8 th and 9 th June, in connection with their duties as Visiting Examiners for the Department

CONFERENCES-FIELDWORK-OVERSEAS

Ed Derbyshire attended a meeting of the Management Team of the International Year of Planet Earth in the Geologische Bundesanstalt, Rasumofsky Palace, Vienna, on 14 May.

Ed Derbyshire spent the period 7 June – 1 July as a guest of the Institute of Geology and Geophysics (Chinese Academy of Science) in Beijing. He undertook fieldwork on the Loess Plateau 15-17 June, concentrating on the Lingtai section, where he sampled the upper part of palaeosol sequence in the Pliocene-Miocene “red clay” formation. He conferred with Dr. Zhang Hongren (former Vice-Minister of Land and Resources) at the Chinese Academy of Geology on 21 June in preparation for a meeting of the Management Team of the International Year of Planet Earth on 24 and 25 June. Under the aegis of the IUGS, he attended the Opening Day of the First International Conference on Geoparks on 27 June. He also agreed the final draft of a paper for publication jointly with Professor Ding Zhongli, Director of the Institute.

ANY OTHER NEWS

Scott Elias held a beard-shaving fund raising event on the 4 th of June and raised £700 for Christian Aid and is now in the process of growing back his beard.

Rounders and BBQ

On Wednesday 23rd June the postgraduate forum hosted a rounders and barbecue

event. Despite the torrential rain, we managed a game of rounders in the sports hall. When it came to the barbecue and drinks the rain certainly didn't dampen anyone's spirits. The committee thought the event was a huge success with over 50 postgrads and staff in attendance. Thanks to all that supported this event. We look forward to welcoming more of you next time. If anyone would like to get involved in the forum or has any ideas for a future

postgrad/staff event please email the committee: h.geoghegan@rhul.ac.uk