



HISTORICAL
GEOGRAPHY
RESEARCH
GROUP

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- *130 Years of Historical Geography at Cambridge* (Alan Baker, Iain Black and Robin Butler)

Copy for the next issue:
October 20, 2019

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HGRG Newsletter, Summer 2019



Historical Geography Research Group

NEWSLETTER

- SUMMER 2019 -

Letter from the Chair

Dear HGRG members,

Welcome to the summer edition of the newsletter. The days are long and the weather is (finally) suitably summery. Last Saturday reached a scorching 31 degrees Celsius as we launched the latest book in the HGRG Research Monograph Series in Cambridge. Written by Alan Baker, Iain Black and Robin Butlin, *130 Years of Historical Geography at Cambridge 1888-2018* charts the changing character of historical geography as conceived, taught and researched at, and disseminated from one institution: the University of Cambridge. Kindly hosted by Emmanuel College, the launch event was attended by 50 guests including current academics, retired historical geographers, former Cambridge undergraduates and the authors' friends and families. It was a lovely event and I'm delighted to say advance print copies were a complete sell out on the day. Readers might like to see the handful of photos from the event (included here). Members will receive their e-book in the coming days (via the HGRG mailing list) and can apply for their free soft bound copy by following the instructions in the email.

As for other dates for your diaries, the RGS-

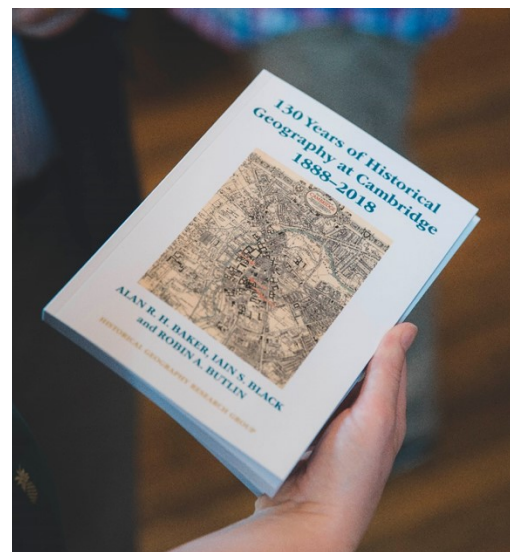


Image credit: Charles Newton

IBG annual conference is now just around the corner, taking place 27th to 30th August at Kensington Gore, London. The HGRG is sponsoring 13 sessions including a double instalment of the ever-popular 'New and Emerging Research in Historical Geography' sessions. Please do come along to these and all the HGRG sponsored sessions—they promise to be an exciting set of papers and round table discussions on a wide range of themes. The



Guests at the launch, 29 June, 2019 Image credit: Charles Newton

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The authors (l-r): Alan Baker, Robin Butlin and Iain Black Image credit: Charles Newton

research group's annual general meeting will take place on Thursday 29th August in the lunchtime slot, 13:10 to 14:25 (room TBC). A number of committee positions will become available this year and members interested in being involved are asked to get in touch with myself as Chair or Cheryl McGeachan as Secretary. We are always keen to get new people involved in the HGRG so regardless of whether you've ever considered a position on a research group committee before, now might be the time. Postgraduate members may be particularly interested to serve as one of our Postgraduate Representatives, who organise the 'New and Emerging' sessions at the annual conference and otherwise represent PG views on the committee. Anyone interested in representing the early career researcher (ECR) community is also encouraged to get in touch.

As for the newsletter, skilfully put together by the ever-brilliant Jake Hodder, readers will enjoy the latest contribution to 'How I Became a Historical Geographer' series, this time from James Kneale who writes very frankly about his engagements with the subdiscipline. Next up, Hannah Fitzpatrick narrates some of her personal, emotional and moral engagements with the Oskar Spate papers held at the National Library of Australia, while Flossie Kingsbury's 'Shelfie' flags up a number of texts on writing persuasive, creative and accessible academic 'stories' and 'character-led research' which we might all usefully look up. Finally, Benjamin Thorpe then offers us a thoughtful report on the American Association of Geographers annual conference in Washington DC in April, after which follow the usual announcements and notices.

Finally, let me flag to those of you working in UK and Irish Geography departments that the annual HGRG undergraduate dissertation prize closes on 12th July. The winner receives £200 of Routledge-published books and will be invited to submit an article based on their

dissertation for publication in the *Journal of Historical Geography* (subject to standard peer review). Submissions should be sent to the Dissertation Prize Coordinator, James Kneale (for more details, see the website: <https://hgrg.org.uk/grants-and-prizes/undergraduate-dissertation-prize/>). The names and dissertation titles of former prize-winners and highly commended entries are also available on the HGRG website (and include at least one current HGRG committee member!).

Kind regards as always,

Dr Briony McDonagh, HGRG Chair

130 Years of Historical Geography at Cambridge 1888-2018

Alan R. H. Baker, Iain S. Black and Robin A. Butlin

Historical Geography Research Group
number 46, 2019 ISBN: 978 1 870074 29 2

Abstract: This book is the outcome of an investigation of the changing character of historical geography as conceived, taught at, researched at, and disseminated from, one institution—the Department of Geography of the University of Cambridge—from the early-twentieth century. An explanatory history is given of historical geography within a major department of an ancient English university, but viewed within broader geographical and historical contexts. The principal scale of investigation is small, which requires awareness of possible linked hazards, including the paucity of university archives, unreliability of personal memories and oral evidence. As such, the book offers a significant and innovative contribution to the history of historical geography and geography more broadly.

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How I became a historical geographer

James Kneale



James Kneale is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography at the University College London. His research interests include historical and contemporary geographies of drink, drunkenness, and temperance; and literary geographies, particularly in non-realist genres (science fiction, horror, ghost stories, utopias, etc). James has published in dozens of leading academic journals and his research has been supported by the Wellcome Trust and the Japanese Ministry of Education. He is also the co-editor of the *Journal of Victorian Culture* and the Dissertation Prize Coordinator for the HGRG.

I am sure I am not the only person to have responded to the invitation to write a piece for this column with a “who, me?” and a twitch of impostor syndrome. I usually describe myself, when I have to, as “a cultural/historical geographer,” a clumsy formulation that dates me as someone who encountered historical geography just as it was beginning to deal with new questions of representation, discourse and identity.

At school I’d enjoyed human geography and loved history—particularly the classes of Phil Nichols, a chalk-slinging Communist who insisted we buy primary source collections from Colletts’ radical bookshop—but for some reason I wanted to be a scientist. Physical geography seemed so much easier, even if it meant taking extra O levels in Geology and Statistics. But at UCL physical geography was suddenly bewildering; I remember quailing before an equation that had something to do with the plasticity of ice. Luckily I had chosen to do an affiliate course with historians Julian Hoppit and Negley Harte, simultaneously discovering historical geography through the contributions Hugh Clout, Richard Dennis, Hugh Prince and others made to the ‘London’ course. I wrote my coursework on eighteenth-century Westminster’s radical politics, having read Thompson, Rudé, and Hobsbawm for a long A level history essay on machine-breaking.

And so I discovered that it was possible to study geography and history at the same time. Historical geography took over my final year: Richard Dennis’s ‘Urban Historical Geography,’ Tony French’s ‘Russian Historical Geography,’ and Hugh Prince’s ‘Methods in Historical Geography,’ with contributions from Hugh Clout. The department’s strengths in historical geography were of course well established, but something new was happening. Peter Jackson’s contribution to the second year ‘Cultural and Historical Geography’ course would shortly be published as *Maps of Meaning* and Jacquie Burgess’s *Geography, the Media and Popular Culture*, edited with John Gold, was only a few years old. Hugh Prince enthused about Peter

Gay and Richard Cobb and the art of Paul Nash, as well as the classic works of historical geography. Richard Dennis’s final year module surveyed everything from moral geographies to impressionism, and when Gillian Rose and Miles Ogborn’s conference on Feminism and Historical Geography was held in the Department I was able to attend as a student helper. Looking back, I was poised between two quite different kinds of historical geography, between field systems and landscape art, indices of segregation and institutional geographies, fustian and feminism.

The thought of starting a PhD hadn’t ever occurred to me, but after graduating I worked for Richard Munton and Philip Lowe in UCL’s Countryside Change Centre, and this gave me time to think about what I might do next, as well as giving me a taste for academic life. I considered working with several people but one day I picked up Annette Kuhn’s collection on science fiction film, *Alien Zone*, while browsing in Dillon’s. I made the link with Fredric Jameson’s *Postmodernism* and I had a proposal. Working with Jacquie and Peter Jackson, I made a break with historical geography. As a result, I missed out on a few key things I would later feel the need for: archival experience and training; membership of a cohort of fellow students; a network of senior researchers. Still, the London Group of Historical Geographers seminars at the IHR provided a fortnightly dose of historical work alongside lots of new ideas.

My first lecturing job, a nine-month contract at Bristol in the final year of my PhD which included a course on urban historical geography, was a welcome distraction from the thesis; that course survived into my next job, at Exeter. Historical geographers at both institutions were, on the whole, very welcoming, and I learned a lot from Paul Glennie, Catherine Brace, David Harvey and John Morrissey. At the same time I realized that the cultural turn was still very unevenly distributed across UK higher education.



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Struggling to publish from the PhD, I worked up a long essay on Victorian moral geographies of drinking I had written for Richard Dennis and submitted it to the *Journal of Historical Geography*. Publishing another paper on drink and temperance two years later, I began to wonder if I might be a historical geographer after all.

Since then, having returned to UCL, I have published a series of papers and chapters that might be described as historical-geographical, some with Shaun French and Sam Randalls; but not much, recently, in geography journals or collections. To some extent this reflects the interdisciplinarity of 'drinking studies.' Over the last decade a series of stimulating and generous workshops and conferences, organised by Angela McShane and Phil Withington's Intoxicants and Intoxication Network and then Debbie Toner and Mark Hailwood's Drinking Studies Network, have given me the cohort and mentors I had struggled to find elsewhere. At the same time I have been able to watch David Beckingham

develop historical geographies of drinking into a well-defined research area, demonstrating the superiority of meticulous scholarship over my opportunistic archival ram-raids.

I continue to teach some historical geography, with Caroline Bressey and Tariq Jazeel, and have supervised some excellent PhDs in this area (Charlotte Jones and Ruth Slatter). I've been a HGRG committee member for a few years now and have belatedly started attending meetings of the International Conference of Historical Geographers. All of this means that I feel more like a historical geographer than ever before, but still at a slight remove from the sub-discipline (it's not you, honest, it's me). And while there is of course lots of room in literary geographies for historical work, I have yet to really develop a productive dialogue between the kind of work I did for my thesis and more straightforwardly historical-geographical research. Still, I am very happy to be identified as a historical geographer—it really is one of the nicest and most interesting bits of the discipline. □

From the archive

Responsibility at the margins: on partition and the Spate papers

by Hannah Fitzpatrick,
University of Edinburgh

A colleague of mine joined me for lunch recently, and we happened upon the topic of the archive (specifically my archive, which for the past eight years has been the Oskar Spate papers, held by the National Library of Australia), and I asked him about the relationships he has cultivated with the families and friends of the people whose lives and work are documented in the boxes and files that form the basis of much of his research. He understood my meaning instantly, and agreed that this invisible work is one of the most important aspects of what we do.

Oskar Spate became my geographer by accident, of course. I came to him in the traditional way: via an extended tangent, while doing some archival work on the partition of India and Pakistan, which I had begun as an undergraduate student at Barnard College in New York. The collection of materials associated with partition are both hotly contested and well-examined, and so I did not expect to find much in the way of unexplored archives when I set out to write a historical geography of partition maps. Yet, as well

known as Spate is among some geographers, his involvement in the Punjab Boundary Commission remains a relatively unexplored episode from the early days of his academic career.

Spate is arguably most famous for his contributions to 20th century regional geography: his work on the Pacific and Southeast Asia is generally considered to be foundational. He has also been of interest to some historical geographers recently because of his apparent involvement (although the character and extent of this involvement is not well-understood) with the communist students' organisation while he was at Cambridge. He understandably downplayed this aspect of his political life, and so his papers and his memoir give very little away. At conferences I am usually asked, 'Was Spate a Communist?' I don't yet know.

He did have a generally remarkable life. Spate was British, but he spent most of his adult life in Australia, as the first chair of the Geography department at Australia National University, and so he is sometimes referred to in the Partition literature (when he is referred to at all) as an 'Australian geographer'. Before his career in Australia took off, however, he worked in Burma during the final years of the British empire, and was badly injured during the Second World War while serving in



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Rangoon. He was stationed in India and then Sri Lanka until the end of the war.

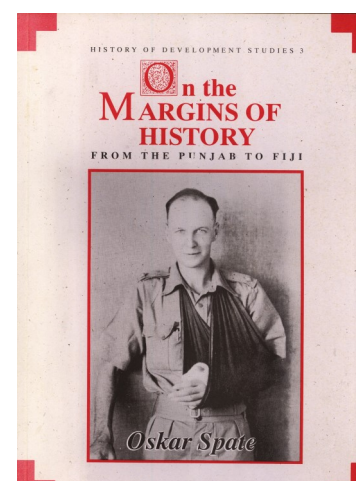
Because I have read some of his diaries, I now know that during the war, he followed Indian news closely, and was very interested in the development of Indian nationalist politics. He was particularly fascinated, as I was sixty years later, by the lack of cartographic and territorial specificity of what many called the 'Pakistan demand', or the call by a group of Indian Muslim nationalists for a homeland for Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. He was one of the few British geographers to express much interest in the dismantling of the empire that he witnessed happening around him.

After the war, he returned to London, where his association with Dudley Stamp brought him both employment and, in July of 1947, a contract with a small community of Muslims affiliated with the Muslim League to assist them in devising a geographically-informed territorial claim to a small city in the Punjab, which was set to be partitioned. This claim was to be put before the Punjab Boundary Commission later in the month, as part of the negotiations over the future border between India and Pakistan.

It is the small set of papers remaining from this (roughly) fifteen-day period from July, when Spate was 36 years old, that has been the basis for most of my research in the last decade. It has provided far richer and more nuanced data than I expected, of course, but the thing I find most compelling about my time with Spate is not the colourful and detailed maps he preserved or his disturbingly prescient observations. In fact, I am most moved by speaking with his daughter, whom I met during my extended quest to get permissions in place in order to publish from the Spate papers.

Many readers of this piece will have had the opportunity to meet Spate, or will have met colleagues or students who were in close proximity to him. He was only a few years older than my grandfather, after all. His academic work is quite accessible, even if some of the books are no longer in print, and I have my own memories from the year he died. He was well liked by some, feared or disliked by others, and the curated nature of his papers suggests that he gave some thought to what he wanted future bottom feeders of the archive (a.k.a. me) to know about him. He seemed to be cultivating a critical distance, one that I reciprocated quite naturally.

As such, I didn't expect my conversations with his family to feel so existential. But the archive gives us the power to conjure ghosts (of a sort) and before I met his daughter, Spate's



On the Margins of History by Oskar Spate (1991)

work in the Punjab seemed to me to be the closest I could get, as a North American geographer, to what it might have been like to be an academic geographer working in the midst of a historical moment that I had come to care so deeply about. In the words of the government funding councils, Spate came far closer to an Impact case study than I suspect I ever will! Hearing about him from his family feels like a homecoming of sorts, a way of building an emotional structure on which to hang the fragments of thought and experience and labour I had spent so much time trying to decipher in his papers.

What was both predictable and sad was his assessment after the fact of his own hamstrung position. Spate was of the empire, of course, yet he was not as proud of it as some of the literature has suggested. He was in favour of independence, and expressed regret over the way the British government had mishandled partition. The evidence suggests that he felt the weight of his responsibility alongside an overwhelming sense of his own inability to assist in preventing the loss of life that might (and eventually did) become part of the partition process.

I have been thinking critically about his position: a white British academic, affiliated with a prestigious University of London institution, yet distanced from the affairs and interests of the government. How much of what happened was his responsibility? Where were his power and his privilege directed? I'm still not sure I can ever fully know the answer. But it historicises a question that we are often required to answer on funding applications and in Impact case study reports. Spate tells us something about what we as historical geographers did then, and what we do now. What sort of good should any of us try to do, if we are caught up in events so much bigger and weightier than not only ourselves but our little corner of the academy? □

From the archive

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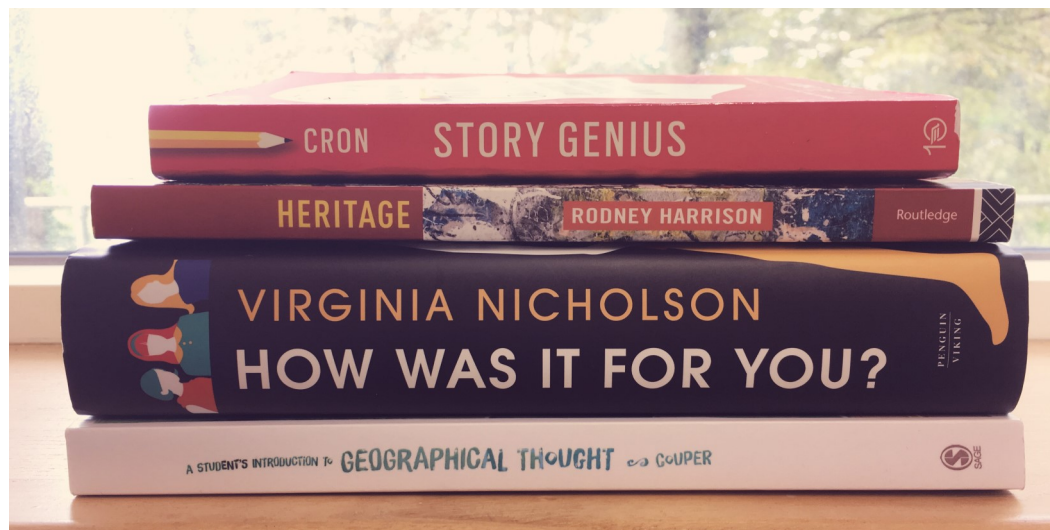
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Shelfie

Shelfie

by Flossie Kingsbury



I have never been a conventional researcher. My strengths lie in weaving together seemingly unconnected ideas, seeing the links that join together a myriad of topics; it's why I've spent so many years swapping between academic disciplines, first theatre, then history, followed by heritage, finally ending up in geography (for now at least). This interdisciplinary background shows itself in the books I've selected for my shelfie. All of these are books that are currently having a profound impact on my PhD thesis, and they cover a suitably wide range of subjects, from heritage studies to creative writing and geographical theory. Interestingly, none of my chosen books are directly related to the actual subject of my PhD, which is the movement of people into Wales from 1965-1980. There are precious few books on this topic already, which is one of the reasons for doing the project in the first place. And while I could perhaps reflect on one of the few that do mention the idea—Tim Cresswell's *In Place/Out of Place* (1996) for instance, or George McKay's *Senseless Acts of Beauty* (1996)—these are not books that have heavily influenced my work (so far, in any case). Instead, my writing has grown out of the interviews I conducted, around 50 in total, with the people who moved. The secondary literature which has influenced me is, therefore, that which demonstrates the significance of these stories and shows me how best to interpret and recount them.

I instinctively focus on personal, human, lived experiences in my research, which is something that has arisen from my background in heritage, where I was drawn to the intangible remnants of the past, the things which exist and obtain meaning and value

only through doing, through being enacted. Rodney Harrison, author of *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, was one of the first writers to introduce me to this side of heritage. The book provides an overview of recent developments in heritage theory. Harrison argues for a dialogical model of heritage, which focuses on the interactions between people, places and things in the creation and maintenance of heritage. This model allows for more scope to understand the intangibility of heritage, the side of it which I am drawn to. And of course, one of the most significant intangible forms of heritage is stories and the act of storytelling. While Harrison does not deal directly with stories and storytelling, his work demonstrates the significance of these intangible forms of heritage. This is one key reason why I chose to base my research on interviews in the first place. A dialogical model of heritage reinforces the importance of telling and re-telling these people's stories, demonstrates its benefits for both the teller and the recipient and, in doing so, provides my research with an additional layer of purpose and a new way of understanding the raw data.

So, with Harrison's work prompting me to listen and retell people's stories, the next challenge is to find a way of writing them that does justice to the richness of their lived experiences. There are plenty of books on writing, any one of which could help me to tell these stories, but it's the advice Lisa Cron gives in *Story Genius* (2016) which has had the most influence. Cron explains the science behind why our brains gravitate towards stories and responds to them so strongly, building on research by other authors such as Jonathan Gottschall (2013) and Benjamin Bergen (2012). Where Cron differs from these



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Shelfie

earlier works is that she goes on to set out practical advice on how to apply what brain science has shown us to our writing, creating stories that will engage readers as fully as possible. She argues that the majority of poor writing arises when writers focus on external events to drive the story forwards, rather than on a character's internal development. Working with interview data, there is a tendency to want to extract key themes and insert them into their chronological context. But as Harrison has shown it is people who are at the heart of these stories, and by focusing on positioning interviews in relation to external events we can sometimes lose track of their personal significance. Switching the focus, emphasizing what living these experiences means to the individuals and building the research around that instead, creates a research narrative which is driven by its characters. Or that's what I'm hoping at least.

Of course, the very best way of learning to write stories well is to read. In many ways, it's been my deep love of reading narrative non-fiction that drew me to the methods outlined in *Story Genius*: these are the books I love and want to emulate. I can remember lugging a copy of Roger Fouts' *Next of Kin: My Conversations with Chimpanzees* (1997) around the shops with me as a teenager, because I absolutely had to know what the outcome of his quest to teach Washoe the chimp sign language would be. While I never did end up researching chimpanzees myself, I still read and emulate books that ignite that same spark of curiosity (and do so by employing the methods Cron outlines). This interest is where Virginia Nicholson and *How Was It For You? Women, Sex, Love and Power in the 1960s* (2019) comes into play. Nicholson has written several acclaimed books on women's lives in the twentieth century. While those dealing with the earlier half of the twentieth century draw heavily on archival research, supplemented with some interviews, the more recent ones weave together the narratives arising from interviews with the women themselves. Nicholson always places these against a rich backdrop of archival research on the culture of the 1960s, but it's the women's voices which take centre stage and drive the narrative. These voices are what makes *How Was It For You?* (and Nicholson's other work) so phenomenally useful for me: Nicholson takes the same kind of raw data that I work with and writes it up in the style I prefer, while simultaneously providing a jolly useful bit of contextual history about my era (not to mention a tremendously extensive bibliography). It's a triple-win as far as I'm concerned, a veritable masterclass in developing story/character-led research.

The danger of taking so much influence from the books so far discussed is that one might sometimes forget what discipline I am actually writing in. The beauty of geography is that it gives so much potential for drawing together multiple different approaches and perspectives. Almost every human geographer will be familiar with the phrase 'but how is this geography?' in response to their latest research project. My perspective is so interdisciplinary though that I sometimes need to ground myself. And when this happens, I turn to Pauline Couper's *A Student's Introduction to Geographical Thought: Theories, Philosophies, Methodologies* (2015). It is perhaps a rather basic book for a PhD candidate, but the clear overview Couper gives of geography's key developments, changes and ideas is invaluable for staving off imposter syndrome (especially for someone like me, who has flitted between disciplines like there's no tomorrow and consequently doesn't quite fit into any of them). It's important to recognize the value of books like this in supporting thesis writing, not through providing groundbreaking ideas, but by helping to keep us grounded and remind us that actually we do know things after all.

There's a second value to Couper's book which is that she draws her own personal experiences into her writing, remaining open about her positionality. This awareness of positionality is also shared by Cron and Nicholson and is a running theme throughout the books that have influenced me. It is important to remember when writing story-driven research, particularly that based on interviews, that the researcher is also a character in the piece. Our story also impacts the research, and this impact needs to be given space and recognition. Moving forwards, I'll be continuing to develop the story-based approach to writing historical geography that I've been working on with the help of Harrison, Cron, Nicholson and Couper. A story-based writing methodology like this requires a greater awareness of positionality, both the researcher's and the interviewee's, and a willingness to be flexible. You can't guarantee what people will say and tying research to individual stories means it can be taken in completely unforeseen directions. But I believe that doing so can yield research narratives that are far richer and more powerful than anything a conventional approach could produce. □

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Conference Report



Tidal Basin, Washington DC Image credit: Ben Thorpe

AAG Annual Meeting, Washington, DC

April 3 - 7, 2019

by Benjamin Thorpe

For those of us based in the UK, arranging travel to this year's Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers (AAG), held from 3rd to 9th April 2019 in Washington, DC, involved one more variable than usual. Namely, the predicted chaos of the wake of Brexit Day, inked in for 29th March. In the event, of course, this did not come to pass, and the chaos was of a purely political nature, redoubling when the rearranged Brexit Day of 12th April also failed to come to pass.

Amidst the chaotic uncertainty over precisely what political entity we were leaving, and what we would return to, Washington, DC felt like an oasis of calm. This was encouraged by the fortuitously timed cherry blossom, and the warm, still spring weather that left the blossoms intact and in peak bloom for the duration of the conference. While the expansive grounds of the conference hotels in the leafy Woodley Park neighbourhood made for pleasant relief from the conference sessions, cherry blossom mania was most intense around Tidal Basin, where tourist-watching was as much a sport as cherry-blossom-photography.

The AAG itself is of the monstrously large

variety of academic conferences, where there are as many conference experiences and paths through the programme as there are attendees; speaking to other delegates, it sometimes seemed the cherry blossom was the only common factor in the shared conference experience. To put this in numbers, the conference boasted around 8500 delegates from 78 countries, and featured over 6000 papers and over 1000 posters. The AAG's own [photo album](#) of the conference gives a good impression of the wide variety of events that took place, while their [YouTube channel](#) hosts some of the special sessions held.

In the course of my own decidedly unsystematic choice of sessions, three cross-cutting themes might be identified. First, the methodological weight placed upon images. Indeed, the five sessions on "Picturing Power: Innovative Visual Methods in Critical Geography" spanned the entirety of Wednesday's programme. The value of active collaboration and conversation to visual methodologies were stressed, whether in the present, as in Dacotah-Victoria Splichalova's co-production of 'water stories' with local communities in the Costa Rican-Panaman Sixaola river basin, or in the past, as Alannah Kamp did in her use of migrants' family photographs to reconsider narratives of belonging, place and mobility. Perhaps these talks had attuned me to it, but my impression was that the general style of presentation across the conference were more image-led



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Conference Report

than has been the case in the past.

The second recurring theme I met was that of ‘slow violence’, highlighting the continuing influence of Rob Nixon’s 2011 book *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Slow violence is that which is sufficiently gradual, invisible or unspectacular that it does not accord with what we think of as violence, and yet often causes great harm. The twin sessions on “Nuclear Geographies: Between the spectacular and the banal” demonstrated nuclear technology’s juxtaposition of fast and slow violences, with Jonathan Luedde giving a fascinating account of the interlinked historical geographies of ecological ‘knowledge’ and bioaccumulation of radioactive particles in the Arctic. And John Paul Henry’s paper on using photo-based methods to tell stories of communities poisoned by toxic waste demonstrated that, perhaps paradoxically, invisible and unspectacular slow violence can yield to visual methods.

Thirdly, there were a number of papers concerned with the idea and practice of commemoration. This was certainly the case in the four sessions on “Monuments, Memorials, and the Politics of Place”, during which various spaces of commemoration were analysed. These ranged from the bodily (Corinna Moebius’s paper on ‘commemorative bodies’, looking at racialised public memory among Miami’s Cuban community) to those emptied of bodies (Elyse Zavar and Sarah Roe’s paper on official and informal commemoration of abandoned places). Meanwhile, a session on “100 Years After

Conference venue: Marriott Wardman

Image credit: Ben Thorpe



World War I: The Legacy As Seen In American Geography” was interested in a more academic sense of commemoration, debating the various lines of influence in the geopolitical imagination caused by the Versailles settlement. The double session I had co-organised with Steve Legg and Mike Heffernan, “Historical Geographies of the Interwar: Beyond 1919”, shared ground with each of these, asking how, now that the centenaries of the World War I had come and gone, we might think about commemorating the events of the interwar. By chance, these very questions were in the news at the time, with reports of disagreement among the UK government’s advisory board for the First World War centenaries on whether to extend the official commemorations to cover the 1919–21 Irish war of independence and the 1919 Amritsar massacre.

The AAG itself, of course, is too large to be corralled by overarching themes, and part of the joy of it lies in the miscellany: the session attended on a whim that ends up sticking with you, the odd paper in a session that sits uncomfortably with the others but ends up

being the standout. The conference defies careful planning; even the programme would take weeks to read properly. It’s exhausting, frustrating and fascinating in equal measure, and certainly one of a kind. Until the next one, that is, when the AAG reconvenes in April 2020 in Denver, Colorado. □

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Conference venue: Omni Shoreham

Image credit: Ben Thorpe

NOTES AND RECORDS

THE ROYAL SOCIETY JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

Nineteenth-century survey sciences: enterprises, expeditions and exhibitions

A special issue organised and edited by Simon Schaffer and Simon Naylor



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The issue was published online in May 2019 at <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/toc/rsnr/73/2>

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Hand in hand with the survey: surveying and the accumulation of knowledge capital at India House during the Napoleonic Wars, *Jessica Ratcliff*

Cetacean citations and the covenant of iron, *Jenny Bulstrode*

Follow the data: administering science at Edward Sabine's magnetic department, Woolwich, 1841–1857, *Matthew Joseph Goodman*

Thermometer screens and the geographies of uniformity in nineteenth-century meteorology, *Simon Naylor*

Instrument provision and geographical science: the work of the Royal Geographical Society, 1830–c. 1930, *Charles Withers and Jane Wess*

Geomagnetic instruments at National Museums Scotland, *Alison Morrison-Low*

Survey stories in the history of British polar exploration: museums, objects and people, *Charlotte Connelly and Claire Warrior*

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Image: Detail from the Antarctic ceiling mural in the Memorial Hall of the Scott Polar Research Institute, courtesy of Bryan Lintott / Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



British Commission for Maritime History

**Undergraduate Prize
Organiser**
Dr Alan James
Dep't of War Studies
King's College London
London
WC2R 2LS

11 June 2019

alan.2.james@kcl.ac.uk

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The British Commission for Maritime History awards a small number of £75 prizes each year for excellent undergraduate dissertations in the broad field of maritime history. The Commission's aims are to encourage students to pursue maritime questions in their final year research and to reward the best of that work.

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If you would like to make a nomination, please send a copy of the dissertation (on paper or electronically), the name of the student, and a statement confirming the externally-moderated mark (and ideally the comments of the markers) to me at: **Dr Alan James, Department of War Studies, King's College London, Strand, London, WC2R 2LS** or by email. We will inform you of the results and enclose letters for forwarding to successful students, in due course, though if students are willing to give consent for you to share their personal email addresses this can make contacting them easier in the autumn.

With many thanks,

Dr Alan James

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Nevertheless, there are some important benefits to be gained by switching to Full membership and we would encourage you to consider doing so. It would be of immense benefit to the Group and we promise to make you feel 'special' in return! As it stands if you are with us as a RGS/IBG member only, we receive a minimum contribution (as little as £2 *per annum*) from that. In return all you receive is this newsletter.

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