



**HISTORICAL  
GEOGRAPHY  
RESEARCH  
GROUP**

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- London Group of  
Historical Geographers  
Seminar Programme
- Maps and Society  
Lectures

Copy for the next issue:  
**20 May, 2021**

Please send to:

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HGRG Newsletter, Winter 2021



# NEWSLETTER

- Winter 2020/21 -

## Letter from the Chair

Dear HGRG Members,

Welcome to the next edition of the newsletter. As with most things at the moment time feels a little suspended and it is difficult to grasp when one season ends and another begins, but the research group has been really busy over the last few months. In December, the second of our Practising Historical Geography events took place online to the theme of Decolonising Historical Geography. Huw Rowlands reflects so powerfully in this edition of the newsletter on the legacy of these events for considering the purpose of future historical geographies. The focus on

The winners of the HGRG Dissertation prize have been announced and we are delighted to have two joint winners this year. Congratulations to Sophie Thiesen from Maynooth University for her work 'The Heretical Geographies of Irish Witches and Fairie' and to Grace Atkinson from UCL for her work 'Disrupting Gendered Dichotomies of Colonial Knowledge and Representation: A Critical Analysis of Beatrice Grimshaw's and Kathleen Haddon's Travel Writing and Photography in Papua New Guinea, 1910-1914'. Also, congratulations to our Highly Commended entry by Bethany Williamson at Northumbria University for her work.



**Innes Keighren sharing his progress on Day 2 of the Writing Retreat  
#hgrg\_vwr2021**

the co-creation of knowledge and the recognition of this as an important tool for exposing hidden histories and geographies raises a number of pertinent questions for the sub-field. Thanks to Dr Joanne Norcup for organising and running these events and to everyone that attended and shared their ideas.

Historical geographies of labour control regimes in nineteenth-century Belper. The judges were incredibly impressed by the quality of the submissions and the innovative research undertaken. I would like to thank the judges for their time and energy in this role and we hope that the prize winners will be able to share their

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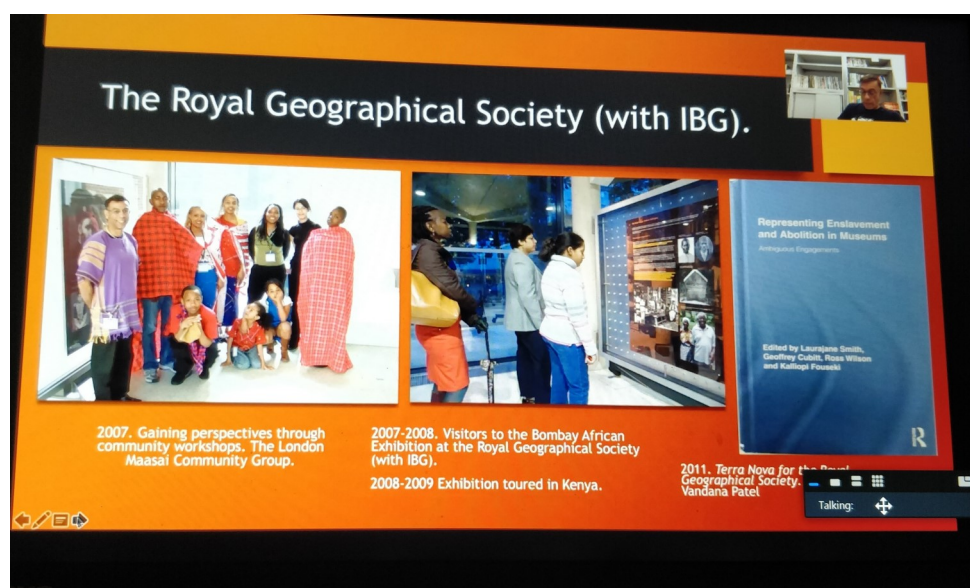
work at the next Practising Historical Geographies event later in the year.

The HGRG virtual writing retreat took place from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> January and a number of people from across the historical geography community took part. Countless cups of tea and biscuits were eaten as people took the opportunity to undertake writing tasks, catch up with reading, and to share research ideas with others. It has been great to see the writing retreat grow in popularity and moving it online has had a number of benefits, including increased international accessibility. Thanks again to Dr Joanne Norcup for running the retreat again this year and for all her words of encouragement on the @HGRG\_RGS Twitter account.

future of archives and the 'doing' of historical research.

The RGS-IBG Annual Conference will take place in August 2021 and we would like to remind all members that we have a number of funding schemes available on the HGRG website. The page also includes information about our Postgraduate Support Scheme, Small Conference and Seminar Funding, and Undergraduate Dissertation Prize. The deadlines for the first two schemes are 1st April, 1st August, and 1st December in any year, so postgraduate readers might like to consider making an application for the next round.

The Group are also keen to support conferences dedicated to the advancement of historical geography and supporting the



### Clifford Pereira's Presentation at Practicing Historical Geography 2020

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue of the newsletter. Dr Nanna Katrine Lüders Kaalund's fascinating reflections on the power of maps for interrogating history leads to new questions about the conception of the space of the Arctic. Ruth Quinn's 'Shelfie' gives a wonderful tour into an array of work relating to heritage, landscape and environment, and highlights the important contributions of local history to broader debates within historical geography. Throughout both of the pieces there is a sense of longing and melancholia for archives and the archival experience temporarily lost to many researchers due to the pandemic. As many archives remain closed we are facing questions over the

profile and careers of postgraduate and early-career historical geographers. Applicants should be members of the HGRG and application forms can be found on the Group's website at [hgrg.org.uk/grants-and-prizes](http://hgrg.org.uk/grants-and-prizes).

Members keen to contribute to any of these regular features are encouraged to get in touch with our newsletter editor, Edward Armston-Sheret ([ed.armston-sheret.2017@live.rhul.ac.uk](mailto:ed.armston-sheret.2017@live.rhul.ac.uk)), or to drop me a line.

Take care everyone and best wishes,

Cheryl McGeachan, HGRG Chair





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## From the Archives

### Arctic Imaginations, Maps, and The Scott Polar Research Institute



Dr Nanna Katrine Lüders Kaalund is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, working as part of the ERC funded 'Arctic Cultures' project. <https://www.arcticcultures.org> Her research centres on the intersection of Arctic exploration, print culture, material culture, religion and science in the modern period with a focus on the British, American, and Danish imperial worlds. She is the author of *Explorations in the Icy North: How Travel Narratives Shaped Arctic Science in the Nineteenth Century*, which is forthcoming in 2021 with the University of Pittsburgh Press.

I recently had a brief conversation with an acquaintance about the impact of the global pandemic on my research. I told them that my plans to visit the north of Greenland had been shelved, to which they replied, 'of course, you could risk giving Covid to a polar bear'. This conception of the Arctic as being an empty space, except for the

remains apparent that there is a vast gulf between the state of the research field, and how those with only a passing interest in the Arctic visualize the region.

Challenging the *terra nullius* rhetoric continues to be an important part of the work of polar researchers, and maps are useful tools for interrogating this history. In the basement of the SPRI, there is a



Figure 1: 1853 British Admiralty Map of the Arctic

odd polar bear, is strangely pervasive. Readers of this newsletter will know, of course, that there are vast amounts of research articles and books that again and again counter this imperialist exploration rhetoric that imagines the Arctic as *terra nullius*, an empty white space. Combating this misconception is also a central aim of the project where I am currently employed as a postdoctoral researcher, the ERC-funded *Arctic Cultures* led by Richard Powell at the Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI). It

large storage area where the numerous maps of the collection are held. Together with the [SPRI's library](#), [photo-library](#), and [archives](#), these maps are important sources for studying the construction of both historical and contemporary perceptions of the Arctic. Maps do not simply represent what has been surveyed and projected in geographic research, nor are they an objective ordering of borders and coastlines. Rather they reflect specific visions of the world. One map can tell different stories, depending on how you

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## Postgraduate Representatives

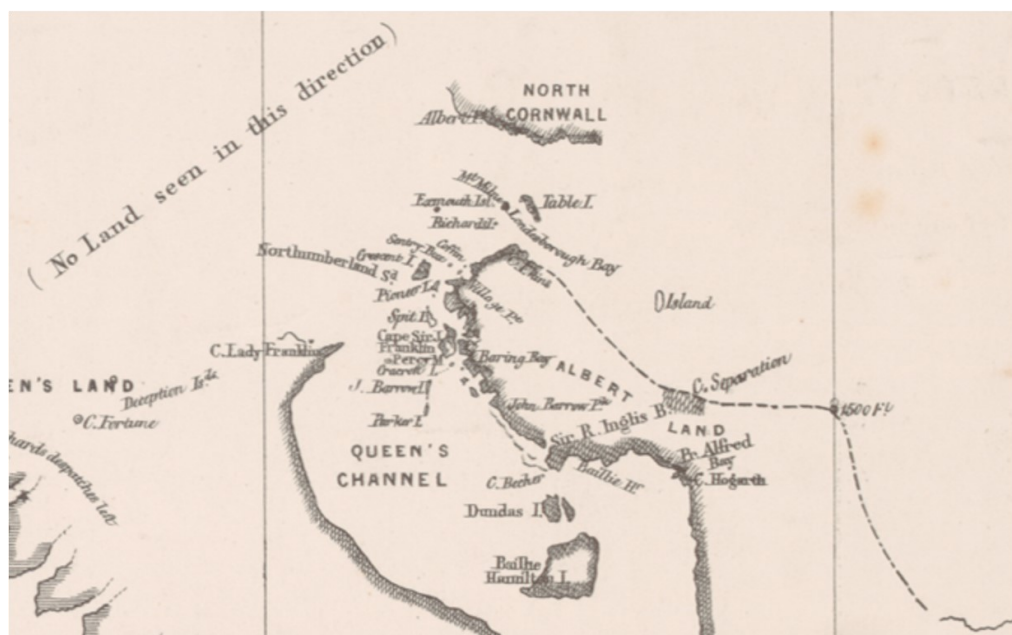
Jenna Kirk

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read it.

Take for example this map of the Arctic, published by the British Admiralty in 1853. [See Figure 1]. It included the areas surveyed by two recent expeditions, one under command of William Penny, and another under command of Edwin De Haven. Both expeditions had travelled to the Arctic in 1850 in search of the lost John Franklin expedition. At a glance there was nothing unusual about this map, as the Admiralty regularly updated their maps following the return of Arctic expeditions. The map, however, caused a minor diplomatic crisis between the UK and the

expeditions had been circulated, Grinnell addressed the issue in a letter to Lady Franklin. He noted, that it would be a good gesture towards the American government, which could encourage more search missions, if the British Admiralty amended their documents to prioritise De Haven's discoveries over Penny's. As Grinnell and others argued, De Haven had reached and surveyed the area before Penny, and therefore should have been given priority (1). Following the publication of the 1853 map, the controversy intensified, both in private letters and public lectures, until the British



**Figure 2. Albert Land in the Admiralty's 1853 Map**

US. The search for John Franklin's lost expedition generated a large international interest, in part driven by the lobbying efforts of Lady Jane Franklin. The American merchant and philanthropist Henry Grinnell funded a search mission, known as the First Grinnell Expedition, which left the US in 1850 under command of De Haven. The two expeditions, one British and one American, were accordingly in the Arctic during the same time, and their crews visited overlapping areas; particularly, they both surveyed and claimed to have discovered the region which was named Grinnell Land by one expedition, and Albert Land by the other. The use of 'Albert Land' in the Admiralty's 1853 map [See Figure 2] generated serious consternation in the US. Already in 1851, before the map was published, but after the results of De Haven and Penny's

Admiralty conceded and changed Albert Land to Grinnell Land in their 1855 Arctic map. As the Grinnell/Albert Land debacle shows, maps were never simple representations of physical landscapes, but highly politicized objects. What this story does not show, however, is that this land, which both De Haven and Penny claimed to have discovered, was already known and named. The area labelled as Grinnell Land forms part of Umingmak Nuna (Ellesmere Island), which lies today in Nunavut, and has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples for millennia. The claim to primacy through toponymic colonialism is not simply a matter of labels - as J. B. Harley famously argued, maps constitute a form of power-knowledge (2). The cartographic practices of Europeans and Euro-Americans were intertwined with extreme acts of violence against



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## Shelfie

Arctic Indigenous peoples, and Arctic maps are testaments to the histories and legacies of European and Euro-American colonialism. Understood in this light, the map collection at the SPRI shows the importance of reconsidering how narratives of discovery, expressed through mediums such as maps that claim to be objective representations of the world, continue to perpetuate the *terra nullius* rhetoric, and it also shows the potential role of polar archives in working to decolonize Arctic studies and Arctic history.

### Notes

1. See: Letter from Henry Grinnell to Jane Franklin, 13 October 1851, MS 248/414/28 Scott Polar Research Institute; Letter from John Pendleton Kennedy to Jane Franklin, 12 January 1853, MS 248/483/2, Scott Polar Research Institute.

2. J. B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map", *Cartographica*, v. 26, n. 2 (Spring 1989), 1-20.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant Agreement number: 724317 — ARCTIC CULT — ERC-2016-COG



## Shelfie

By Ruth Quinn

This 'Shelfie' is brought to you from a time of sadly empty shelves. It has been a year since I last stepped foot in a University Library, as I live remotely from my University campus at Hull. The combination of national lockdowns and local restrictions in the Bradford district has somewhat thwarted my plans to hop on a train to collect a large stack of books. The spaces that libraries provide are so incredibly important, and their role in society has been brought into even sharper relief by the pandemic. My favourite libraries as the Brymor Jones Library at Hull, for the amazing views on the top floor and the Brotherton Library at the University of Leeds for the incredible circular reading room and the toasty smell of the basement. I've also used the Local Studies library in Bradford regularly during my PhD study. It is a magical place, full of the hushed voices of enthusiastic researchers and the quiet presence of people doing their homework or just using the computers. Earlier on in my PhD, my best friend

bought me a membership one of the oldest surviving subscription libraries in the UK, The Leeds Library. Tucked away above the shops on Commercial Street the Leeds Library is an incredible place and houses an extensive collection of travel, topography, biography and literary books and archives. Each of these spaces has had as much of an impact on my research as the books and papers I will share with you in this 'shelfie' and I hope we are all reunited with our precious libraries soon.

My research is concerned with how landscape has been conceptualised as part of the model environment at Saltaire. Established in 1853, Saltaire is an industrial model town near Bradford built by the wealthy worsted manufacturer Titus Salt. Saltaire was awarded UNESCO World Heritage Status in 2001, alongside New Lanark and Dewent Valley Mills. My research has found that a powerful moral geography has been constructed around green space at Saltaire, emerging through descriptions of the



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town's separateness from Bradford in nineteenth-century newspapers and guides and culminating in contemporary heritage narratives that emphasise the role of gardens, parks and the 'healthy' countryside in providing a better environment for workers. However, this moral geography represents only a fraction of the messy entanglements of environmental-industrial relations at Saltaire, and my thesis argues that a more critical understanding of the historical geography of landscape, greenery and the model village environment is needed.

### **Heritage, Landscapes & Fragmentary Historical Geographies**

I have been inspired by Historical Geographers who work with fragmentary material to disrupt 'grand narratives' of landscape significance and cultural value at heritage site. One body of work which I revisit frequently is Gareth Hoskin's (2015) work on historical geography of hydraulic mining in California. Hoskins work on Malakoff Diggin's State Park in California uses fragmentary material relating to the lives of two residents, Mary Kallenberger and Julius Anderson, who lived at North Bloomfield during it's time as a booming mining settlement. Through examining Anderson's messages sent from his outpost as a dam keeper and Kallenberger's observations of bird's in her garden, Hoskins constructs a more complex and embodied history of relationships with nature than the one that is acknowledged by the grand narratives of industrial extraction that are remembered as the site's heritage today. Although my work is concerned with a markedly different kind of industrial heritage site, Hoskins approach illuminates the kinds of material Historical Geographers of industrial landscapes can work with, and the ways in which relatively small

archives can be worked with to yield new perspectives. Caitlin De Silvey's work has also been hugely influential in forming my methods. In 'Objects Lessons: from Batholith to Bookend' (a lively chapter from the Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Cultural Geography) DeSilvey (2013) unpacks the 'constellating material histories' of a pair of bookends. Through these seemingly mundane objects DeSilvey constructs a rich 'geo-biography'. A pair of bookends, found in a hedge, tell the stories of Cornwall's mining heritage, the reconstruction of London Bridge in 1831 and the bizarre travelling journey from bridge to souvenir bookends. Through these approaches I have been encouraged to really look closely at the materiality of the landscape which I am studying and consider the constellation of landscape stories which can be told through places which can seem quite mundane, like the small backyards and garden plots of Saltaire village.

### **Landscape, environment and improvement in the nineteenth century.**

Ideas around landscape and health are deeply entwined at Saltaire, and much of the empirical work in my PhD draws on work which has explored the moral geographies of nineteenth-century improvement. Felix Driver's (1988) work on the formation of the 'moral gospel' of social science and amelioration has yielded new approaches to the study of 'improving' environments in the mid-nineteenth century. Clare Hickman's (2013) work builds on Driver's arguments and emphasises on how inter-relationships between the temperance movement, the National Health Society and key actors engaged in sanitary reform resulted in new model approaches to planned urban environments which would promote, healthy and model behaviour through interrelationships green spaces, ventilation and sanitary homes. My work draws on these



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## Shelfie

arguments by exploring how Saltaire is an understudied example of how these ideas were actualised in an experimental peri-urban environment. There is a vast body of work on improvement and the environment in the nineteenth century, however these two papers are texts that I often find myself coming back to.



**Leeds Library, photo credit R. Quinn.**

The Great Paternalist: Titus Salt and the growth of nineteenth-century Bradford was the first comprehensive academic text written on Saltaire. Reynolds work describes the development of industrial society Bradford, and how the improving zeal which came to dominate local politics in the city provided vital local context for the development of moral approaches to industrial welfare at Saltaire. Much like Driver and Hickman, Reynold's work provides insight into how the constellation of improving organisations in Bradford led to the development of 'green' models of urban reform. In many respects, Saltaire is a microcosm of an improved Victorian Bradford set outside of the main hub of the city. Understanding the local connections which make Saltaire so distinctive has been a vital part of my research, and I am passionate about the rich historical geographies of the Bradford District. Alongside Reynold's book I have been sent a wealth of fascinating research and recommendations from the members of the Saltaire History Club, who have contributed to the development of the Saltaire Collection and Archive at Shipley College, where much of the research for this project took place.

### Local History

Finally, my work owes a great debt to the tireless work of local historians in the Bradford District. Jack Reynolds' (1983)

*Ruth Quin is a PhD Candidate at the University of Hull and a HGRG Postgrad Representative.*

## Reports

### Practicing Historical Geography Conference 2020 online: 24 November and 8 December.

By Huw Rowlands

As I brush the biscuit crumbs off my coffee-stained notes, I am reminded that there are silver linings to be found in our confinement to digital contact. Such traces reflect a more relaxed, messy and, for me anyway, a valued alternative 'place' to engage with people and ideas than an auditorium. More importantly, I am also grateful for the way the vibrant community of interest that is the HGRG breathed warmth and intellectual life into the digital spaces with which we have all become far too familiar. The two-day conference welcomed two outstanding key-note presentations, by Chandan Mahal in Session 1 and Clifford Pereira in Session 2. Chandan led us

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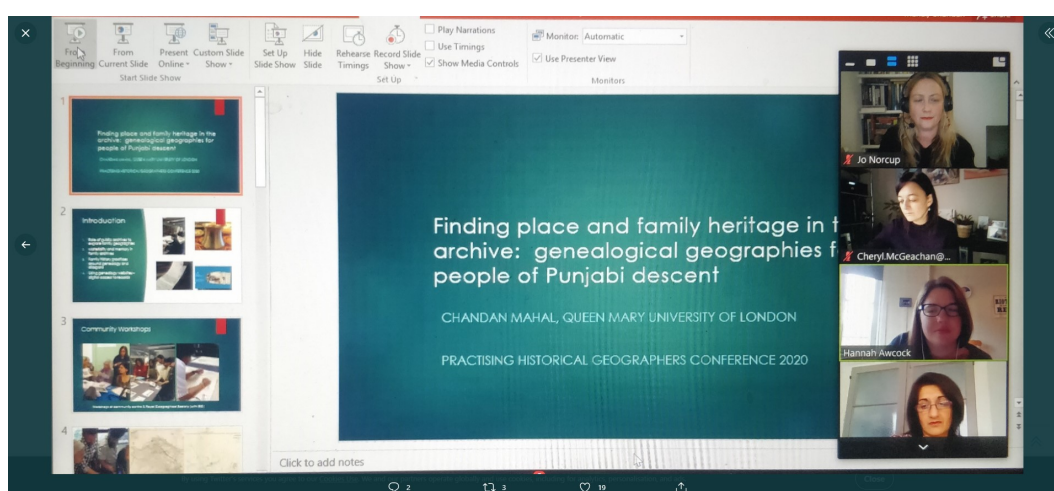
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## Reports

through her work on 'Finding place and family heritage in the archive: genealogical geographies for people of Punjabi descent.' Her work struck two dominant chords with me. The first was the value of practical methodological lessons about how archives function and how they are and might be used. Practical questions raised by genealogical research reveal opportunities. One is to find ways to adapt archival records that will increase access driven by methods and relationships different from those of earlier collectors and archivers.

their buildings. There is a second point too. Such practices of muting or silencing co-creators of knowledge are not limited to the past. While there are valuable examples of the broadening and diversifying of research teams, the recognition of individuals and the identification of the knowledge they co-produced is less common. There are opportunities for better understanding of the processes of co-creation and, importantly, of recording and celebrating them in the present too.



**Screenshot of the first day of the conference. Photo credit: Jo Norcup.**

The second, related chord was that such questions have very personal impacts in relationships today, both for the families concerned and for those who manage and share archived records. To me, this means that in bringing archives alive, living relationships are part of our world of research, relationships beyond orthodox networks which bring responsibilities with them. Some responsibilities imply carefully considered personal and emotional dimensions to our work. Others imply practical changes, such as to the places where people can consult archives, where they can live through and share the experiences that archives can stimulate.

Clifford Pereira raised many important points from which I draw attention to two. Firstly, the importance of naming the multiple, often muted or silenced voices that co-created knowledge in the past. Recent work in historical geography, not least by Clifford, has shown how such hidden histories can be revealed and celebrated. Practical actions which can be taken include institutions such as the RGS-IBG adding photographs and names of historical co-creators of knowledge to the walls of

An example, which emerged in discussion, is the role of oral contributions to knowledge co-creation. As Chandan pointed out, while RGS-IBG may not have strengths in recording oral sources and making them accessible, the British Library has extensive experience and capacity to do so. There are ways.

From the ensemble of speakers and the group's stimulating questions then, I recognised the importance of co-creation in both the past and the present. While historical geographical research can reveal hidden histories in the past, there is also a need to focus on how we do our work in the present, especially the relationships through which we co-create knowledge, to ensure that future historical geographers do not have the task of seeking out hidden histories in the work we do today.

*Huw Rowlands is a doctoral candidate at Royal Holloway University of London*

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# HGRG Dissertation Prize Results (2019-20)

### **Winners**

The HGRG Undergraduate Dissertation Prize for 2020 was jointly awarded to:

**Sophie Thiesen** ('The Heretical Geographies of Irish Witches and Fairies', Maynooth, NUI) and

**Grace Atkinson** ('Disrupting Gendered Dichotomies of Colonial Knowledge & Representation: A Critical Analysis of Beatrice Grimshaw's & Kathleen Haddon's Travel Writing & Photography in Papua New Guinea, 1910-1914', UCL).

### **Highly Commended**

**Bethany Williamson's** dissertation was Highly Commended ('Historical geographies of labour control regimes in Belper (nineteenth century)', Northumbria).

All three dissertations were truly excellent and it proved hard to judge between them. We also considered another six dissertations, all original, engaging and well-researched.

Sophie and Grace have received £200 worth of Routledge books each, as the Prize is sponsored by Routledge's Research in Historical Geography book series, and have also been invited to submit articles based on their dissertations for publication in the *Journal of Historical Geography*. We will be inviting Sophie, Grace, and Bethany to our next Practising Historical Geography conference.

We delayed the deadline for submission until the late summer because of the pandemic, awarding the Prize came much later than usual. Thanks to Hannah Neate, James Kneale and the rest of the HGRG Committee for their help in judging the submissions. Thanks too to the authors for creating such stimulating dissertations in very difficult conditions.



# SEMINAR PROGRAMMES

## London Group of Historical Geographers

Seminar Programme, Winter Term 2020

### Translation and Circulation

19 January 2021 **Iolanda Plescia** (Sapienza University of Rome)  
Transit and translation: Galileo in England, 1660–1685.

16 February 2021 **Peter R. Martin** (University of Cambridge)  
Arctic silence in circulation: mediating Inuit geographical knowledge.

16 March 2021 **Isabella Alexander** (University of Technology Sydney)  
Copyright, maps and the circulation of geographical knowledge in 18th-century Britain.

30 March 2021 **Susan Pickford** (Sorbonne University)  
Translation and travel writing.

### Summer Term 2021

4 May 2021 **Jovan Scott Lewis** (University of California, Berkeley)  
Violent utopia: territory, terror and Black life in Tulsa.

18 May **Peter Adey** (Royal Holloway, University of London), **Nils Grosch** (Universität Salzburg), **Michael Holden** (Royal Holloway, University of London), **Norbert Meyn** (Royal College of Music), and **Beth Snyder** (Royal College of Music)  
Music, migration, mobilities and mappings: musicians from Nazi Europe in Britain.

1 June 2021 **Alison E. Martin** (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)  
Managing in translation: Alexander von Humboldt's works in 19th-century Britain

Seminars take place online at **17:30 UK time**. Register at <https://www.history.ac.uk/seminars/london-group-historical-geographers>. Details about how to join the seminar, which will be hosted on Zoom, will be circulated via email to registered attendees 24 hours in advance. The event's online waiting room will be open 15 minutes prior to the advertised start time.

Please [subscribe to our mailing list](#) to keep up-to-date with our activities or take a look at our [archive of previous talks](#).







## Seminar Series

## Maps and Society Lectures

Lectures in the history of cartography convened by Catherine Delano-Smith (Institute of Historical Research, University of London), Tony Campbell (formerly Map Library, British Library), Peter Barber (Visiting Fellow, History, King's College, formerly Map Library, British Library) and Alessandro Scafi (Warburg Institute).

### 2021 Spring Term

#### *Bathymetric Maps of Tokyo Bay: A Transnational History*

21 January, 5pm - 7pm | Presented by Dr Radu Leca (Postdoctoral Research Associate, Heidelberg University, Germany)

*Revised title: 'Chart-making and the Admiralty Hydrographic Office, 1830-1850'*

18 February, 5pm - 7pm | Presented by Dr Megan Barford (Curator of Cartography, Royal Museums Greenwich, London. Hakluyt Society Speaker)

#### *The Landscape and the Ship. Mapping Seventeenth Century Naval Battles*

29 April, 5pm - 7pm | Presented by Dr Djoeke van Netten (Department of History, University of Amsterdam)

#### *What Is a Map? The Case of Fra Mauro's Mappamundi: Author's Intentions, Modern Receptions*

27 May, 5pm - 7pm | Presented by Dr Angelo Cattaneo (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Rome)

For the 2020-2021 academic year all will be virtual meetings (via Zoom) unless otherwise informed. Details of how to register can be found [online](#).



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## ARE YOU A FULL MEMBER OF THE HGRG?

Some of you reading this newsletter and, perhaps, participating in our activities will not be a full member of the HGRG. Some of you, for instance, will have expressed an interest in the work of the group when you became a member of the RGS/IBG and so joined that way. And that's just great! We welcome and celebrate the breadth of our membership.

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.

In short we would be delighted to welcome you to join us as a full member of the HGRG community! Membership subs are essential for us to continue to provide the full range of support and we are grateful for the collegiate generosity of members in this regard.

### **Full Membership** £12.00 *per annum*.

Should you choose to become a full member you will be added to the e-circulation list, will receive the HGRG Research Series and the HGRG Newsletter. Your subs will help support the grants that we provide to the HGRG community and you will be eligible to apply for these. Finally, you will get a reduced rate on back issues of the HGRG Research Series and have the opportunity to take up an Officering role.



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