

# Geographical Society Newsletter



July 2013



## *The end of another year!*

Hi everyone! This is your first newsletter from the new exec. This newsletter will sum up what's been going on this year in geography and DUGS.

Last year's exec have done a brilliant job to keep everything running smoothly in DUGS and we are all hugely looking forward to taking on our roles as your new exec! The new exec will be introduced in this issue.

This year has seen so much with DUGS, ranging from the freshers' social to the Rio de Janeiro Ball, and fieldtrips all over the country, with international ones coming up this summer. This issue will cover

all of this and introduce us as your new exec.

This year we will be giving DUGS a revamp, starting with the introduction of our new **BA and BSc fieldtrip reps** (see pg4). We will be having even more speakers and will keep ensuring we are providing you with the best geographical society possible.

We hope you all enjoy your summer holidays, and good luck to everyone who has now graduated!

If you have any questions please feel free message us on Facebook (see above link) or email us at [geographical.society@durham.ac.uk](mailto:geographical.society@durham.ac.uk).

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### *This issue*

Pg 1  
The end of the year  
Congratulations

Pg 2  
Guest speakers  
DUGS Ball  
Fieldtrips

Pg 3  
Fieldtrips continued  
Travel grant winners

Pg 4  
Meet the new Exec

## *Congratulations to the 2013 Geography Graduands!*



Final Year Students and Academic Staff 2013

***On behalf of the new exec and everyone in DUGS, a massive congratulations to all of this year's graduands***

## *2012-2013 Guest Speakers*

We had many guest speakers coming in to give talks on their areas of expertise this year.

Some highlights include **Iain Woodhouse** talking about the use of GIS and Remote sensing technology in monitoring deforestation in Malawi.

**Emily Grundy** also gave an interesting talk about later life health and well-being in ageing populations from a European perspective.

## *2013 DUGS Ball - "Rio de Janeiro Carnival"*

This year's DUGS ball was held at the glamorous Radisson Hotel and was a brilliant night of colour, a delicious four-course meal, entertainment and dancing. 60 students and staff attended the event and were treated to a cocktail drinks reception, photobooth, a samba dance performances face-painting. It was a really fun night which continued to impromptu after parties in Klute and Loveshack!



## *Fieldtrips The Isle of Skye*

by **Joanna Walker**

At the beginning of April around 50 second year physical geographers visited the Isle of Skye as part of the Scientific Research module. It was a long coach journey through the Scottish Highlands to reach Skye, and on our arrival we were welcomed with a friendly hotel, and plenty of good food. Skye itself is a beautiful island, and there was amazing scenery around every corner.



The Trotternish Landscape on Skye, produced by massive landslides

Featuring the Trotternish landslides, massive relict glacial landforms in the Cuillin hills as well as raised beaches, Skye is truly a geographers dream. The research projects were a chance for us to investigate geographical themes that most interested us, and covered a large range of topics. Skye seemingly has a few microclimates as although for the most part we enjoyed a week full

of brilliant cloudless sunshine, during the project work several groups were caught in freak blizzards! So come prepared for all weather conditions-sometimes in the same day.

## *The Lake District*

By **Sophie Cochran**

The final week of the East Holidays saw half of the level 2 physical geographers head off to stay in the Blencathra Centre in the Lake District. The week's main aim was to collect data for our group projects and prepare for the summative presentation. Projects included vegetation recovery ten years after a severe wildfire, the effects of local mines on water and sediment quality, shallow landslide mapping and even studying the geologic significance of moles on the landscape. Additionally, there was a geo-caching exercise on the first day to help us get our bearings and use a GPS. Later in the week, there was a coach excursion around the Lakes, and a day of walking through moorland by streams since bad weather prevented the planned climb of Skidaw. Overall, it was a busy, tiring but useful week, and despite the rain, the Lakes provided beautiful scenery.

## *2013 Travel Grant winners*

### **Rachel Brown**

Rachel will be receiving £150 in order to help fund her trip to Iceland this summer. With a group of 14 other Durham geography students, she will be conducting her dissertation fieldwork on Iceland's outlet glaciers in the south-east. Rachel will be focusing particularly on debris transport pathways of Vatnajökull's outlet glaciers Falljökull and Virkisjökull. However the research of the whole group will include the study of a wide breadth of processes on multiple different outlet glaciers of Vatnajökull. DUGS will be delighted to support such a vast project!

### **Joe Taylor**

Joe Taylor will be receiving £100 in order to help fund his trip to Borneo this summer. He will be leading 16 others in a conservation oriented expedition to Borneo assisting with the conservation of the local wildlife. He and his team will be working with local scientists, focusing on the conservation of sea turtles on an island off Borneo, and orang-utans in Borneo's rainforests. This is a new project he has set up himself this year and therefore DUGS are delighted to help support its development.

Well done to everyone who applied; it is amazing to read about all of the incredible things Durham's geography students will be involved in this summer. We hope that all trips are a success!

## *Fieldtrips coming up this summer...*

### *Iceland*

#### **By Dave Saddington**

In September 2013 fifteen geographers including two members of the DUGS exec will take part in a ground-breaking expedition with Durham University and funded by the Royal Geographical Society to explore Europe's largest ice cap-Vatnajökull, Iceland. While there the team of adventurers and scientists will investigate the glaciers which drain the massive ice field which sits atop an active volcanic plateau. Several field-sites will be established along the southern tip of the ice cap and studies will be conducted with the overriding aim to better understand glacier dynamics with a focus on current glacier retreat due to climate change. This amazing expedition will then be joined by the Iceland fieldtrip for the L3 "Field Research in Glacial Environments" module. Updates of the expedition to follow in the autumn edition of the newsletter.

### *California*

#### **By Caroline Jackson**

California... sun, sea and fun! Well okay so the sea won't be involved in our fieldtrip but the sun most definitely will and as with any field trip I'm sure we'll have plenty of fun. After exams, the 11 of us heading to California this September have been learning about what we will be doing and planning our group projects. From the photos of fantastic scenery and with temperatures of high 30's – mid 40's I'm sure we're all looking forward to it! Look out for the next newsletter to hear how it all went!

## *Nepal*

#### **By Helen Wardell**

It's post exams in Durham and a group of budding L2 mountaineers are preparing for their summer fieldtrip to Nepal as part of the L3 Mountain Hazards module. Led by Dr Nick Rosser, the trip will take place in the final two weeks of September and encompass various hazards in mountain regions. In order to get the most of the time in Nepal, the group have been attending preparatory sessions during which they have learnt about Nepal's background and the areas in which they will be based whilst on the fieldtrip- The Kathmandu Valley and Upper Bhote Kosi. Projects this year include landslide mitigation, rural road stability and understanding local perceptions on natural hazards. The projects will generate a dataset that will be used back in Durham during Level 3, with support on data handling and interpretation during computer and laboratory based classes. Alongside the project work, on the trip there is also opportunity to interaction with local government, industry and academics, which study and manage the dynamic landscape plus engage with the Nepalese culture. I think I speak for everyone in saying that it promises to be an amazing trip and September can't come quick enough!



The 2013 Iceland Expedition team!

# MEET THE NEW EXEC!



**President** – Sophie Cochrane  
BSc Geographer  
**College:** St. Mary's

**Would most like to travel to:** Australia, backpacking!



**Vice President** – David Saddington  
BSc Geographer  
**College:** St. Mary's

**Would most like to travel to:** Africa, for a safari (and is luckily going to be in Tanzania for safari this summer!)

**Witty geographical joke:** "I just climbed to the top of the world's highest mountain," I told my mate. "Everest?" he asked. "About every hundred feet", I said.



**Secretary** – Rachel Elms  
BA Geographer  
**College:** Collingwood



**Treasurer** – Jade Soanes  
BA Geographer  
**College:** Collingwood

**Would most like to travel to:** China  
**Witty geographical joke:** What do you call a man who has been buried underground for 1000 years? Peat.



**Social secretaries** – Helen Wardell and Caroline Jackson  
BSc Geographers

**College:** Josephine Butler

**Helen would most like to travel to:** New Zealand

**Caroline would most like to travel to:** Australia

**Witty geographical joke:** Where is it always 90 degrees but never hot? The North and South Poles



**Publications officer** – Helena Nathan-King  
BSc Geographer  
**College:** Hatfield

**Would most like to travel to:** Greenland...or Peru

**Witty geographical joke:** What do penguins wear on their heads? Ice caps



**BSc Fieldtrip rep** – Jenny Tolson  
BSc Geographer  
**College:** Grey

**Would most like to travel to:** New Zealand



**BA Fieldtrip rep** – Josh Holmes  
BA Geographer

**Would most like to travel to:** The Maldives

**Witty geographical joke:** My dad's a pilot and flies over Amsterdam all the time but he Netherlands.