

KCL / LSE GEOGRAPHY ALUMNI SOCIETY

Newsletter No 41 (2020)

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the KCL / LSE Geography Alumni Society (incorporating the Joint School Society) Annual Newsletter. We hope you and your family are staying safe and healthy in these extraordinary and challenging times, whether you're working from home, self-isolating or still working on the front-line.

Needless to say, Covid-19 has disrupted all our plans for this year's walks, as well as our June AGM. Hopefully, we will be able to schedule the AGM and a walk or two later this year once the outbreak is over, if conditions allow. If this is possible, details will be circulated nearer the time.

The Society continued its activities last year. We organised the annual Geographer's Walk as part of the King's Alumni Weekend last June, which was focused on the new developments north of King's Cross station (write-up below), and also ran a walk for undergraduate and postgraduate students in November. The annual Geography Alumni Society student prize for the LSE was won last year by Ser Jin, a first year BSc Geography with Economics student.

There have been several 50-year reunion events happening and write-ups of the 1967, 1968 and 1969 get-togethers are included below.

All being well, the Society will be recommencing its activities in the Autumn of this year and in 2021. Meanwhile, the Committee would like to extend all good wishes to you and your family.

Dr Paul Collinson (King's 1990) Newsletter Editor E: jointschoolsociety@gmail.com
Tel: 07879 460767

DATA PROTECTION LAW

In relation to the requirements of the EU Data Protection Law, the King's / LSE Geography Alumni Society (Incorporating the Joint School Society) would like to inform members that it uses your email and personal addresses solely for the purpose of sending notices to members and for administering your membership. If you do not wish to receive the Society's notices, please send a line to that effect to jointschoolsociety@gmail.com or to the address given above requesting to 'unsubscribe' and your email or personal address will be removed from the centralised database of our members.

THE SOCIETY: PAST AND PRESENT

The Joint School Society was started around 1960. When the Joint School was dissolved in the 1990s, the JSS continued. The Society entered a new era in 2015 with a change of name, to become the King's / LSE Geography Alumni Society (incorporating the Joint School Society).

The Society caters primarily for undergraduate and postgraduate alumni of the Schools of Geography of the two colleges. We also welcome membership from those who have graduated from the two departments since the Joint School finished in 1997.

Over the years, our functions have varied – from providing careers advice to students in the 1970s to organising excursions. We generally run two or three walking excursions during the year and also run walks for students in the two departments. A member acting as ‘leader’ who provides some geographical colour and background to the terrain leads each walk. If anyone has an idea for a future walk that they would like to lead please contact the Newsletter Editor. Contact details are provided below.

The Newsletter editor is very happy to accept articles for future editions of the newsletter from alumni of both departments on their current activities, memories of their time on either side of the Strand or any aspect of geography that they would like to share with readers.

Anyone who currently receives the newsletter as a hard copy and would like to receive it by email instead, please let us know your email address and we will add it to the database.

If you have any news about yourself that you would like to include in the next newsletter, please do complete the proforma at the end of this one and email or post it to the addresses provided below.

We would very much like to link in with alumni who have graduated from either of the two departments since the Joint School finished in 1997, so if this applies to you, please get in touch – we would love to hear from you.

The Newsletter is also posted on the Society’s web-pages, which are hosted on the Alumni pages of both Colleges:

LSE: <http://alumni.lse.ac.uk/s/1623/interior-hybrid.aspx?sid=1623&gid=1&pgid=781>
King’s: <https://alumni.kcl.ac.uk/alumni-community/geography-group>

If you would like to join the Society, please contact Dr Paul Collinson either by email, phone or post at the address below, who will then ensure that your name is added to the membership database.

E: jointschoolsociety@gmail.com
T: 07879 460767

35 Sterling Road
Enfield
Middx
EN2 0LN

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We hope to hold our AGM in the Autumn of 2020 on a date to be arranged, if the King's Strand campus has re-opened by then and conditions allow us to do so.

The 2019 AGM of the Society was held on 9th June 2019 at King's.

Following a statement from the Secretary and Treasurer, the meeting reviewed the activities of the past year and discussed plans for the future. These include expanding the student walks' programme, establishing a student prize in the Department at King's and running a conference for students and / our alumni examining how geographical knowledge is being applied in practice. There was a discussion about the possibility of the Society offering annual lectures.

A number of ideas for future walks were proposed, including the National Trust Ashridge Forest in Hertfordshire, Lee Valley / Waltham Abbey, Roman London, London's Infrastructure, Walthamstow and Milton Keynes. [Editor's note: it is hoped that we can schedule at least some of these later in 2020 and in 2021].

KCLA has invited affiliated societies to apply for grants to support the development of their organisations and have asked them to submit business plans over two years. It was agreed that the Society will compile a business plan. [Editor's note: a plan was submitted to KCLA later in 2019].

Andrew Smith was added to the committee.

The officers of the Society for 2019-20 were elected as follows:

- Chairman: Craig Clarke
- Vice Chairman / Secretary / Newsletter Editor: Paul Collinson
- LSE Representative: Vacant
- King's Representative: James Heaphy
- KCLA Representative: James Heaphy
- Committee members [in addition to the officers]: Peter Ballantine, Laurie Baker, Valerie Beynon, Jo Crocker, Brian & Kay Gordon, David Narracott, Andrew Smith, Arthur Spencer.

We are currently looking for someone to fulfil the role of LSE rep. If you are interested, please contact us.

REPORTS FROM PAST EVENTS

Geographers' Walk 2019 - The Old and the New North of King's Cross

Sunday 9th June 2019

The Geographers' Walk proved as popular as ever, with four groups setting off from the British Library quadrangle. After walking through St Pancras Station - generally considered to be one of the world's best stations - the route took us up Midland Road via the impressive Francis Crick Institute, the largest biotechnological research facility in Europe, and the small public housing

enclave of Somers Town. Somers Town is home to a Bangladeshi and Somali community and is a reminder of how public / social housing is often found in the very heart of London – and provides a stark contrast to the new developments of the area to the east.

We then crossed through the churchyard of St Pancras Church, with its famous ‘Hardy Tree’. This is a tree growing between gravestones which were piled up when they were cleared in the 1860s when the railway was built over part of the churchyard; Thomas Hardy was in charge of the exhumation project when he was working as a trainee architect. The churchyard also contains the tombs and mausoleums of various famous former residents of the area, including Mary Wollstonecroft (mother of Mary Shelley) and Sir John Soane. Crossing under the railway tracks, we approached the new Kings Cross redevelopment via the Regent’s Canal, which winds its way through it.

The area around St Pancras Basin on the canal has been totally transformed over the past ten years. It has even been given its own new postcode – N1C. Coal Drops Yard, which was established in the first half of the nineteenth century to unload coal and other goods from barges into wagons for onward distribution around the capital and beyond, has retained much of its original character. Apart from a sweeping new roof, the structure of the yard remains broadly the same, while cranes and pulleys can still be seen attached to the walls. It is now home to various restaurants, cafes, high-end clothes shops and plush offices. Adjacent to this is perhaps one of the most unusual residential developments in London. Three gasholders, built in the 1850s and decommissioned in 2000, have been turned into 145 luxury apartments and penthouses. The frames were dismantled, taken to Yorkshire and refurbished by a specialist engineering firm, before being re-erected in situ around the new residential blocks. Needless to say, the flats are among the most expensive in London.

We then took a route north to look at the Aga Khan Centre, the headquarters of the British Shi’a Ismaili community. This is an impressive building built in July 2018 and designed to reflect the rich diversity of the Muslim world. The building contains exhibition areas and gardens which are intended to act as an entry point to discovering and understanding the history and cultures of the faith.

The final stop of the walk was Granary Square, a magnificent public square at the heart of N1C. It is flanked on the north and west sides by the refurbished old buildings and warehouses from the area’s industrial past, many of which are now occupied by Central St Martins art college, part of the University of the Arts. Google’s new HQ is being built on the south east side of the square, while to the south a series of steps covered with artificial turf sweep down to the canal. The square is animated with over 1,000 choreographed fountains – each individually controlled and lit. It is a truly awe-inspiring testament to the transformation of Kings Cross over the past ten years from a neglected and rather seedy post-industrial wasteland into a vibrant business, cultural and residential hub. It is also a reminder of how the geography of London is a product of successive reinvention and the interlacing of layers of history, built one on top of the other, in a constantly changing urban landscape.



Some of the walkers who took part (including the Newsletter Editor's two year old daughter in the foreground...start them early!)

Report compiled by Paul Collinson.

Paul is happy to supply detailed walk notes on request.

NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENTS

KCL Department of Geography

[See also KCL Geography website: <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/geography/>]

Latest News

In the last UK Research Excellence Framework (2014), almost 80% of research in the department was rated as internationally excellent or world leading in quality. The department has also recently achieved a top ten place in the Complete University Guide. In the 2020 QS rankings of universities and subject departments, King's Department of Geography was placed 9th in UK and 31st in the world.

King's Geography has over 60 academic, teaching and research staff and over 750 students, including around 175 master's students and over 100 PhD students. There are four main research groups: Cities Group; Earth and Environmental Dynamics Group; Environment, Politics & Development Group and Hazards and Risk Group. Each group has its own seminar series and reading groups.

A total of 12 Masters courses are currently offered by the department, in areas ranging from Aquatic Resource Management to Sustainable Cities.

Three King's geographers have won a prestigious King's Award for Excellence in Innovation and Impact for their work in establishing King's Humanitarian Mappers.

LSE Department of Geography and Environment

[See also LSE Geography and Environment website:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/geographyAndEnvironment/Home.aspx>]

Latest News

The department is ranked the 2nd in the world for Geography in the latest QS World University rankings. The University of Oxford remains in top spot.

In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, the department was ranked 1st overall in the UK for quality of published research (output), and 4th overall when including research impact and research environment.

The Department has major specialities within the economic, development, urban, regional planning and environmental social science aspects of Geography, all with a strong emphasis on application and policy issues. With 38 academic staff, the department is large enough to offer a breadth of expertise but small enough to allow for good relationships between students and staff.

REUNION NEWS

Class of '67 Reunion

The Class of '67 held a reunion in September 2017. Jane Westaway writes...

50 years to the day from their first meeting outside the LSE, to board a coach to Beatrice Webb House in Dorking, for a bonding two nights and three days, the Joint School of Geography class of '67 met up again. Our venue was the Harbour Heights Hotel Poole from 27-29th Sept 2017. We have met four times before (2007, 2010, 2013 and 2015). Previously we have had a meal, overnight at a hotel and a walk the next day – as good Geographers do! As this was the Big 50 we thought we would go for a two-night stay to mirror our first meeting.

Initially we hoped to meet at Beatrice Webb House but it is now private housing. A London venue was ruled out by price, so we decided on Poole, having had a field trip to study mudflows in that area, courtesy of Professor Denys Brunnsden. 22 Alumni and 11 other halves met on the Wed. Some came from as far as the States, Glasgow and Teesside! Many had been to some or all of our previous reunions but one new member bravely joined our number. In the evening we had a superb buffet meal and a quiz based on 1967. The next day 28 of us walked over Hengistbury Head along to Mudeford Spit in glorious sunshine. It was even warm enough for two of us to take a dip in the sea! That evening we had a 3 course sit down meal and were joined by one more alumnus and husband plus one of our lecturers, Barrie Morgan. The following morning, we dispersed to do our own thing with some making the trip across to Brownsea Island.

The overwhelming feeling of all who attended was that it was quite amazing how we were able to just pick up the threads of friendship and chat away as we did in Florrie's coffee bar and The Chesham all those years ago. Safe to say a good time was had by all and we have

pencilled in early June 2020 for our next reunion – 50 years from Graduation – and the location will be somewhere 'up north'!!

If any of the Joint School Class of 67 are reading this, are not on our contact list and would like to be added would you please email Jane Westaway on jwestaway@blueyonder.co.uk



Class of '68 Reunion

Carol Hicks (née Fludder) writes...

Fifty years seemed a long time, and worthy of note, so once a small group had decided we should mark the event, the emails grew and flew around the world.

Twelve former geographers met on 10th May 2018, with several partners, for afternoon tea at the Wellcome Kitchen to celebrate 50 years since we graduated. We chose tea because there were no overheads, and it was much easier to circulate and chat over sandwiches, scones and cakes than during a more formal meal, plus we could remain flexible on numbers up to the last minute. We had previously met for our 25th anniversary, but only small gatherings had happened since then, and our connections were slender. However, one person led to another, and we eventually made contact with 30 graduates in all, scattered around the world, and gathered brief information on a dozen others. Most of us are now keen to keep in touch and gather when a suitable excuse arises, for example when our overseas colleagues make return visits to the UK.

Is there something in our geographical DNA that has encouraged many of us to travel widely, or take up residence abroad, temporarily or on a more stable basis? We weren't going to let our scattered fellow geographers who were unable to join our London gathering, disappear into the ether. So everyone was asked to contribute a résumé of their careers, and a few photos. Thirty obliged. The resulting compilations was circulated around all contributors and

made fascinating reading. While the nucleus within reach of London were able to meet and share memories and pour over old photos, we had greetings from Wales and Scotland, France, Italy and Israel, Hong Kong, Canada and Australia.

As we might have expected among those thirty, there were a number of teachers, lecturers, researchers, a couple of head teachers, a number of planners and a planning inspector. Several had gained doctorates, and at least one had a gong. Sadly two had died. Others had worked in local government, the civil service in the UK and Australia, land and environmental management, palynology (study of pollen) and mapping for the defence industry. At least two had gone into the church, two more into charity fundraising. Gardening and garden design was popular, and we had among us company directors, a banker, a pilot, one person who had worked in regeneration / construction, another in the rail industry, others in publishing, counselling, art, music and restaurant management, textile imports, and the teaching of yoga. Four had experimented with a commune in the 'good life' style.

Our thanks must go in particular to Pat Holding (née Morehouse) without whose determination the project would not have developed to the extent it did, and to many who helped foster connections, especially Dick Lister working on the LSE contingent, and to Jancis Ford in Canada who determinedly put names to the faces in our JSS group photos from 1966 and 1967. Had we changed that much?



Class of '69 Reunion

Helen Sansom (née McManus) writes...

In late September 2019 sixteen members of the 1969 Geography intake (plus six partners/spouses) met up to celebrate the 50th anniversary of starting our degree at Kings.

In September 1969, prior to the official registration and start of the degree course, the Geography Department organised a two-night field course based at Netley House just outside Shere in Surrey. The House was a Victorian Mansion which was then owned by the Holiday Fellowship. The course enabled the students to get to know one another before going up to London and being spread out over the capital in a variety of accommodation.

Phil Woodward took on the task of organising the get-together. People stayed at the Mercure at Box Hill, the Running Horses Pub at Mickleham or came along for the day and/or the celebratory meal at the pub. Phil also arranged a visit to Netley House, now run as managed office space. A walk was organised but heavy overnight rain caused some

flooding and the route had to be modified. But the sun came out and the walk was completed in the dry.

It was good to meet up again: obviously people had kept in touch with particular friends but many of the participants had not seen each other since graduation so there was a lot of catching up to do.

Thanks go to Phil for organising the event.



OBITUARIES

Dr Ted Yates

Dr Ted Yates, stalwart of the department at King's for over 40 years, passed away in November 2018. The Committee would like to extend belated condolences to his family and friends. An obituary published in the Spring 2019 edition of King's In Touch magazine is included below:

Edward 'Ted' Yates has been described as a 'geographer in the true sense of the word'. After serving in the Royal Air Force throughout the Second World War, he came to King's in 1947 to study Geography.

In 1955, Ted was appointed lecturer at King's and began his 30-year career at the university. His breadth of knowledge was legendary. His background in maths and physics, along with his proficiency in languages, allowed him to range widely across different aspects of the discipline, from physical to human geography. Ted was also an inspirational field teacher, setting up the Rogate Field Centre for King's. He continued to research and write long after retirement.

Ted Yates lived in Selborne for more than 50 years and became a central figure in the village's life and a member of several societies. Following in the footsteps of Gilbert White, he wrote a book on the history of Selborne from prehistoric times to the present day entitled 'Knights, Priests and Peasants', published in 2009. He worked as an advisor for the National Trust and English Heritage on environmental management in the area. He also organised a walk for the Joint School Society several years ago around Selborne, fondly remembered by those who took part.

The Newsletter Editor writes...

Ted Yates taught both my Dad (in the 1950s) and myself (in the 1980s) at King's. My Dad remembered him well as a truly inspiring teacher, as did I. One of the most memorable courses I took during my degree was Ted's module on Geographical Ideas, ostensibly focused on the historical development of the subject but essentially a philosophical exploration of the concept of geography itself – the breadth of scholarship was extraordinary and ranged far beyond the boundaries of the discipline. He also helped lead a first year field trip to County Clare in the west of Ireland, a week which instilled in me a life-long love of the country which cumulated in a PhD many years later and continues to this day.

Many thanks to Arthur Spencer for additional information.

Marion Davies (LSE 1952-55)

Marion's son Richard Davies writes...

Marion Davies died in December 2019. A Londoner, she lived her early life in Ealing, her home area later undergoing a startling change of use to what is now the North Circular Gyratory. Although excelling at languages she read Geography at LSE, but with French as subsidiary, obligatory at that time. She appreciated the range of subjects in Geography that the Joint School offered, particularly those about Africa and Historical Geography and was proud of the School's radical roots and its international character, and for years afterwards whenever an African politician or general was on the TV she would invariably remember them as someone she'd met at LSE at one of the Union 'hops'. After marriage to John (KCL 53-56) in 1958 and living mainly in Enfield they both had teaching careers, during which time the family grew with 3 children. She taught locally and retired as Geography teacher and Librarian at The Latymer School, Edmonton in 1984.

Marion's love of learning and energy nevertheless remained undimmed and she eventually took both a BSc (Hons) and an MSc from the OU and became a tutor, particularly for disabled students. Marion kept up to date with a large range of scientific and medical questions, particularly climate change, immunology, and later treatment of eye conditions. A keen member of the University Women's Club in Mayfair she was also a devoted allotment holder, growing fruit and vegetables for the family to eat, and was a regular attendee at the various LSE Reunions, including the 90th Birthday Party for Professor Wise who had interviewed her in 1952.

She unfortunately suffered from an eyesight problem for many years and devoted her time from the mid-1990s to building up the 'Macular Disease Society' set up to provide help for it. As its Chairman in the late 1990s, she boosted the Society's membership, and its financial

reserves, and set up local groups nationally; and ensured that it sponsored research into the causes of what was still a little known disease. She got to know Dr Tim Ffytche, a leading medical authority on the disease at Moorfields Eye Hospital and former Surgeon-Oculist to the Queen, and helped sponsor early research by Professor Clare Bradley, of Royal Holloway College.

At her funeral, a collection in her memory raised £650 for the Calibre Library, which provides audiobooks for blind and the partially sighted and whose murder mystery discs she enjoyed listening to.

KCL / LSE Geography Alumni Society Newsletter Class Notes

If you'd like some information to be included about yourself in the next newsletter, please complete the proforma below.

If you have any ideas about additional information you would like to see in the newsletter or any other comments, please include these as well.

Contributions can be emailed or posted to the newsletter editor at the addresses provided on page 2.

Many thanks.

Name:

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KCL / LSE (delete as appropriate)

Year of graduation:

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Some information about myself for inclusion in the next newsletter:

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The Society has over 250 members. If you would like to join and be added to the mailing list, please contact the Newsletter Editor at jointschoolsociety@gmail.com. Please ensure that we have your up-to-date contact details, including e-mail address. The latter will be used solely to communicate news to you, and all correspondence is sent BCC.