

## POSTSCRIPT: GEOGRAPHY OVER THE LAST 45 YEARS

*This is the section of the postscript covering some of the ways in which the School has maintained its identity over the years. It is preceded by a substantial section covering the School's development between 1970 and 2015. It is followed by a discussion of how the School has changed, including the rise of online learning, and the move to the new building in the spring of 2015. N.B. Final text may change.*

### The Future

#### What stays the same:

In many senses, the School is, perhaps, more fixed by its history, location, and position within British Geography, than many imagine. The School still maintains its strength in commercial and political geography (p.13), exploiting the diversity of the city-region it resides in, and it still aspires to provide that bridge between scientific knowledge and moral values (p.26), combining all that is best of quantitative and qualitative geography with a keen eye for social injustice. The School continues the tradition of leading the academic debate in its areas, acting as the home for international journals including *Applied Spatial Analysis and Policy*, and editing others like *Antipode*, *Acme*, and *City*. We also run major conference series such as the *International GeoComputation Conference Series*, started by Stan Openshaw, Tavi Murray and others twenty years ago, and have chaired a variety of international committees, including the *IGU Commission on Applied Geography* and the *AAG Sexuality and Space Specialty Group*. Members of the School sit on a wide variety of international advisory boards, including the *UN Convention to Combat Desertification expert panel on desertification impact indicator refinement*, the *Natural England Science Advisory Committee*, the *NERC Flood Risk from Extreme Events Programme Steering Group*, the *National Population Projections Expert Advisory Group*, and the *Department of Health Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation*.

Ironically, the return to fees has returned the institution largely to the financial model it had in the 1940s (p.14), when a module with 2hrs/w cost 2.12.6; around £270.48 equivalent now; approximately what students pay per

week for a module currently. Teaching levels are also similar: a Level 3 student in 1949 had around 5hrs of lectures a week (p.55). In 1912, an assistant lectureship attracted £300 pa, which is £29,000 today, and some staff would recognise the inflation-devastated lectureship salary in 1919 of £420, or £18,000 today, though fortunately there is more equity between the genders, at least in grade-by-grade salary (in 1949 a female assistant lecturer got £550, or £16,000 in today's money). The School also continues to maintain the tradition, set with our first First Class student, Robert Dickinson, of supporting of our best students through into academia, with some 20 per cent of academics trained in-house at either undergrad or PhD level. We also continue to encourage a great deal of loyalty in our staff; members of the School who have built careers for over 20 years at Leeds include such stalwarts as Phil Rees (1970), John Stillwell (started undergrad in 1970), Martin Clarke (undergrad 1971), Adrian McDonald (1972), Mike Kirkby (1973), Mark Birkin (undergrad 1978), Graham Clarke (started PhD 1981), Gordon Mitchell (1987), Martin Purvis (1989), Frances Drake (1990), Alison Manson (1991), Alan Grainger (1992), Steve Carver (1993), the author (PhD 1993), David Appleyard (1993), Helen Durham (1993), Andy Turner (1993), Paul Waley (1991), Oliver Phillips (1995), and Myles Gould (1996). It would also be remiss not to mention occasional demonstrator and researcher within the School, Frank Cudjoe, whose efforts to hide the eons of time he's been in the School can't disguise the fact that he's been here at least twenty years, if not considerably longer!

The French fieldclass, introduced by Dickinson (p.74) and run in the second year to Montpellier, still continues, and has run for at least 50 years. This is now supplemented on the BA side with alternative trips to Helsinki and Belgrade at Level 2, and Athens, Mumbai, and Miami at Level 3. On the BSc side, the well-loved Spanish fieldtrip, which ran for some 30 years from the 1970s onwards, ended with the retirements of Jim Hogg, Mike Kirkby, and Adrian McDonald. This has been replaced with a trip to the Cevennes, and an alternative trip to the Alps, and is now supplemented with trips to Malham at Level 1, and New Zealand at Level 3. Ironically, the School has only just cancelled its annual trip to Bogglehole, which, though not a direct descendent, still covered much of the same ground as would have been covered by P.F. Kendall on his field classes there (p.16, p.21 cf.p.30), not least because of the astonishing quality of the scientific research Kendall himself carried out in the area, which still represents much of the state of the art for the region.

While the Geographical Resources Unit (GRU), or “Map Library”, open since at least 1953 (p.52), finally closed in the face of space needs and the rise of online data, the Graphics Unit still continues, in spirit if not in legal actuality, as a branch of Faculty services and still produces maps for the University (p.68). The School continues to have strong links with the Geographical Association, and the Student Geographical Society (GeogSoc) is still going strong, long after it was first recorded in 1921/1922 (p.28/32). Moreover, despite the general trend against history in modern office design, there are still small artefacts that linger unnoticed around the place. Anyone looking carefully at page 70 will notice that we still have the same departmental rubber stamp that we had in 1979. It’s done us well so far, and will probably do us well for another 40 years, if left to its own devices – a small reminder of where we’ve come from. There is even, lurking in an office somewhere, a luridly painted interglacial Hippo skull, stolen one dark evening in the 1950s from the Engineering department, and only bought out for staff photos (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Departmental Mascot.

Finally, the general feel of the place and the debates within its walls would have been easily recognised by the vast number of its staff over the

years. There is still the occasional rise of the question of Geography's continued survival, and whether it should be broken up (p.81); there is still the occasional antagonism with a professor who likes to stamp their mark with a firm foot; and still the never-ending question of the relationship with the centre of the University. Nevertheless, it remains a fortunate place to work: broad in its vision, collegial in its routine, and committed in its approach.