

# IGES Newsletter

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Back cover: Hambrey Cliffs

## Geography Matters

by Hannah Lees

Year 2 BSc Geography Student

On the 18th of December 2004, I travelled to Sri Lanka for my Dad's wedding. The first week of the holiday was spectacular; we visited the Cinnamon islands and our hotel at Bentota Beach in Bentota was an old Dutch Fort. The hotel was flanked on one side by the sea and on the other by a lake.

After a filling Christmas dinner and a party the evening before, most hotel guests (including ourselves) arose later than usual for breakfast on Boxing Day. The restaurant area, which faced the lake, looked calm as ever. After breakfast, my brother and I headed to the pool to meet his friend. As they played about in the pool I looked out to the sea (some 20 metres away) and noticed that the sea was further out than normal and eerily calm. To begin with, I thought nothing of it; but ten minutes later I began to realise what was happening when water began surging its way into the hotel grounds. I began to shout at everyone to get out of the pool because a tsunami was going to hit us. My family and the other guests climbed frantically to the fifth floor of the hotel and the elephants in the grounds were moved to the third floor reception.

My dad and I ran to the wall outside of the restaurant from where the sea was just visible. We watched the tsunami approach, climb the beach and smash through the lower levels of the hotel. Next door to us was a smaller hotel facing the lake and we watched in total horror as a second wave crashed through, completely destroying it. I remember yelling at the hotel staff tying up the pontoon, "Move! Move! It's in the lake! Move!" The wave, which had destroyed an entire hotel, was now moving back towards us from the lake. The look on everyone's faces will stay with me for my



entire life as we stood frozen waiting for the tsunami to hit us from the lake. The question on everyone's mind was, "Would the hotel stay standing with the sea hitting us on one side and the lake from the other?". I felt the wall shudder as the full force of the wave from the lake hit it. We were some of the lucky ones. Our hotel stood the ultimate test and as the waters receded the full scale of the damage and devastation was revealed.

After the tsunami many of the hotel guests headed to Colombo Airport. My family and I decided to stay put and help the staff with the clean up operation. On New Year's Eve, one of the senior staff members thanked us all for our help as without guests the hotel would not be open and they would not get paid. They needed the money more than ever now. That night I wrote my personal statement for the University of Wales Aberystwyth. The events of my holiday had shown me how important geography was and how my knowledge about physical processes had helped me to recognise and react to the situation as it happened around me. I will never forget Sri Lanka or the events of December 26th 2004 as they hold a special place in my heart. The sea has always been one of my favorite parts of nature and the tsunami has given me a greater respect for it.

*Knowledge of geography can save lives. Hannah Lees had learned what the warning signs of a tsunami were in A Level Geography and on Boxing Day 2004 she saved many lives. Hannah's Hotel "the Old Dutch Fort" was*

*solidly built with foundations in bedrock the hotel next door, which was completely destroyed, had its foundations on alluvial silt. Hannah is currently a second year IGES Undergraduate.*

## Gareth Thomas Travel Scholarship sends Mills to Dublin

From Sarah Mills

*IGES Masters Student (IGES BA Geography Graduate)*



With the help of a Gareth Thomas Travel Scholarship\*, I undertook a trip to Dublin, Ireland this September. As well as having the opportunity to explore the city and meet local people, this visit also provided me with several geographical case-studies relating to themes in contemporary human geography.

As a city with an increasing 'split personality' between its cosmopolitan European identity, and its very traditional pre-EU identity, I found Dublin a fascinating place to explore. Its

compact and geographically small area meant that it took very little time to familiarise myself with the city. There was a sense that locals bumped into each other on the street, highly unusual for a country's capital, especially compared to previous travels to Paris or Rome. The city has had a turbulent and often oppressive past, yet Dubliners seem to have retained a strong sense of pride and identity. The city's uniqueness is somewhat under threat from the EU regeneration, which is transforming Dublin into a modern, vibrant and sophisticated city.

Dublin seemed a city of contrasts, one experience I had seemed to sum-up its new internal conflict. I observed a stereotypical old Irish gentlemen in a

flat cap drinking Guinness in a corner of a pub with traditional Irish music playing in the background. To me this seemed a 'postcard' image of Dublin. However, it also seemed surreal that he paid for his drink in Euros, was served by a Greek barman and next door to this pub was a Starbucks coffee house. I questioned whether the place of Dublin has lost some of its distinctiveness with the increasingly European agenda, or whether this blend of tradition and cosmopolitanism was creating a more diverse, exciting, multicultural capital city.

After exploring and getting to know Dublin as a city, and meeting the people that make Dublin so friendly and welcoming, I am very grateful to IGES for being awarded a Gareth Thomas Travel Scholarship. I feel that I have benefited academically with a widening of my cultural and political knowledge of our closest neighbour. This trip has complimented and added to my geographical imagination and has given me a greater understanding not only of Dublin and Ireland, but of some of the themes and processes that are played out in places, and I hope this will help me in my postgraduate studies this year.

*\* Generous bequests from Mr Gareth Thomas and Dr Elwyn Davies, both former students who became lecturers in Geography at Aberystwyth, fund travel scholarships reserved for Geography students at Aberystwyth. Ten scholarships valued at £400 each and three at £70 each are awarded annually enabling students to travel and use this experience to broaden their geographical education. Sarah Mills completed her BA Geography degree in July 2006 and is currently undertaking an MA this year (Space, Place and Politics) and then onwards and upwards to a PhD.*

## A warm Welsh welcome

From Marie-Eve Lemieux

*IGES 3rd Year Exchange Student from McGill University*

I'm sitting at my desk in Montréal, January 2005, looking out of the window at the white fluffy snow falling down. I take another look at the yellow and purple University website on the computer screen and dream again. It was almost a year ago now. As a student in the McGill School of Environment I wanted to complete my undergraduate degree with an experience abroad. I chose to study in Aberystwyth at IGES, particularly within the Centre of Glaciology.

After a 24 hour flight from Montreal (Canada) to London, I finally got the train to Aberystwyth. As the train rolled closer to Wales, I noticed the landscape changing, until all I could see for miles around was green hilly pastures dotted with white sheep. Occasionally, to my pleasant surprise, the tops of those hills were covered by a forest of tall wind mills. Upon arriving, despite the weariness of the trip, I deposited my luggage in my new flat, and promptly ran down the hill to see for real the Irish Sea.

I'm writing this text exactly mid-way through my exchange programme. I've had the great opportunity to meet the researchers at the Centre of Glaciology. I only wish I had time to take more modules. I was happy to get the chance to work with Dr. Essery and Dr. Lucas. We have installed an eddy covariance tower in Penglais Woods across the road from the University. The aim of the project is to use an energy budget, to explore the relationships between precipitation, cloud cover and solar radiation. All this information will then be included in an already existing database of Penglais Woods, using GIS.

Owing partly to my background at the McGill School of Environment, I did not want to strictly focus on the scientific side of everything. I need some way to relate the science to daily life or to find relevant applications. I was



therefore quite keen to attend Dr. Whitehead's lectures. His lectures gave me a perspective on sustainable societies within a European context. The more time I spend in the UK and learn about the politics of the country, the more I realise the importance of sustainable development.

Prior to coming to Wales, I had heard a lot about Wales and the warm Croeso (Welcome). Wales and Aberystwyth definitely grow on you. I have joined the walking club and spent several weekends away, enjoying breathtaking views atop the summits of Cadair Idris, the Brecon Beacons and Snowdon: warm tea, wet feet... because it does rain in Wales! But this is a minor detail considering the great people I've met. I've also become an international student with the Guild of Students. Being on exchange I could have travelled extensively outside Wales and tried to see as much as possible, but coming back to Canada I would have felt that I had missed the best things Aberystwyth has to offer: flatmates, classmates, staff, and the dynamism of the University.



## Employment after Graduation

From Dr John Grattan (jpg@aber.ac.uk)

IGES students do better than the national average when it comes to employment in the first six months after graduation: 88.2% of those seeking work were employed compared to 85.9% nationally in 2005. But these figures do not tell the whole story. IGES graduates are obviously a clever lot; in 2005 38% of our graduates went on to study for postgraduate qualifications against a national average of 18%.

## Mock Earth Summit

From Dr Mike Woods (zpz@aber.ac.uk)

Human Geography students saved the world again (in principle), at the annual 'Mock Earth Summit'! The first-year students managed to save the planet over just one October weekend, while attending an IGES new student induction programme. The event was hosted at the University's residential centre, Gregynog Hall, in mid Wales.

The mock-Tudor country house is set in acres of beautiful parkland and was the perfect forum for the over forty first year Human Geography students to hash out some of the world's most challenging issues. Students formed teams representing different



countries and negotiated an agreement on carbon reduction. After preparing their positions in bilateral discussions (with a roving TV news team trying to scoop the latest developments), the teams came together to make their presentations and hammer out a compromise.

As well as introducing some of the key concerns of contemporary Human Geography – responding to climate change, global inequality, and geopolitics – the mock summit is a great opportunity for first year students to get to know each other and members of staff, with plenty of free-time to explore Gregynog's spacious grounds and make use of its first-rate facilities.

## The Most Satisfied Geography and Environmental Science Students In Britain – Official!

From Dr Mike Woods (zpz@aber.ac.uk)

Aberystwyth has Britain's most satisfied Geography and Environmental Science students, the 2006 National Student Survey has found. Final year students in the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences completing the survey gave us:

- The highest overall satisfaction rating in Human Geography for any university in Britain with a score of 4.6 out of 5.
- The joint highest overall satisfaction rating in Physical Geography and Environmental Science for any university in Britain with a score of 4.5 out of 5.

The University of Wales, Aberystwyth, as a whole topped the National Student Survey results in Wales and came fifth across Britain. The Director of the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences, Professor Martin Jones commented: "IGES is immensely proud that our students have rated us so highly in this satisfaction survey. We are a research-led department striving to produce the highest quality of learning environment and resources to make sure that our students have the best start to their adult lives. This indicates the professionalism and enthusiasm of staff, our dedication to the quality of teaching and support services, and the participatory and interactive nature of the student experience. Aberystwyth is a unique place to study and we are totally committed to providing the best possible experience for our students."

The National Student Survey is an annual, independent, survey of student satisfaction commissioned by the government's Funding Councils for Higher Education and supported by the National Union of Students.

Further details on the survey can be found on the Teaching Quality Information website at: [www.tqi.ac.uk](http://www.tqi.ac.uk)

## A Close Escape

From Dr John Grattan (jpg@aber.ac.uk)

On our most recent student field trip to New Zealand, we visited the ruins of a home which had a volcanic fumarole open up underneath it! The elderly owner thought there was nothing amiss with having a very hot floor and adopted the habit of drying her clothes by spreading them out on the carpet. She narrowly avoided death by gas poisoning though, the heat forced her to sleep with all the windows open! We actually stay nearby at the KiwiPaka Hostel, which has its own volcanic plumbing – here put to good use to heat the hot-tub.



# IGES staff continues to grow!

from Professor Martin Jones (Head of Department)

As part of our continued expansion as a world-class research and teaching centre in Geography and Earth Science, we are very pleased to introduce the following new staff, who joined IGES since the last Newsletter:



**Dr James Brasington** joined IGES this January from the University of Cambridge as a Reader in Physical Geography. His academic interests focus on the development of numerical models and earth observation techniques to study and predict the behaviour of catchment and fluvial systems over a wide range of time and space scales. Geographically his research spans a diverse range of environments from the hot and dry (Iraq, California) to the warm and wet (Nepal) and the cool and humid

(Scotland, New Zealand). Outside work, James is a keen hill walker, enjoys running and has recently turned to triathlon, although is struggling not to drown in the process! He is looking forward to moving from the flatlands of East Anglia to finally see some hills from his window!



**Professor Mathew Hannah** joins IGES this summer from the University of Vermont (Burlington, Vermont, USA) as a Professor in Human Geography. Matt's primary research interests concern the ways in which modern forms of power, knowledge and territorial organization constitute each other and underpin Western social orders. His studies have focused on the spatial prerequisites for

administrative control of Native Americans by the US Government in the late 19th century, the modernization of the US Census as both a symbol and a vehicle of new forms of spatial governance during that time period, and most recently, West German Census boycott movements in the 1980s as a window on emergent forms of citizenship appropriate to the 'Information Age'. Away from the office, he is an avid walker and near-fanatical, year-round disc golfer.

**Dr Allen Hubbard** joined IGES this January as a Lecturer in Physical Geography. Allen is interested in the links between glaciers and ice sheets and global climate on a variety of temporal and spatial scales. Allen's particular expertise focus on the collection and use of field-measurements to train high-resolution, 3D models of climate, ice sheet and geophysical dynamics to help unravel the multitude of interactions and feedbacks which govern this aspect of the earth-system and which can lead to complex, non-linear responses and rapid environmental change. Allen has been most fortunate to have been able to combine some of these research themes with a passion for high-latitude sailing and mountaineering. In the last 7 years he has been sailing off in his own steel ketch, which has taken him from the Arctic to the Antarctic and lots of very pleasant (and warm!) places in between. For those of you wondering; yes, Allen is the brother of IGES's Dr. Bryn Hubbard, and yes they are both great glaciologists.



**Dr Damià Vericat** joined IGES this January, from the Forestry and Technology Centre of Catalonia (Spain) as a Post-Doctoral Researcher for the Centre for Catchment and Coastal Research. Damià is a fluvial geomorphologist whose research is primarily concerned with monitoring and modelling fluvial dynamics,

especially sediment transport (bedload and suspended load) in gravel bed rivers, sediment and water management in regulated rivers, and fluvial hydrology. Recently his interest was focused on macroinvertebrate drift and bedload transport interactions in gravel patchy rivers in collaboration with the University of Lleida (Catalonia, Spain), the Forestry and Technology Centre of Catalonia (Catalonia, Spain) and the University of Aberdeen (Scotland, UK). Damià's main hobbies are mountain biking, football, enjoying nice films in cinemas, and cooking.

## Glacier Web ([www.glaciers-online.net](http://www.glaciers-online.net))

With support from UWA's Teaching Innovations Fund, **Professor Mike Hambrey** ([mjh@aber.ac.uk](mailto:mjh@aber.ac.uk)) of IGES, has been working jointly with Dr Juerg Alean from Zurich, Switzerland, to develop an educational website about glaciers ([www.glaciers-online.net](http://www.glaciers-online.net)).

The website is based on their very successful book (Hambrey & Alean, *Glaciers*, Cambridge University Press) and includes most of the photographs published therein. The site is hosted by 'SwissEduc', which is a rapidly expanding site covering geography and other academic disciplines. It is supported by charitable foundations in Switzerland. The purpose of the website is to help secondary level and university students

gain a visual appreciation of glaciers, glacial landforms and sediments, and their importance in the context of climate change. Aberystwyth students are encouraged to use the site for glacier-related modules. The site is also used by university lectures world-wide to incorporate images into their own course, and some photographs have been used by BBC News Online. The website received a very positive review in the journal *Science* in 2005, which described it as 'a boon for visual learners'. The site continues to evolve – new additions last autumn included an illustrated glossary of glacial features, and a collection of Arctic photographers.



# OFF THE BOOKSHELF

## 'Fuel for Free'

Wearing his trans-disciplinary hat, engineer and postgraduate political geographer **Kelvin Mason (kjm04@aber.ac.uk)** has written a practical guide for small-scale brick-makers and development field workers. The guide confronts prevalent ideas of both development and the environment. Fuel For Free presents an overview of the use of wastes as fuels and case studies from the experience of ITDG/Practical Action in Peru, Zimbabwe and Sudan.



## 'Benchmark paper in Hydrology'

One of **Professor Tony Jones's (taj@aber.ac.uk)** early research papers, published in Water Resources Research, has been selected as a benchmark paper in hydrology by the International Association of Hydrological Sciences. The paper introduced soil piping to hydrological theory and proposed that flow through these subsurface pathways can make an important contribution to stormflow in rivers. Previous theory maintained that only water flowing over the surface was a significant source of flood flows in rivers.



Subsequent field experiments have confirmed the hypothesis, with around 50% of discharge in part of the upper Rheidol catchment being supplied by soil pipes. The paper is one of just 31 selected papers published since the ground-breaking work of Robert Horton in 1933 that initiated modern scientific hydrology.

It is reprinted in the IAHS Benchmark Papers in Hydrology Series (2006) with a commentary by Professor Keith Beven of Lancaster University.

## 'Encyclopedia of Quaternary Science'

November 2006 saw the publication of the stunning 4-volume Encyclopedia of Quaternary Science, to which our own **Dr Helen Roberts** and **Professor Ann Wintle** were invited to contribute entries.

Printed in colour, the encyclopedia is written by a team of leading experts in the field of Quaternary Science, and designed to be "an essential reference

for scientists, students, and others" studying this important period of the last 1-2 million years of the Earth's history. The articles are pitched at a level which makes the material accessible to undergraduate students, whilst also providing researchers with the most up-to-date information. Don't just take our word for it though - check it out for yourself at the library (or visit <http://www.books.elsevier.com/eqs>).



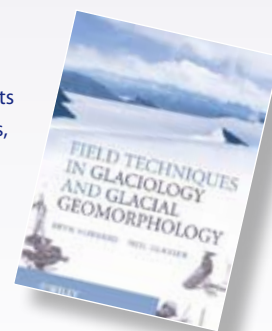
## 'The Nature of the State'

Written by three members of human geography staff in IGES (**Dr Mark Whitehead**, **Dr Rhys Jones** and **Professor Martin Jones**), and published in the Oxford Geographical and Environmental Studies series (Oxford University Press), The Nature of the State challenges the ways in which geographers and social scientists approach the study of state-nature relations. The authors analyse different instances of state-nature interaction from all over the world, considering the geo-politics of resource conflicts, the operation of natural history museums, the organizational practices of environmental departments and ministries, the regulation of genetic science, and contemporary forms of state intervention within issues of climate change.



## 'Field Techniques in Glaciology and Glacial Geomorphology'

All geography and earth science students carry out fieldwork as part of their studies, either on supervised field courses or independently as part of an extended project. Field Techniques in Glaciology and Glacial Geomorphology, by **Professor Neil Glasser (nfg@aber.ac.uk)** and **Dr Bryn Hubbard (byh@aber.ac.uk)** of IGES, provides students with accepted and practicable field techniques for research in glaciology.





A device designed at IGES to remove toxic metal pollution from water flowing from disused mines was the winner of the National Energy Globe award for the United Kingdom. The award is in recognition of leading work on the BIOMAN project headed by **Dr. Bill Perkins** ([wwp@aber.ac.uk](mailto:wwp@aber.ac.uk)), **Dr. Nick Pearce** and IGES postgraduate and research assistant **Suzanne Hartley**. BIOMAN (BIOabsorption of Metals from Abandoned miNe sites) is a €1.4m€ Life Environment funded project led by the University of Wales, Aberystwyth and in collaboration with researchers from the University of Bologna and the University of Sheffield.



The device consists of a large tea bag-like structure filled with dealginated seaweed (a by-product of an industrial process to make food additives) housed in a water tank. Bioman has been undergoing field trials in mid Wales and Italy. Key to the process is the dealginated seaweed's ion-exchange capacity. Initial laboratory tests and the field trials completed to date have shown that dealginated seaweed is very effective at trapping the principal mine water pollutants such as zinc, lead and cadmium, as the water flows through the tank. The Energy Globe is awarded to projects from all over the world which make careful and economical use of resources and employ alternative energy sources. Every year, about 700 projects from all over the world are submitted in the Energy Globe Award competition.

**Dr Peter Wyn-Jones** ([pyw@aber.ac.uk](mailto:pyw@aber.ac.uk)), of IGES's Centre for Research into Environment and Health (CREH) has been appointed by the Office of Science and Technology (<http://www.dti.gov.uk/science/>) to be a UK representative to the management committee on the EU COST Action 929 project titled 'A European Network for Environmental and Food Virology'. Action 929 seeks to strengthen the area of food and environmental virology in Europe.

They seek to establish systems for effective European responses to viral hazards associated with food and environmental contamination. Dr Wyn-Jones will represent UK interests as the programme develops.

## An anthropogenic origin for hummocky moraine sediment-landform assemblages

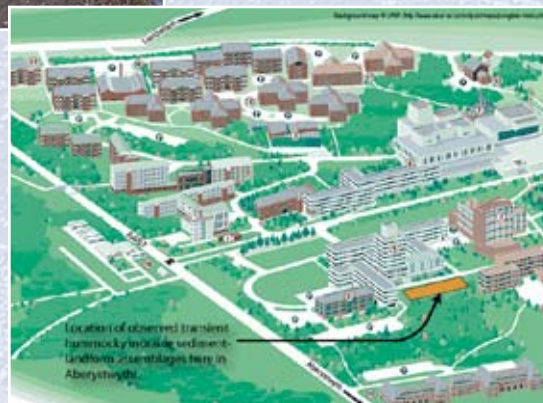
Recent ground works at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth has revealed startling new evidence supporting an entirely new formation mechanism for the development of 'hummocky moraine' topography. High-resolution remotely sensed digital imagery has shown that a excessive use of poorly consolidated ground can rapidly lead to the establishment of highly mineragenic swamp conditions. This process is compounded by the contemporaneous and dramatic reduction of ground vegetation, formerly *Festuca rubra*. Alleviation of swamp-like conditions through the rapid aggregation of a series of sandy-gravel mounds has lead to the formation of a generic hummocky moraine topography.



It is proposed that via the process of 'laying-off', prolonged neglect can result in the establishment of landforms typical of formerly glaciated landscapes (Hambrey et al., 1997). This new process provides evidence supporting the hypothesis that Scottish land clearances during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries resulted in the widespread formation of non-glaciogenic hummocky moraine-like sediment landform assemblages.

*Remotely-sensed imagery showing evidence of anthropogenic origins of hummocky moraine sediment-landform assemblages at 'temporary' car park on Penglais Campus, University of Wales, Aberystwyth.*

Spoof provided by S.L. Roberson and E.A. Sahlin.



**Dr Mohammed Umer**, Associate Professor at the Department of Earth Sciences at Addis Ababa University, has been appointed to an Honorary Departmental Fellowship in the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences. This marks the vital role Mohammed has played in research collaboration with IGES's Quaternary Environmental Change Research Group over the last 12 years. Mohammed is a member of the scientific steering committee of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme's PAGES (Past Global Changes) Pole-Equator-Pole transect through Europe and Africa, as well as PAGES representative for Ethiopia. He will next visit IGES in September 2007, as part of the PalaeoTana project, investigating the Pleistocene history of the Blue Nile headwaters.



## 'Scholarship Travel Awards send IGES Postgraduates to Austria and United States'



Blue Ridge mountains, South Carolina.

The D.T.H. Price Postgraduate Scholarship Awards are a generous legacy to IGES from the estate of Mrs Ann Price. The scholarship is awarded annually to doctoral students who submit imaginative or worthy plans for enriching their understanding of Geography. This award provides an excellent opportunity for students to either (i) enhance their knowledge of comparative environments or (ii) to attend a conference and associated field excursions related to their research. This year, two awards were presented to **Eva Sahlin** and **Matt Rowberry**.

**Eva Sahlin** is a third-year doctoral student studying the dynamics and configuration of Welsh Quaternary glaciations in the IGES Centre for Glaciology. Eva took the opportunity to attend the 9th International Symposium on High Mountain Remote Sensing Cartography (HMRSC) in Graz, Austria where she gave a poster presentation titled "Geomorphological mapping in Wales, UK, based on remotely sensed data". The conference enabled Eva to meet researchers in the same field whilst also learning about new computational techniques, applications and software. Photographic evidence for the trip seems to involve wine tasting in southeast Styria (while discussing the formation of the Alps, of course), the Italian Renaissance courtyard of Landhaushof and the new Art Museum in Graz. Who says physical geographers don't also enjoy an occasional culture?

**Matt Rowberry** is a final year doctoral student studying tectonic and climatic influences on Cenozoic landscape evolution in the Welsh region in the IGES River Basin Dynamics and Hydrology Research Group. The scholarship allowed Matt the opportunity to go into the field to compare and contrast models of long-term landscape evolution developed in Wales to those developed in the southern Appalachians, United States. This also enabled Matt to apply the theoretical model



Cumberland Mountain, South Carolina.

of landscape evolution that he hopes to present in his PhD thesis beyond the geographical confines of the region where it was conceived.

Photographic evidence for the trip seems to invoke a lot of rock-gazing in thick coniferous forest. So did Matt actually leave Ceredigion? Well, a slight suntan and a red, peeling back suggested yes and, apparently, the beaches in South Carolina are well worth a visit too!

Both Eva and Matt highlight their gratitude for an award that enabled them to work outside their immediate research area, be that academic or geographical. This scholarship provides a fantastic opportunity for future postdoctoral researchers and both recommend applying for the award wholeheartedly.



One of Aberystwyth's most distinguished Geography graduates returned in November to deliver the University's annual J. B. Willans Lecture. **Professor Nigel Thrift** is widely recognised as one of the world's leading human geographers. After graduating from Aberystwyth in 1971, Professor Thrift followed a career that has taken him to universities in Canberra, Lampeter, Bristol and Oxford before being appointed as Vice-Chancellor of Warwick University in 2006. Professor

Thrift's work has spanned interests ranging from economic geography to cultural studies, and has consistently been at the forefront of theoretical innovation in human geography and the social sciences more broadly.

In his talk, entitled 'Emotional Geographies: What and Why?', Professor Thrift argued that emotions are becoming increasingly important in shaping modern commercial and political practices.

Businesses design products that appeal to consumers' emotions and seek to build emotional connections to their brands. Politicians and parties are packaged and promoted through the media in highly emotive ways. Understanding the contemporary world therefore requires understanding of the power of emotions, which in turn demands new research strategies from geographers and social scientists.

# General Announcements



**John Grattan** has appeared in two TV programmes in recent months. As reported in the last edition, on August 30th 2006 he was the Super Eruption expert in a 2 hour long 'end of the world extravaganza' broadcast by ABC news in the US. On January 19th 2007 the BBC's Timewatch series broadcast a documentary largely based on John's research into the eruption of the Laki Fissure volcano in Iceland. To John's eternal embarrassment the documentary was entitled "Killer Cloud", but at least his mum was pleased. Electronic copies of the Super eruption report John co-authored can be obtained by emailing him at [jpg@aber.ac.uk](mailto:jpg@aber.ac.uk). It is written in a very accessible style and ought to be useful for A level students.

## Professional Alumni Association

We are hoping to make contact with graduates of the department who have moved into teaching and would like to join our Professional Alumni Association. We would love to hear of your own experiences as geography teachers. It is our intention to keep you up to date with the department's news, to send you copies of research relevant to the school curriculum and we also hope to produce material based on our research which you can use in your teaching. Please contact Dr John Grattan at [jpg@aber.ac.uk](mailto:jpg@aber.ac.uk) and let him know you are out there.

## New place names in Antarctica linked to IGES

The Antarctic Place Names Committee has added the name Hambrey Cliffs to the map of James Ross Island in British Antarctic Territory. The location is 63° 52' 30" S, 58° 06' 00" W, and overlooks Whisky Bay which faces the Antarctic Peninsula. The 3 km long cliffs are named after **Professor Mike Hambrey**, Director of the Centre for Glaciology in IGES, in recognition of his work in glacial geology and glacial sedimentology in the Arctic and Antarctic. The cliffs are composed of a subglacial delta complex of volcanic debris (called hyaloclastite), overlain by basalt lava flows, and the sequence rests on soft Cretaceous sandstone. Sporadically developed between the sandstone and the volcanics is a thin layer of glacial sediment formed at the same time as the volcanic strata. It was here that Mike dislocated his shoulder in 2002 for the cause of science!



Also honoured is **Professor John Smellie** (pronounced Smylie), who is Senior Volcanologist at the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge, and a Visiting Departmental Research Fellow attached to the Centre for Glaciology. Smellie Peak, at 63° 55' 54" S, 57° 55' 12" W, is an isolated triangular peak about 695 m high, also on James Ross Island. It has a conspicuous deep red pyroclastic unit on the north face. Both John and Mike are working together on glacier-volcano interactions on this and adjacent islands, with a view to unravelling the evolution of the Antarctic Peninsula Ice Sheet and the local ice caps, in an area that is particularly susceptible to climatic change.

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