

URBAN GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP: Secretary Report 2004-05

There are four key issues to present in the Secretary's Report:

1 URB-GEOG-FORUM Listserv

In 2004, the UGRG Committee identified one crucial aim to be improved communications amongst the UGRG members and urban geographers more generally. As one key way to accomplish this, a new listserv was established by UGRG for UK urban geographers: URB-GEOG-FORUM@jiscmail.ac.uk. This listserv is intended for productive dialogues related to the study of cities and urban geography, and to serve as a channel for the dissemination of related information on upcoming conferences, seminars, calls for papers, job postings and other events. It is also intended to serve as a key channel for the UGRG membership to keep in contact. Membership was made open to anyone interested in cities and urban geography, while UGRG members in particular have been encouraged to join the list.

2 UGRG Website

The UGRG website was comprehensively redesigned and updated in 2004-05, building upon the excellent base of content created under the previous committee. An added measure to improve the website was also taken when UGRG purchased a permanent web domain (www.urban-geography.org.uk). This will ensure continuity in both the web address for browsers who visit the site, and for the administration of the web page as each new UGRG Committee is established, at which time a new webmaster would assume responsibility for maintenance of the pages. In conjunction with the URB-GEOG-FORUM listserv, the UGRG web site is a key aspect of UGRG's goal for improved communications. The website has been designed to disseminate information to members and other passing web browsers, and contains links to meetings, conferences, papers, publications and web sites which may be of interest to urban geographers and those in cognate disciplines.

3 UGRG Postgraduate Conference

Emerging Urban Geographies: Connecting Theory, Politics and Practice

Department of Geography, Queen Mary, University of London, 27 November 2004

The 2004 UGRG Postgraduate Conference brought together postgraduates from across Europe to present and discuss their research in the context of empirically and practically connecting contemporary urban geography with contemporary urban programmes and planning initiatives in the spheres of culture, society and economy. The day-long meeting incorporated paper presentations, a poster session, and 'break-out' discussion groups addressing key questions about how urban geographical research is of relevance and interest to corporate and public policy and practice. Discussions emerged over the ways in which urban geographers interpret

and think about 'the city' as an ontology, and about how 'the city' might be/ought to be re-thought or re-interpreted in our engagements with the process of policy beyond the realms of academe. Two former members of the UGRG Committee – Donald McNeill (King's College, University of London) and Mike Raco (University of Reading) – kindly offered their summations of the day.

The UGRG Committee would like to thank all those who participated in this event and also the RGS-IBG for providing a small grant which offered expenses to conference participants. We would also like to express a special thanks to Professor Roger Lee and his colleagues at the Department of Geography, Queen Mary, University of London, for generously hosting and sponsoring this event.

4 UGRG-Sponsored Sessions at the 2005 RGS-IBG Annual Conference

UGRG's call for sessions for the 2005 RGS-IBG Annual Conference late last year drew a great deal of interest. From a high quality group of proposals, UGRG was able to sponsor a number of excellent sessions for this year's conference, including:

'Good' Cities for Everyday Life

Conveners: Helen Jarvis (Geography, Politics and Sociology, University of Newcastle) and Jean Hillier (Architecture, Planning and Landscape, University of Newcastle)

Relational Geographies of Architecture and Development

Conveners: Donald McNeill (Department of Geography, King's College London) and Susan Moore (Department of Geography, London School of Economics)

Urban Sustainability: Rethinking Senses of Place

Conveners: Mags Adams (University of Salford) and Simon Guy (University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne)

Global Business Spaces (Joint-sponsored with EGRG)

Convener: Andrew Jones (Department of Geography, Birkbeck College, University of London)

Ordinary Spaces of Urban Development (Joint-sponsored with DARG)

Conveners: Colin MacFarlane (Department of Geography, Open University) and Steve Legg (Department of Geography, University of Cambridge)

Sustainable communities workshop: addressing geographical challenges (Joint-sponsored with the Economic and Social Research Council [ESRC] and the Office of Deputy Prime Minister [ODPM])

Conveners: Ade Kearns (Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow) and Gordon MacLeod (Department of Geography, University of Durham)