

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 29th August 2008, RGS-IBG London
1.10pm, Council Room

1. Apologies for absence: Mia Gray, University of Cambridge (Secretary)

2. Minutes of the 2007 AGM – available on the EGRG website

3. The current committee:

Chair and Web Officer: Neil Coe (University of Manchester)

Secretary: Mia Gray (University of Cambridge)*

Treasurer: Martin Hess (University of Manchester)

Book reviews/ James Faulconbridge (University of Lancaster)

Working papers John Harrison (University of Loughborough)

Mia Gray is to step down after three years as Secretary. The Chair thanked Mia for her excellent service to the EGRG and noted that a replacement would be needed. It was reported that a few people had already expressed an interest in the position and that an email would be sent to see if any further EGRG members were also interested. A selection process would then be determined.

4. Last year's activities:

a. It was noted that having been allocated seven sessions for the 2008 RGS-IBG Conference, the EGRG compiled and successfully submitted 12 sessions (with the potential for more):

4 x New Geographies of the UK economy

2 x A-level reform and economic geography

2 x Networks in economic geography

2 x Transnational formations of class

2 x Spaces of Learning and geographies of knowledge

Overall, it was felt the EGRG had been successful in its aim from last year of organising a wider range of more high-profile sessions at the annual conference.

b. It was noted that the EGRG had sponsored three guests at the 2008 RGS-IBG Conference: Anne ter Wal (University of Utrecht, 3 days), Andrew Sayer (University of Lancaster, 1 day) and Nicholas Thoburn (University of Manchester, 1 day).

c. It was reported that an EGRG textbook proposal has been put together from the above mentioned sessions on the UK economy. The working title is 'Reading the Economy: the UK in the 21st Century', and the proposal is almost ready to go to prospective publishers. The book, to be edited by Neil Coe (Manchester) and Andrew Jones (Birkbeck), will contain a varied range of some 12-14 chapters and any funds generated will go to the EGRG.

d. It was reported that the EGRG Annual Symposium took place from 14-15th May 2008 at the School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester, on the theme of 'Economy, Nature, Space'. There were eight postgraduate presentations on day 1, followed by six presentations on day 2 from Dick Walker, Marcus Power, Daniel Buck, Diana Liverman, David Gibbs and Erik Swyngedouw. The highly successful day was attended by approximately 35

people, and thanks to the two organisers – Gavin Bridge and Jason Beery – were recorded. The relatively low take-up of postgraduates was discussed, as was whether holding the events back-to-back had a positive or negative impact. It was decided to consider ways for more successfully marketing the postgraduate event and making clear its distinctiveness from the symposium while retaining the benefits of the two-day event. Another potential idea was to see if an event could be co-organised with a cognate research group.

e. It was noted that the longstanding mystery of who hosted the EGRG website (<http://www.egr.org.uk/>) had been resolved by moving the site to UK Web Solutions Direct Ltd for an approximate cost of £65/year. Thanks were offered to Graham Bowden at the University of Manchester for his ongoing and excellent work on the EGRG website.

f. The book review and working paper series were discussed. While the book reviews are in good health, the low level of submissions to the working paper series were debated, with the conclusion that the series should be re-targeted at postgraduates and that a £100 working paper prize should be instigated on the same timeline as the thesis prizes. James and John will work on some text and criteria for the website. It was also noted that the 35 attendees of the 2008 Summer Institute in Economic Geography might provide one good target audience for the series and prize. It was also agreed that the working paper series should be discontinued if this initiative does not generate enough submissions over the next year or two.

g. It was noted that the annual postgraduate prizes, sponsored by Wiley-Blackwell, were awarded to:

Simon Turner (University of Durham, now at the Department of Public Health and Policy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine): 'Learning in doing: the social anthropology of innovation in a large UK organisation' (PhD Prize)

Sarah Marie Hall (University of Liverpool): 'Developing moral identities: articulating ethics in family consumption' (Masters Prize).

It was noted that there were highly competitive fields for both awards.

5. Forthcoming events:

a. Topic and venue yet to be decided for 2009 Annual Symposium

b. The next RGS-IBG Annual Conference will take place from 26-28th August 2009 in Manchester. Suggestions for topics and themes for EGRG conference sessions to be emailed to committee members. A formal session selection process will be implemented in due course. One suggestion that received strong backing was for sessions reflecting the 20 years (1989-2009) that will have elapsed since the demise of state socialism in central and eastern Europe.

6. Treasurer's report:

The Treasurer presented the accounts for 2007 (balance £1253.81) and the current account for 2008 (balance £1134.29 as of August and before the RGS subvention). Three points were noted in particular: the new charge for website hosting (see above), the successful budgeting for the annual symposium, and the benefits of attracting sponsorship for the annual thesis prizes in 2008. Overall it was agreed that the finances were reasonably healthy and could support the new working paper prize (see above) but that we should continue to seek sponsorship for the prizes in 2009 and should also continue to charge a £25 fee for waged attendees at the annual symposium.

7. AOB.

There was a discussion as to whether the EGRG could provide any assistance, advice or training to teachers, either through some kind of event or through the provision of online resources. It was agreed that the committee would consider this issue further.

8. Date of next meeting: tbc

NC, September 2008