



Geography Newsletter

for former students

No 16 Summer 2005

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Last year's 'Bumper Edition' of the Newsletter reflected the 2003 centenary activities. Next year, we are looking forward to inviting you back again to celebrate our return to the main College rectangle after 27 years. This year has seen the beginning of some major changes in personnel, with retirements and new arrivals redirecting our teaching and research. Meanwhile, of course, Bill Mead leads our expanding cohort of emeritus staff!

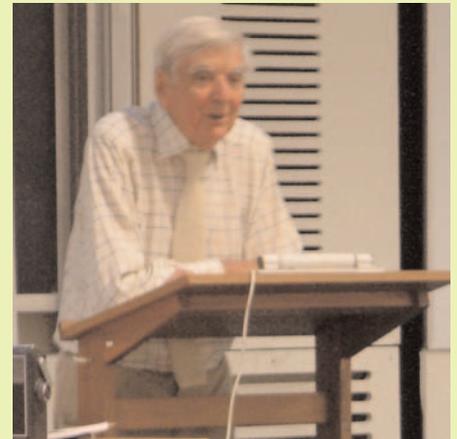
Bill Mead at 90

Bill Mead was 90 in July. A reception and dinner were held to mark the occasion on 24 June, and also to celebrate Bill's continuing energetic contributions to Geography. Many former members of the department came, some from as far away as Australia, Nigeria and Texas. Hugh Clout has written this appreciation.

Professor Bill Mead is an international geographer par excellence. A graduate of

the London School of Economics, he has nevertheless spent almost his entire academic career at UCL, as Lecturer (from 1949), Reader, then Professor, and ultimately Head of the Department of Geography (1966-81). Since then, of course, he has remained a very visible Emeritus Professor. Generations of students were stimulated by his enthusiasm and commitment, not just to Scandinavia, but also to learning more generally, to field work, and to student intellectual and personal development. Anyone who has been to one of our former student reunions will know that he tends to be a centre of attention, usually identified by waves of laughter from his part of the room!

Bill's approachability should not detract from his distinction. He has devoted almost seven decades to the study of northern Europe. His 1953 book, *Farming in Finland*, incorporated detailed research undertaken in 1949-50 on a Rockefeller Fellowship, and was followed by the path-breaking, *An Economic Geography of the Scandinavian States and Finland* (1958). Later books have included, *An Historical Geography of Scandinavia* (1981), and latterly *An Experience of Finland* (1993), *A Celebration of Norway*



Bill reminiscing at his 90th Birthday Reception.

(2002) and a book on the Scandinavian traveller Pehr Kalm (2003). Countless articles, book chapters and memoirs complement these works.

Bill remains a scholarly ambassador for the UK and for Geography throughout northern Europe, where he still regularly visits many universities and old friends (He returned from a wedding in Finland to attend the dinner). His expertise continues to be sought on doctoral juries and committees for professorial appointments in Scandinavia and Finland. Honorary doctorates have come from Uppsala, Helsinki, Lund and Turku,



Presentation to Bill (including straw for the horse) by Roger Kain ('67), with Richard Munton looking on.

as well as the White Rose of Finland, and Pole Star of Sweden. He is a Chevalier of the Swedish Order of Vasa, and a Commander of the Order of the Lion of Finland. Bill is also very well known in London's north European diplomatic and business communities, and continues to promote north European interests through active membership of numerous societies; for example, he was Chair of the Anglo-Finnish Society for three decades (1966-95).

He is also a tireless advocate of Geography in the UK, having been President of the Institute of British Geographers (1971) and of the Geographical Association (1981), Honorary Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society (1967-77), then Vice-President (1977-81) and Honorary Vice-President. He must have delivered more lectures to branches of the GA than any other British academic. He has been awarded the Founders Medal of the RGS (1980), the Wahlberg Gold Medal of the Swedish Geographical Society (1988), the Fennia Medal of the Finnish Geographical Society (1988), and the Research Medal of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (1988). He is also a Fellow of the British Academy.

Bill's contribution to the discipline of Geography and promoting international understanding is enormous. He has adopted other lands, and has been adopted by them. Without doubt, he is truly a great international geographer and an example to us all.

Bill's latest publication is an autobiographical account of the origins and development of his interest in Finland. Available on the Departmental website at: www.geog.ucl.ac.uk



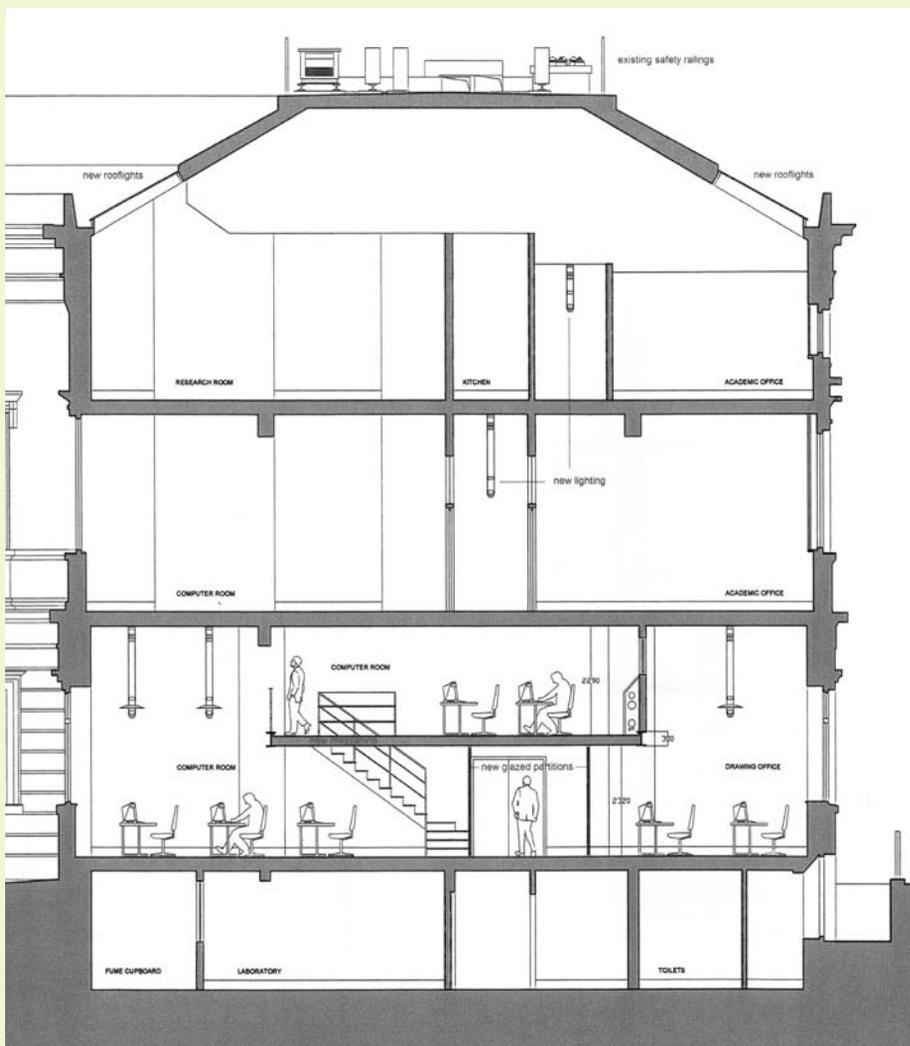
Pearson Progress

Three years after the Former Students' Centenary Reunion, we are planning another get-together in the summer of 2006, to celebrate our return to the College rectangle, 27 years after we left Foster Court for Bedford Way. Here, we sketch the background to the event, and offer the architect's impressions of what you might expect to see next year.

Those who received the department's Centenary Booklet¹, will have read the story of our physical expansion over the past ten years or so. Although about two-thirds of the department is currently housed at 26 Bedford Way, Chandler House and Remax House were added in the late 1990s. At the time, this extra space, 7-8 minutes away in opposite directions, was crucial for our computer-

based research and the development of Masters teaching. A more unfortunate effect, of course, was fragmentation, both academically and socially, so we have been looking for the opportunity to reunite once more in a single building.

The Pearson Building doesn't quite achieve this goal, at least yet, but will allow Chandler and Remax activities to be reunited into one site in the centre of the College. In fact, our front door will be on the immediate left as you enter the Front Quad from Gower Street. Pearson will house new computer labs for remote sensing, environmental modelling and GIS. Some Bedford Way activities will also be relocated, including the Environmental Change Research Centre, with the department's science labs, some of the 'Environment and Society' group, and most administrative offices. About



Architects drawing showing a slice through the Pearson Building perpendicular to Gower Street.



Rear elevation of the Pearson Building from the Main Quad.

40% of the department will remain in Bedford Way, especially undergraduate teaching support and most human geography staff, but there is a prospect of moving these to join up with Pearson within 3-4 years.

The move offers real opportunities to develop our research and teaching

capacity, not just by increasing laboratory and computing space but also through collaboration between our different specialisms within Geography. Three new inter-disciplinary College Institutes are also being set up in the building with Geography as the 'flagship department': The Institute of Earth Dynamics; Chorley Institute of Spatial Information; and

Environment Institute. The Departments of Geomatic Engineering, Earth Sciences and Space and Climate Physics are all nearby, and there will be closer access to the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, (CASA), and Chemistry, where we share the mass spectrometry capacities of the Bloomsbury Environment Isotope Facility.

¹ Geography at University College London: A Centennial Report. Copies still available.

Global Security and Health

One of our new staff members, **Alan Ingram**, has a special interest in how global politics and security problems affect policies to alleviate health and disease. This builds on his work before coming to UCL with the Nuffield Trust, where he ran a programme of policy research and development to examine relationships between health, foreign policy and security in the context of globalisation. He continues to act as editor and advisor for this programme.

Alan is concerned with how the priority now given to security issues is affecting international approaches to disease in three particular ways:

- How responses to infectious disease epidemics and global health crises are influenced by fear.
- How post-9/11 policy shifts have affected global health policies more generally.
- How these changes influence attitudes to international mobility, particularly in the case of the UK and migration policy.

Alan worked for his PhD at Cambridge on post-Soviet Russian nationalism before broadening his interests to geopolitics and globalisation. At UCL he has taken on the second year course on the 'Political Geography of European Integration', as well as convening first year 'International Problems', which focuses on the challenges of globalisation. He will also contribute next year to the core teaching of our new MSc in Geographies of

Globalisation. Elsewhere in UCL, he is teaching medical students in the International Health and Medical Education Centre about international health and security.



A f r i c a i n F o c u s

During the past year Africa has been almost constantly in the news. Our long-established commitment to research and teaching on the continent has been reinforced in recent years through new appointments. Here we summarize some of their main current activities.



Ben Page joined the department in 2003. He has wide interests in Africa, and especially the politics of urban water supply in Nigeria and Cameroon. He is currently co-leading a major ESRC-sponsored study of 'hometown associations' in Africa and Britain. Here he explains the background to this work.

One intriguing fact that has emerged from the hullabaloo of G8-inspired arguments about African debt forgiveness and increased aid is that between three and five times more money is returned to Africa by Africans living in Europe and the USA than is given as foreign aid. It often assumed that these remittances are merely 'wasted' on consumption. They are spent on the daily food and clothing needs of the family in Africa, or on home improvements, rather than the productive enterprises or social projects usually taken as the measure of social and economic development. Can and should this potentially important flow of capital from the diaspora be steered towards development goals such as building schools and hospitals? In fact, it turns out that, contrary to the doubters, this is already happening.

For at least the last 50 years many of the money flows have been organised through various forms of association. These include 'hometown associations',

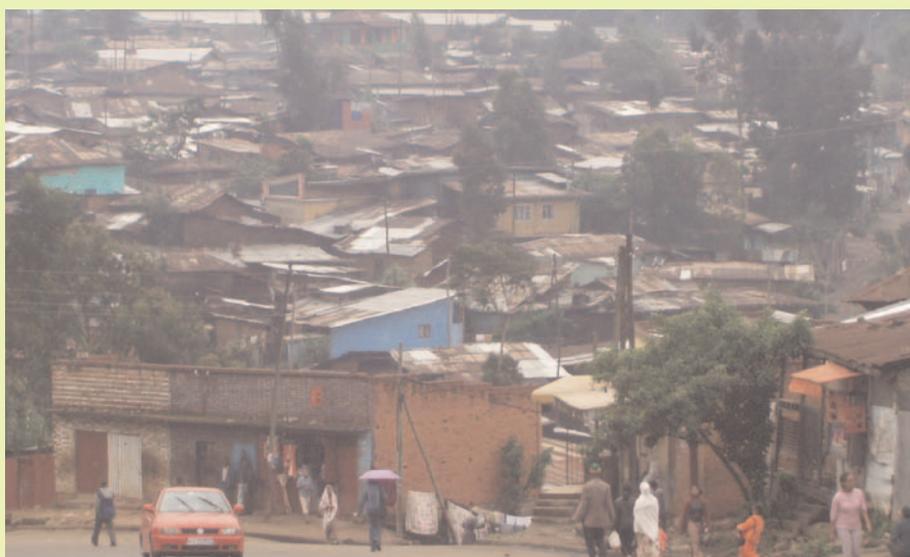
which originally allowed migrants to the big cities from small towns to keep in touch with each other, often just to eat together, gossip, dance and sing. They also took on more practical purposes, such as helping newcomers to find accommodation and employment, or providing a trustworthy context for saving money and obtaining credit. Most had a 'trouble bank' to help with hospital bills or funeral costs. They even began to provide scholarships for talented individuals to travel to good schools or universities.

Now, as the diaspora has expanded to the West and the Middle East, hometown associations have achieved a global reach. There are regular monthly meetings of Nigerian and Cameroonian hometown associations across NE and SE London, and in Milton Keynes, Cardiff and Manchester. They continue their social functions, but have also developed a specifically developmental agenda, contributing money to buy school desks, hospital equipment and water supply infrastructure for their hometowns.

With Ben Lampert at UCL and colleagues from the University of Leicester, we are being supported by the ESRC to investigate these activities. Could they perhaps contribute more significantly to

Africa's development? We are looking specifically at associations in Nigeria, Cameroon and Tanzania, through interviews and archival work in Africa and the UK. We want to trace the activities of a sample of associations and quantify the money flows associated with them. They also operate in a complex political context, often being used by politically ambitious individuals to harness influence in African communities. They have to negotiate with governmental agencies, even though their members are often fierce critics of the authorities. One of our case study associations, for example, equipped a local hospital mortuary, but is now in dispute with the Ministry of Health over the ownership of the building and the profits from its operation.

So, the global African diaspora are already involved in African development through these associations. This has many implications for their own understanding of their citizenship rights and interpretation of home. Like a Former Students' Newsletter, they reflect the universally powerful forces of happy memories and loyalty to place! The UK government has also recently raised the possibility of using these associations as a conduit for international development aid. This research project will examine the potential value of such a proposal.



The dustiest place on Earth

Last spring, Andrew Warren and Martin Todd, combining their geomorphological and climatological expertise, organised the first field research into what makes the Bodélé depression, a remote ancient lake bed in northern Chad, the dustiest place on Earth. It is also by far the largest source of mineral dust in the world, and is much dustier even than the 'brown cloud' that hangs over parts of China and India.

Around 6,000 years ago, the Bodélé was covered by Mega-Chad, a huge freshwater lake, bigger than the present Caspian Sea. The lake gradually desiccated, perhaps disappearing 2,000 years ago, exposing large areas of diatomite, a deposit formed by tiny

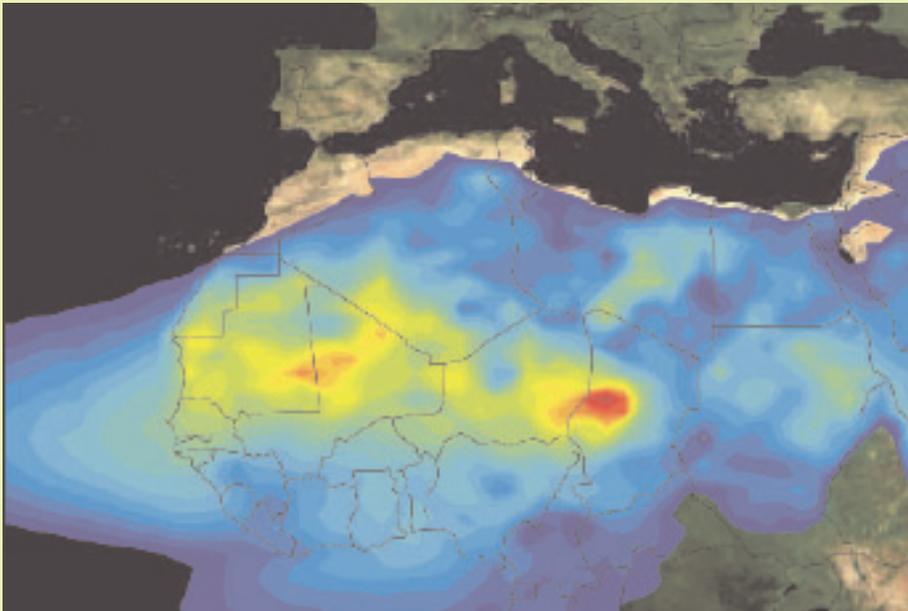


freshwater silicious organisms. Today, this injects 200–400 million tonnes of dust into the Harmattan wind, which then cloaks Western Africa and beyond through the winter and spring.

Its effect on global climate and possible climate change remain uncertain. If the dust reflects solar radiation, it would cool the Earth. If it absorbs solar and terrestrial radiation, it could heat it up. Martin explains. 'The balance of these processes depends on many factors, notably the amount, size, shape and

colour of the dust'. What is certain is that, 'Dust also carries nutrients, such as iron, potassium, phosphorus and calcium, and is a major supplier of these to the oceans. Bodélé dust is thought to be the main source of nutrients in Sahelian farming systems, and forests in Ghana, and the North Eastern Amazon where it is taken by transatlantic winds.'

Despite its crucial contribution to terrestrial and oceanic nutrients, however, the only research so far has been based on the analysis of satellite imagery, partly because the region was in a war zone until recently. According to Andrew Warren, however, 'The production of dust depends on two factors: the erodibility of the surface and the erosivity of the wind. Without field observations we could only speculate about these factors, or rely on satellite observations without ground truth.' Grants from the Gilchrist Educational Trust and Royal Geographical Society allowed a group from UCL, Birkbeck, Salford and Oxford to carry out the three-week Bodélé Dust Experiment (BoDEx 2005). For fuller account, see *Nature* 434, (14 April 2005) pp. 816 – 819.



Ethiopia Twenty Years On

Twenty years after the world was alerted by the famous Live Aid concert to the plight of millions of people starving in Ethiopia, a team of UCL undergraduate geographers traveled to Addis Ababa in the summer of 2004 to find out how social conditions in its major city have developed.

Sam Heslop, Derek Dyson, Jo Crampton & Roz Davies spent seven weeks in Addis carrying out research into

people's way of life, including the quality of drinking water, the perceptions and realities of healthcare, the importance of agriculture in the city, and the informal business sector. They interviewed market traders, with the help of students from the University of Addis Ababa.

The expedition was supported by the Royal Geographical Society-Institute of British Geographers (backed by WEXAS International), the Department's Eric Brown Fund, and sponsorships from British Airways, MeesPierson and SpecSavers.

Sam Heslop and shoe-shiners in Addis Ababa.



Remembering Frank Carter

A score of family, friends and colleagues met in the Maconochie Room on the afternoon of 4 July, to remember Professor Frank Carter (1938-2001) who taught the geography of east-central Europe at UCL and later at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies for 35 years. The gathering was a belated launch of *Foreign Direct Investment and Regional Development in East Central Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, a collection of essays in Frank's memory (Ashgate, 2005), edited by David Turnock of the University of Leicester. The book contains perhaps the last essay Frank wrote, assembling work from his final international project.

Many former students will remember Frank's lectures, dealing with the lives of ordinary people based on his many visits to east European countries and his remarkable linguistic expertise. He combined lived experience, hard and raw, with policies and theory. As Professor Emeritus David Hooson (Berkeley, California) wrote recently, 'Frank was one of a kind'.

At the launch meeting Mrs Krystyna Carter announced that she wished to make a generous donation for the establishment of an annual postgraduate prize to be awarded in Frank's memory.
HDC



Julie Hughes (Economics/Geography): 1979

Teaching – Head of Business at Shrewsbury Sixth Form College. Love cricket and being outside.

Grant Keir: 1979

After several years as a left-wing political activist, I started in the film and TV industry in the mid-1980s as a researcher at ITN. I went on to write, develop and produce several hours of documentary for Faction Films Ltd. I am co-founder and director of the Sheffield-based Faction North Ltd, established in 1998 with a specific remit to develop and produce drama projects. My second short film., 'Relativity', won the UIP 'Best Short Film' at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2002. I now live in Sheffield with my partner, Virginia Heath, and our 13 year old daughter Stella. I work as a Programme Executive for Inspiral, a Sheffield-based business accelerator, specialising in helping companies in the creative and digital industries to grow. I cycle, play 7-a-side football, love music and enjoy cooking, especially Thai food.

Max Locatelli (Economics and Geography): 1979

After UCL I spent a year in Norwich at UEA and another 9 months in London (living at Spencer Rise, an extension of Max Rayne's V corridor) working as a hospital porter, where I met Heather (now my wife) who is a New Zealander. We spent 3 years travelling and working in New York City, across the US, Los Angeles, New Zealand and Italy. In 1984 I began my career in high tech in Milan for Olivetti. In 1986 I moved to Boston to work for a networking start-up and where I spent 7 years before returning to the UK in 1993 working for CompuServe and moving to Oxford in 1998. I have now moved to Cisco Systems. Heather and I have two sons, Alex, 17, and Henry, 15.

Jane Rogers: 1980

Primary school teacher in north London for 10 years, lecturer in primary education at the Institute of Education for 15 years. Recently returned to teaching in primary school. Two children aged 10 and 7. Living in Islington.

News about Former Students

Among those attending the College Alumnus 1979-81 reunion in June 2005:

Christine Barry: 1981

After 10 years in market research and advertising I moved into academic research. I am a healthcare researcher at Brunel University, got my PhD in 2003, and am currently funded by the government to do research into users of alternative medicine. I recently got engaged to Dave and we are buying a house together in Chiswick. We're hoping to get married next year and travel for three months. I'm trying to keep up with one country visited for every year of my life. Latest (and best) trip was to Bhutan, the Himalayan Kingdom.

Janet Beecheno (née Matthews): 1979

Living and working in Dorking in Surrey. Since graduation have worked in the Drinks Trade dealing with logistics and stock management.

Lynda David (née Prosser): 1979

I have lived in Vancouver, Washington, USA since 1984 but enjoy trips back to the UK to visit friends. I work as a senior transportation planner for the regional planning agency in Southwest Washington and Portland, Oregon. I am married to Jim and we have a 9-year old son. From our house we have good view of Mt. St Helens venting and steaming.

We would be delighted to hear from more of you.

Contact Peter Wood or email: contacts@geog.ucl.ac.uk

News in Brief

UCL Student awarded top RGS Dissertation Prize

Laura Pitcher, who graduated in 2004, was awarded the Royal Geographical Society-Institute of British Geographers Alfred Steers Dissertation Prize, 'for the best undergraduate dissertation submitted for a first geography degree'. Her thesis was entitled "'It's bringing it all back...': Exploring (Re)presentation and Epiphany in Gap-Year Material Culture".

Honours

Professor Gerald Manners OBE, New Year Honours 2004. Charitable services.

Professor Mike Batty CBE (Director of Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis): Birthday Honours 2004, Services to Geography.

Professor Roger Kain CBE (1964-67; Montefiore Professor of Geography, University of Exeter): Birthday Honours, 2005: Services to scholarship.

Professor Hugh Clout was awarded a *Doctorat honoris causa* by the Sorbonne in 2004, the first ever to be awarded to a British Geographer.

A Very Short Introduction to Global Warming

Mark Maslin's latest book is an informative discussion of the predicted impacts of global warming, based on the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The book presents its findings for a general readership for the first time and discusses the politics of global warming and how we can adapt to climate change and mitigate its worst effects. It is published by Oxford University Press, 2005 at £6.99 (Paper).

1957 Undergraduate Year Reunion

For September 2007, Kay Jackson (née Shepherd) and Melvyn Reynolds are planning a 50th anniversary reunion in London of undergraduates who entered the department in 1957. If you are interested, contact Kay at jbjackson@onetel.com, or 'phone 01748 884426.

Staff News

Retirements:

The demography of staff recruitment since the 1960s decrees that several old-established UCL Geography staff are about to reach retirement age. In line with current debate over the age of retirement, few intend actually to disappear from the UCL scene entirely. Some may take the 'Hugh Prince' route. Hugh retired in 1993, but is still in the department for 1-2 days most weeks. Others may follow Gerald Manners, who retired seven years ago, but is now Chair of The Association of Charitable Foundations (see also 'Honours'). Bill Mead's somewhat daunting example is also before us! So these accounts are progress reports, not premature obituaries.



Not many students know that **John Adams** began his research career as a specialist on Brazil and West Africa. In those days he was a quantifier but, after he came to UCL in 1970, he forged a reputation for challenging the misuse of quantification, especially in transport planning. This sceptical, not to say mischievous, frame of mind led him to challenge accepted wisdoms: for example, that the costs and benefits of transport development can be objectively measured, or that safety helmets or seat belts save lives. For at least 30 years he has been critical of the tyranny of the motor vehicle, whether in the planning of cities or constraining the freedom of children. His arguments have moved on

to address the wider treatment of risk in a world where science is unable to provide certain answers about many critical issues for the future. His 1995 book, *Risk*, has been credited with changing both political and public attitudes to the way we see the future. Retirement for John is anything but quiet, as he follows a busy round of lecture commitments and conferences across the globe.



Carolyn Harrison came to UCL as an undergraduate in 1961, and has stayed ever since, collecting the full set of BSc, PhD, lectureship, senior lectureship, and a personal Chair. Her main focus has been biogeography and ecology, but her work widened with Jacqui Burgess, to examine how people interact with their environment and may become more engaged in conservation planning. She has also been active in urban ecology, the subject of her inaugural lecture, not least as Chair of The Camden Groundwork Trust in the 1990s (see our 2003 Newsletter). Carolyn will be remembered with affection by past cohorts of undergraduates, and by students on the MSc Conservation programme, for her work in both the lecture room and the field. She was a superb departmental tutor, twice, combining tough efficiency and human understanding in just the right mix. Carolyn will continue to do some teaching but also plans to devote more time to singing and music in general.

Tony O'Connor will be remembered by many students for his commitment to

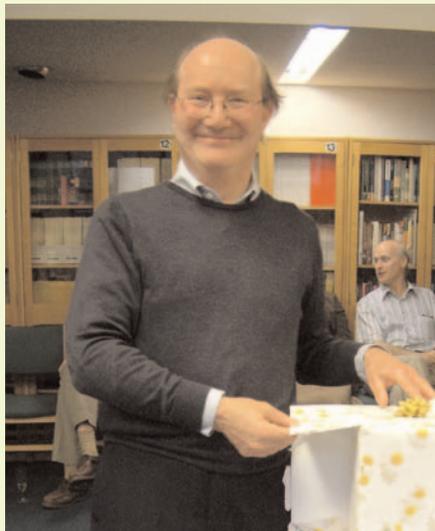


Africa and the understanding of global poverty. This goes back to his PhD work at Cambridge in the early 1960s, and teaching at Makerere University, Uganda, before coming to UCL in 1968. He always gave an enormous amount of his time to students, eager to discuss and support their work. His aim was to challenge easy assumptions about Africa. Some found this frustrating, but many were inspired, and the message seems even more relevant today than at any time in the past 30 years. Tony took retirement in 2004, but has continued to teach and keep the UCL Library geography collection up-to-date, while also searching out bargains to sustain the Department's Reading Room on its meagre budget.



Andrew Warren's retirement in the summer of 2003 might hardly have been noticed, since he has continued his research and is very often at his desk in Chandler House. He even took part in a gruelling expedition earlier this year in Chad to 'The dustiest place on Earth' (see

page 5). Andrew came to UCL in 1964 from Cambridge, where his PhD was on desert geomorphology, based in The Qoz region of Kordofan. Over the years he taught geomorphology, the geography of soils, and environmental conservation, playing a major role in running our highly successful joint MSc Conservation programme (at that time with Botany). Andrew carried out much work in Africa and the Middle East, and ran fieldclasses in many parts of Britain and abroad. Whatever the occasion, it seems he always returned with some new, often riotous, travellers' tale! He now concentrates on researching dunes, desertification, and land degradation, especially in Niger.



Peter Wood has been something of a departmental all-rounder for forty years, but has to stop, at least nominally, in September 2005. He came to UCL from Birmingham (shortly preceding Richard Munton and Alan Gilbert) as an industrial geographer. His research later shifted from West Midlands manufacturing to the London service sector. More recently, his frame of reference also became distinctly European, collaborating with colleagues in various other EU countries on international business services developments. Closer to home, his interest in London was built on his first year lectures and fieldclasses. His latest book is a GA publication for geography students on *Central London* (2004). Peter was B.Sc (Econ) tutor in his earlier years, and remained an advocate for the Joint Degree through changing fashions in both disciplines. He was also undergraduate tutor and admissions

tutor, and College Schools Liaison Officer in the 1980s. His College experience helped when he was Head of Department between 1997 and 2002, as the department expanded to new spaces and achieved another top (5*) research grade. He is likely to continue teaching and writing, while also being interested in what former students are doing as editor of this Newsletter!

Comings and goings:

During the past year, staff departures include **Linda McDowell** (to Chair at Oxford), **Alun Jones** (to Chair at Leicester) and **Martin Dodge** (to Lectureship at Manchester). **Paul Saich** will be pursuing his interests in teaching, through a DfES-sponsored training course for advanced science and mathematics teaching.

New arrivals include **Alan Ingram** (from Cambridge/Nuffield Foundation – see page 3) and **Ben Page** (from Oxford/UCL – see page 4).

Matt Disney (from Birkbeck/UCL), Lecturer in Remote Sensing, with interests in the interaction of radiation with vegetation, and how this can be modelled and exploited to quantify and understand the terrestrial biosphere.

Jan Axmacher (Hohenheim, Germany), Lecturer of Landscape Ecology, is especially interested in the functioning of tropical ecosystems. His PhD was undertaken in east Africa, but he has more recently been working on the development of sustainable land use systems in the North China Plain.

Jurgen Essletzbichler (From Southampton/UCLA), originally from Vienna, completed his MA and PhD at UCLA. He is an economic geographer with research and teaching interests in globalisation, and technological and regional employment change.

See our webpage:
<http://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/news/alumni.htm>
or contact us through our email address:
contacts@geog.ucl.ac.uk