Journal of Transport Geography 20 (2012) 92–93

Contents lists available at SciVerse ScienceDirect

Journal of Transport Geography

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jtrangeo

Transport Geography Research Group Page

1. 40 years of Transport Geography research

40 years ago a small group of transport geography researchers secured the Institute of British Geographers' (IBG) approval for the creation of a limited life Transport Geography Working Group (TGWG) to provide a focus for research in this expanding sub-discipline. TGWG's first symposium was held 40 years ago this month at the IBG Annual Conference in Aberdeen in January 1972 convened by John Farrington with research papers from Peter Jones, Richard Knowles, Brian Turton, Pat White and Ian Wallace (Humphrys, 1972). Following a symposium on *Passenger movement in the conurbation* at the 1973 IBG Conference in Birmingham, TGWG decided to apply for full Study Group status which was granted by IBG in 1974 (Knowles, 1973).

The Transport Geography Study Group (TGSG) quickly established a pattern of holding a symposium on a topical theme at every IBG Annual Conference in addition to several stand alone conferences, with some focussing on postgraduate research. Conference reports and TGSG reports were published regularly in the journal *Area*. TGSG also published its own in-house series of research conference proceedings from 1978 to 1994 (see Hoyle and Knowles, 1992, 1998). In 1995 TGSG became the Transport Geography Research Group (TGRG) following the merger of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) with the IBG. The sub-discipline widened the scope of its research in the 1980s in response to Peter Rimmer's (1978) call for a more humanistic transport geography. Transport deregulation and privatisation from the late 1970s in particular provided widespread opportunities for analysing impacts of transport policy changes.

From 1990 several books were published on behalf of TGSG by external publishers including Tolley (1990, 1997) on Greening Urban Transport, Whitelegg (1992) on Traffic Congestion, Hall (1993) on Central and Eastern Europe, Gibb (1994) on the Channel Tunnel, Graham (1995) on Air Transport, Tolley and Turton (1995) on Transport Systems, policy and planning and Hoyle (1996) on Cityports.

TGSG's growing international reach was celebrated by two significant breakthroughs in the early 1990s (Hall, 1992). First, the publication of *Modern Transport Geography* (Hoyle and Knowles, 1992, 1998), with contributions from an international range of transport geographers, provided a contemporary textbook for undergraduate geography degree courses. Second, TGSG created the sub-discipline's first international research journal, the *Journal of Transport Geography* (JTG) with Richard Knowles as Editor, and with the support of the Association of American Geographers' Transportation Geography Specialty Group who nominated an Associate Editor. JTG was published initially by Butterworth–Heinemann, and from 1995 by Elsevier. JTG focuses on transport and spatial change (Knowles, 1993). It provides an international forum for research analysing, from a spatial perspective and relating to geographic theory, the impact of transport policies and infrastructure, the development of transport networks, the operation and use of transport systems, the demand for transport, transport and welfare need, sustainability issues and transport and leisure.

Since the Millennium, TGRG has developed into a major international research cluster with active links with transport geography research groups, for example in the USA, Germany, France and Hong Kong, and with a Transport Geography Report from different countries in each Issue of JTG. Since 2000, Ashgate Publishing has produced a series of research monographs and edited books on Transport and Mobility under the joint Editorship of Brian Graham (succeeded by Markus Hesse in 2009) and Richard Knowles. The ***Hoyle Lecture in Transport Geography***, named after former TGSG Chair Brian Hoyle, was first presented in 2001 with John Adams discussing 'Risk' in transport. The Hoyle Lecture is now sponsored by Ashgate Publishing and is an annual feature of the RGS-IBG Conference. The annual ***Alan Hay Award in Transport Geography***, named after the eminent British professor, was established in 2008 to recognise significant lifetime achievement in the sub-discipline with Brian Graham, David Banister and Richard Knowles as the first three recipients.

Key TGRG publications since the Millennium include two critical analyses, by a group of transport policy experts, of the United Kingdom Labour Government's Integrated Transport Policy (Docherty and Shaw, 2003, 2008) and an important new university level textbook *Transport Geographies: Mobilities, flows and spaces* (Knowles et al., 2008). Transport Geography has become more outward looking in recent years and is now more engaged with contemporary human geography partly through the 'mobilities' agenda (Knowles et al., 2008; Shaw and Hesse, 2010). JTG expanded from four to six Issues a year in 2006 and has developed into a top rated international research journal. On the basis of citation scores, JTG was ranked internationally by Thomson Reuters in 2011 as the 7th highest transport research journal (out of 23) and the 16th highest geography journal (out of 65).

After 40 years activity of TGRG and its predecessors, Transport Geography is now a highly respected, well established and vibrant sub-discipline of both transport and geography in Britain and worldwide. Much of the credit for this is due to TGRG's officers and members and particularly to a series of pro-active Chairs (Table 1) who have led the transformation of Transport Geography from a small national research cluster in the 1970s into a major international research cluster in 2012 highly rated worldwide by both transport and geography researchers.

2. RGS-IBG 2011 Conference

TGRG convened 10 sessions spread throughout the RGS-IBG's 2011 Annual Conference held in London from 31st August to 2nd September. Day One focussed on young researchers with two sessions on Postgraduate Research in Transport – on Regional Transport Policy and Governance; and on Behaviour Change and

doi:10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2011.11.002

Table 1
TGWG, TGSG and TGRG Chairs.

Pat White (Salford) 1972–1977
Roy Greenwood (Swansea) 1977–1980
Alan Williams (Birmingham) 1980–1983
Brian Turton (Keele) 1983–1987
Richard Knowles (Salford) 1987–1990
Brian Hoyle (Southampton) 1990–1993
Derek Hall (Sunderland) 1993–1996
Jose Smith (Salford) 1996–1999
Brian Graham (Ulster) 1999–2002
Jon Shaw (Aberdeen) 2002–2005
Iain Docherty (Glasgow) 2005–2011
Peter Jones (University College London) from 2011

Individual Travel Choices – followed by an Early Career Researchers Symposium on Progress in Transport Geography. The conference's first day culminated with Markus Hesse's 2011 Hoyle Lecture in Transport Geography, sponsored by Ashgate Publishing, a thought provoking presentation on his theme of 'Cities and flows' followed by a lively discussion. Day Two included two sessions on New Perspectives on Walking and Cycling followed by two joint sessions with the Political Geography Research Group on The Politics of Daily Mobility: constructing the mobile citizen; and embodiments and materialities of citizenship. TGRG rectified its exclusive emphasis in recent years on passenger transport research by convening two sessions on Sustainable Freight Transport on the final day of the conference. Details of papers presented can be accessed on TGRG's website www.abdn.ac.uk/tgrg.

3. 2011 Hay Award

Professor John Farrington (Aberdeen) was presented with the 2011 Hay Award for significant lifetime achievement in Transport Geography at TGRG's Annual General Meeting during the 2011 Conference. John Farrington's wide ranging, highly regarded and often collaborative research has focussed on accessibility, mobility and social inclusion, rural transport and the potential for railway renaissance. He had presented the Brian Hoyle Lecture in 2005 on 'Accessibility: A New Narrative and a Critique'.

4. TGRG Postgraduate Prize 2011

Paul Hebes (DLR-Institute of Transport Research, Berlin) was the winner of the TGRG Postgraduate Prize 2011 for the best paper presented at a TGRG sponsored session during the RGS-IBG 2011 Conference. His paper was on 'What drives service traffic? an empirical research on corporate travel behaviour'. A Judges Mention was made for the paper by Jason Monios (Edinburgh Napier University) on 'Developing freight hub concepts to overcome double peripherality: identifying institutional issues'.

5. New TGRG Chair

Professor Peter Jones (University College, London) was elected as TGRG's Chair to follow the exceptional service of Iain Docherty (Glasgow) who had served as Chair since 2005. Kate Pangbourne (Aberdeen) and Lisa Davison (Ulster) continue as Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

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