Journal of Transport Geography 19 (2011) 466

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Transport Geography

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

TGRG page

Transport Geography, in common with most academic endeavours, is facing the austerity challenge. As potential sources of funding contract, there is a danger that academic research will inexorably find itself narrowing in on approaches and issues that are preferred by funders rather than continuing with the breadth of perspective that has been such a distinctive feature of transport geography in the UK.

Nevertheless, Transport Geography Research Group (TGRG) members continue to research diverse aspects of transport and mobility in the global context. At the Universities Transport Study Group 2011 conference held in Milton Keynes in January, a number of TGRG members presented papers.

Also in January Dr. Jillian Anable of the Centre for Transport Research, University of Aberdeen, played a central role in explaining the role of travel behaviour to the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, which held a seminar on behaviour change and travel behaviour in January this year, to inform its inquiry into Behaviour Change (http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/science-and-technology-committee/inquiries/behaviour/). She outlined how technological 'solutions', such as a wholesale shift to electric vehicles, will require far-reaching changes in behaviour. This underlines how technocratic options, whilst necessary, will not be sufficient if soft policy options, such as Smarter Choices policies, are cut or under-resourced. There are still areas of research required to support the evidence base for designing, implementing and evaluating hard and soft policy options.

Over the course of 2011 TGRG is working to improve its communications to and between its members, and is placing a particular emphasis on younger members and Early Career Researchers in order to ensure that geography continues to have a place in transport research. It has also relaunched its website (www.abdn.ac.uk/tgrg).

TGRG's main gathering place is the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference. For 2011, we have planned a number of interesting and varied sessions for RGS-IBG 2011. This includes a vibrant session on sustainable freight, organized by Professor Richard Knowles (University of Salford) and Dr. Allan Woodburn (University of Westminster). Professor Colin Pooley (University of Lancaster) has organized a session bringing together the research outputs of three substantial multi-centre research projects on walking and cycling. The post-graduate rep, Angela Curl (University of Aberdeen) has worked with Dr. Lisa Davison (University of Loughborough) to put together a large programme of post-graduate student and early career researcher papers along with a seminar in conjunction with colleagues from the German transport group AK Verkehr. The politics of mobility are featured, in partnership with the Political Geography Research Group and there is also a session on the politics of daily mobility organized by Drs. Justin Spinney and Rachel Aldred (University of East London) and Dr. Katrina Myrvang-Brown (The James Hutton Centre, Aberdeen). A further session on 'The politics of mobility – transport after the financial crisis' is being convened by Karen Lucas (University of Oxford), Iain Docherty (University of Glasgow) and Markus Hesse (University of Luxembourg).

We look forward to meeting many colleagues at the conference: further information can be found at www.rgs.org. We also encourage members to attend other gatherings of transport academics in the UK such as the annual UTSG conference held in January. In 2012 this will be in Aberdeen. As a result of the London Olympics in 2012, the date of the RGS-IBG conference has been brought forward to early July (3–5), and it will be held in the Scottish capital at the University of Edinburgh.

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doi:10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2011.02.001