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TGRG page

The TGRG-sponsored sessions at the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) Annual Conferences are now among the most significant—at least in terms of numbers of speakers—of all the sessions at these events and provide an excellent opportunity for delegates to catch up on developments in the sub-discipline from around the world. A full conference report of the TGRG sessions at RGS-IBG 2005 will appear in the next issue of the *Journal of Transport Geography*, but suffice it to say here that the collection of high quality papers presented on a diverse range of topics from a number of different perspectives added weight to the feeling that the Group is reasserting itself both within the discipline of geography and academia more generally. Thanks are again due to the *Arbeitskreis Verkehr* of the German Geographical Society, and the Transportation Geography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers, for helping us to arrange the most recent sessions, in London.

Looking back over recent TGRG pages in this journal, it is easy to discern a growing confidence among group members about the strength, diversity and impact of our work. In addition to regular updates about day to day developments, reports on successful TGRG ventures are increasingly commonplace, as are calls for new types and areas of research, and suggestions of putative research agendas. I anticipate that future TGRG pages will continue in a similar vein. We should shortly be in a position to announce the production of a major new international transport geography text book with a highly renowned publisher, and the coming months should also see work beginning on a second edition of the 2003 volume *A New Deal for Transport?* and a major development at the *Journal of Transport Geography*. Geographers from the TGRG and—very encouragingly—a number of our sister RGS-IBG research groups are picking up exciting new research agendas and we look forward to welcoming more members of, for example, the Economic Geography Research Group, the Cultural Geography Research Group and the Historical Geography Research Group to our conference sessions, and to the pages of the *Journal of Transport Geography*.

Among these exciting research agendas—and in addition to those identified in previous TGRG pages—one I suspect will carry on advancing at pace is that of 'mobility'. Sociologist John Urry has been instrumental in raising the profile of mobility research. Writing in the journal *Sociology*, he notes that although geographers are concerned with the study of transportation we have largely omitted to research "the social bases of travel and of its likely transformations..." For Urry, the "critique of 'hypermobility' needs to examine just how and why there is an apparent desire to travel physically..." A host of approaches and perspectives suited to the investigation of this phenomenon spring to mind, but one, advanced by Urry and subsequently taken up by others associated with the Group, is linking the desire/need to travel with the notion of social capital. A recent re-examination of existing research papers has revealed not only that the maintenance of social capital and networks within and between communities *depends* on mobility, but also that the existence of strong social capital and networks are themselves important in *conferring* mobility on certain social groups. The potential for transport geographers to develop projects using this and other approaches with scholars and practitioners from disciplines across the social sciences is obviously considerable, and the ESRC's renewed interest in transport as a research area will of course help in this regard. Indeed, we hope that the recent call for expressions of interest in the competition to host the ESRC's new transport research centre(s) will be capitalised on by members of the TGRG (see www.esrc.ac.uk). So with this in mind I look forward to reporting further TGRG developments in 2006.

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