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TGRG page

1. The Alan Hay Award

On 31 October 2008 the Committee of the Transport Geography Research Group of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) announced the recipient of the inaugural Alan Hay Award for Contributions to Transport Geography. The award is equivalent to the Ullman Award of the Transportation Geography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers, and scholars from across Europe are eligible for the prize. I am delighted to report that Alan Hay himself presented the award to Brian Graham, Professor Emeritus at the University of Ulster. Brian, of course, is very well known in the international transport geography community for his work on the geography of air transport, and his UK colleagues will also be very aware of the unstinting support he has given to the Transport Geography Research Group in a range of capacities, including all three officer positions of Chair, Secretary and, latterly, Treasurer.

Brian was awarded a Chair in Human Geography by the University of Ulster in 1996, having begun his academic career nearly a quarter of a century earlier after obtaining his PhD from Queen's University in 1972. To date he has published over 100 articles and book chapters, and written and edited numerous books with a variety of publishers; in addition he has authored policy reports and served as a policy advisor to government bodies within the UK. Perhaps his single most significant contribution to academic transport geography is his landmark book *Geography and Air Transport* (Wiley, 1995), a worthy successor to Ken Sealy's *Geography of Air Transport*. Brian is currently writing a new book, *Air Transport: A Critical Geography*, for Ashgate Publishing, providing a timely analysis of the huge changes in air transport in recent years.

What makes Brian's achievements in transport geography all the more impressive is that he was a relatively late starter: he began his career as a historical geographer and subsequently developed a formidable reputation in historio-cultural aspects of the discipline through his work on place, heritage and identity with regard to both his native island of Ireland and Europe more broadly. Indeed, it is in these areas that much of his work has been published and most of his grant income – which runs into millions of pounds – has been secured. Common to all of Brian's work, however, is incisive, authoritative and influential analysis (not to mention wonderfully constructed prose), and reflecting his standing within the discipline he was appointed a section editor for Elsevier's upcoming *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* mega-project. This naturally included responsibility for the transport geography section.

For his many achievements in transport geography the Committee of the Transport Geography Research Group had no hesitation in recommending Brian unanimously as the deserving recipient of the first Alan Hay Award. I am sure you will wish to join me in offering him the very warmest of congratulations.

2. Major geography conferences in 2009

As usual there are several transport geography sessions at the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, being held in March on this occasion in Las Vegas, Nevada. Calls for papers for transport and related sessions at the 2009 RGS-IBG conference in Manchester in late August will appear, on this page and elsewhere, as the year progresses. TGRG committee members look forward to meeting *Journal of Transport Geography* readers at these events.

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