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The transport geography research group at the 2015 RGS-IBG conference

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The Transport Geography Research Group (TGRG) continues to grow, with almost 200 signed up fellows/members of RGS-IBG identifying themselves as transport geographers. We, once again, had a busy programme of sessions at the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference in September 2015. As usual on a three year rotation, the conference was held outside of London at the University of Exeter. Despite the additional accessibility challenges the location presented for many attendees, we were delighted to sponsor a broad range of sessions across the spectrum of transport geography, including two co-sponsored sessions with the Postgraduate Forum and the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group. The conference theme was *Geographies of the Anthropocene* and several of the ten TGRG-sponsored sessions, including the annual Hoyle lecture, reflected on this topic.

The Hoyle lecture, by Gina Porter (Durham University), was extremely well attended. Entitled *Transport, Technology and the Anthropocene: views from the periphery*, Gina reflected on her pioneering participative research methods with excluded groups across Sub-Saharan Africa. The lecture was followed by a well-attended drinks reception, sponsored by Elsevier.

TGRG also organised a pre-conference knowledge exchange event with local transport planning practitioners and local and national policy-makers. This year's event was held at Devon County Hall, organised in conjunction with the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport-South West (CILT-SW). The afternoon session combined a selection of presentations from the conference by academics and practitioners and policymakers' representation from the Department of Transport and Devonshire County Council. TGRG thank Graham Parkhurst (University of the West of England) and Kate Pangbourne (University of Aberdeen) for organising the session, Devon County Council for supplying the venue and Stagecoach South West for sponsoring the refreshments.

Day one of the conference proper began with two concurrent methodologically focused TGRG sponsored sessions. Robin Lovelace (University of Leeds) chaired one session on *GIS for Sustainable Transport*, about open source GIS methods in transport planning. This was a two-part session with practical and presentation strands. The second double session, *Spaces of Participatory Transport Planning*, was convened by Joanna Elvy and Karen Lucas (University of Leeds). Its aim was to identify contemporary empirical studies of participatory transport planning, with a particular focus on different spatial scales and contexts.

In the afternoon, *Urban Transport Visions & Pathways*, convened by Miles Tight (University of Birmingham) and Paul Timms (University of Leeds) comprised five extremely heterogeneous presentations on the theme of constructing 'visions' which involve fully rounded descriptions of desirable futures. Such visions are sometimes accompanied by 'pathways', involving narratives describing how such visions might be achieved.

The busy second day of the conference saw sessions organised around five different research topics. Two of the sessions were specifically aimed at postgraduate researchers working in the field of transport geography. The first postgraduate session, *Current and Emerging Research in Transport* was jointly sponsored with the Postgraduate Forum and convened by Joanna Elvy (University of Leeds). It consisted of four interesting presentations, which coalesced around the themes of active travel and commuting. The second session, convened by Clare Woroniuk (Newcastle University) presented four diverse papers, including an evaluation of smart ticketing across deregulated public transport in the UK, transport vulnerability among older people in Malta, an integrated GIS model for bus systems to help solve design and improvement problems in urban public transport and Inclusive urban mobility examining a rights based approach in Quito.

A double session on *Transitioning to Low Carbon Mobilities*, convened by Debbie Hopkins and James Higham (University of Otago), attracted a diverse range of international speakers and an audience of over 30 geographers and experts working in cognate disciplines. Graham Parkhurst (UWE) and Kate Pangbourne (University of Aberdeen) convened *Spaces of road transport automation* focussing on emerging work around autonomous vehicles. The session was concluded with a short discussion with the audience exploring the research challenges for geography.

A double session on *Understanding Inequalities in Transport and Mobility* was co-chaired by Nihan Akyelken (University of Oxford) and Eda Beyazit (Istanbul Technical University). The sessions ended with an engaging discussion from which one crucial point emerged about how we present and communicate our research to the vulnerable groups of people that are its focus. Angela Curl (University of Glasgow) and Charles Musselwhite (Swansea University) occupied the last slot of the day with a session on *Maintaining Mobility: Geographies of Transport and Ageing*. Its five presentations covered topics ranging from the conceptualisation of conceptualising ageing and mobility through to its implications for physical and mental wellbeing.

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The third and final day was somewhat less hectic, with a session on *Sustainable Freight for City and Global Logistics* convened by Tom Zunder and Clare Woroniuk (Newcastle University). This session aimed to draw together issues associated with sustainable freight in cities and the increasingly negative image of goods vehicles in political and social circles and rising air quality problems, together with research from a global freight perspective. Four diverse papers were presented, ranging from long distance rail freight, city logistics, reverse logistics systems and last mile freight transport, followed by fruitful discussion.

A second session *Surveilling Global Space*, convened by Weiqiang Lin (National University of Singapore) and co-sponsored by the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group completed the TGRG contribution. Four presenters communicated their research on forms of large-scale spatial observations in contemporary global culture. While not all of them directly invoked transport in the conventional sense, the sessions related a strong sense of how society has developed culturally sophisticated ways of monitoring, controlling and managing mobilities.

In addition to the formally sponsored TGRG sessions, there were a number of other independently convened sessions at the conference relating to transport and mobilities. These including *Everyday Mobilities and Transport*, chaired by Kate Pangbourne, *Behavioural Change in the Anthropocene: Unpacking Mobility Research and Theoretical Perspectives towards Sustainability*, chaired by Stewart Barr, University of Exeter), and a session chaired by Tim Cresswell *Re-imagining the Mobility Transition*.

The 2015 Hay Award was awarded to Peter Jones (UCL) at the AGM. Peter thanked the group, explaining that it had been 40 years since his first TGRG event and said it was a fantastic discipline in which it is wonderful to be involved. The 2015 prize for the best undergraduate prize in Transport Geography was awarded to Sam Comber (University of Birmingham) for his study: "*Assessing the Impacts of Rail Investments on Housing Prices*".

Beyond the RGS-IBG annual conference, 2015 has been a busy year for TGRG generally. We have created a new committee role to represent the interests of early career researchers (ECRs) at the Annual General Meeting. Sara Tilley (University of Edinburgh) and Debbie Hopkins (University of Otago) will take on this position jointly. We hope to target some future TGRG activities towards the specific needs of ECRs as they develop their academic careers.

The Journal of Transport Geography, which is affiliated to TGRG, continues to go from strength to strength. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Tim Schwanen for his extremely productive three-year term as the journal's editor in chief and to welcome his replacement Prof. Frank Witlox. The journal also says goodbye to Prof. Karen Lucas (TGRG chair), who has served as an editor of the journal since 2008, first as book reviews editor and then as an associate editor. She will be replaced by Dr. Helena Titheridge (University College London) from January 2016.

Other events included a *GIS for Transport Applications* workshop in Leeds, organised by Dr. Robin Lovelace. It was the most popular of all workshops organised as part of the GIS Research UK conference. The aim was to showcase and develop the growing expertise of GIS within the transport community. Our postgraduate representatives, Joanna Elvy and Clare Woroniuk also showcased TGRG research at the *Postgraduate Mid-term Conference*. Our online presence also shows exponential growth through the website (tgrg.wordpress.com) and use of twitter (@transportgeog).

Three new books have also been published as part of Ashgate's Transport and Mobility series, which is edited by Richard Knowles (University of Salford) and Markus Hesse (Université du Luxembourg) on behalf of TGRG. These are *Mobility Patterns and Urban Structure* (Paulo Pinho and Cecília Silva, Oporto University), *Sustainable Railway Futures* (Becky P.Y. Loo, University of Hong Kong and Claude Comtois, University of Montreal) and *Institutional Challenges to Intermodal Transport and Logistics* (Jason Monios, Edinburgh Napier University).

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