

Geography

News on Geography and
Environmental Science



Geography graduate wins RGS-IBG dissertation prize

QMUL Geography graduate **Zainab Ravat** has won first place in this year's Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers (RGS-IBG) Social and Cultural Geography Research Group Dissertation Prize for her dissertation entitled 'Photojournalism: Explorations into the Geographical Witness, Activist and Traveller'.

With entries from universities across the UK, this is a stellar achievement! Panellists commented that the dissertation was a fascinating and enjoyable read. Engaging and written with journalistic flair, they thought that its focus on photographers' personal experiences, motivations, and senses of self, gave a sophisticated and nuanced approach to the geographies of photojournalism as a practice. They also praised the very rich empirical material produced in the

research, and the sensitivity with which material was dealt with.

Zainab graduated with a first class degree earlier in the summer, and she is currently getting ready to start her MPhil in Development Studies at the University of Cambridge.

Many congratulations to Zainab and to her supervisor **Professor Catherine Nash!**

- Visit scgrg.rgs.org/dissertation-prize/



YouthMappers at Queen Mary

A chapter of **YouthMappers** – an international network of more than 5000 university student mappers in 120 campus chapters across 38 countries – has been set up at Queen Mary. It is being led by the **Queen Mary Geography Society**.

YouthMappers is a voluntary mapping initiative that uses open source mapping software

to create maps in response to humanitarian crisis and need across the world.

Professor Catherine Nash who helped set up the chapter said: 'This is a very exciting and important initiative. We are one of three chapters in the UK, only the second geography department to have one and the first in London.'



- Visit youthmappers.org for more and follow them on Twitter [@youthmappers](https://twitter.com/youthmappers) and [@QMULGeoSoc](https://twitter.com/QMULGeoSoc)

The School welcomes new staff

The School of Geography at Queen Mary University of London is delighted to welcome a number of new colleagues this academic year.

Dr Anna Bourne –

Lecturer in Physical Geography

Anna is a tephra specialist and her research interests are in the development of robust and precise regional chronologies of environmental change – key to being able to assess how change is propagated and represented in other types of palaeoenvironmental archives across the North Atlantic region, Europe and beyond. Anna joined the School in September 2018 on a three-year fixed term contract.



Dr Will Monteith –

Lecturer in Human Geography

Will's research interests are in urban development issues in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on the role of informal labour and precarious livelihoods in urban markets in Uganda. In future years, he plans to develop his work by examining 'post wage economies' in other contexts and by pursuing a collaborative project exploring the global geographies of the wax fabric trade. Will continues to work in the School on a permanent basis.



Dr James Brown –

Lecturer in Human Geography

James's research focuses in labour geography, special economic zones and manufacturing production networks in Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on Laos and Cambodia. James joined the School in September 2018 on a one-year fixed term contract.



Dr Giuditta Trinci –

Lecturer in Physical Geography

Giuditta is interested in understanding the mutual feedbacks between fluvial processes and aquatic organisms (animals and plants) and the relevance of this for sustainable river management, and the impact of human activities on freshwater systems. Giuditta's research has focused on the field-testing and development of hydro-morphological river assessment methods, and exploring how aquatic organisms respond to flow hydraulics at small spatio-temporal scales, and she collaborates closely with **Dr Gemma Harvey**, **Dr Alex Henshaw** and **Professor Geraldene Wharton**. Giuditta continues to work in the School on a one-year fixed term contract.



Dr Heather Ford – NERC

Independent Research Fellow,
Lecturer in Environmental Science

Heather joins us from the University of Cambridge, where she has been working as NERC Independent Research Fellow. Heather is a palaeoceanographer who undertakes geochemical analysis of microfossils from marine sediment to reconstruct past ocean conditions. Heather joined the School in September 2018 on a permanent basis.



Dr Marcia Vera Espinoza –

Lecturer in Human Geography

Marcia is interested in migration and development in the Global South, with a particular focus on refugee and migrant governance, protection and integration in Latin America. Her edited book *The Dynamics of Regional Migration Governance* (Edward Elgar) will be published later in the year. Marcia joined the School in September 2018 on a one-year fixed term contract.



Dr Stuart Grieve –

Lecturer in Physical Geography

Stuart is a geomorphologist who uses computational and modelling techniques to develop understanding of the processes, driven by environmental change, which shape planetary surfaces. Some of his recent research included analysis of global river morphology and climate data, work on shallow landslide recurrence interval modelling, and the use of integrated channel hillslope metrics to understand the evolution of complex tectonic environments. Stuart joined the School in September 2018 on a permanent basis.



Dr James Bradley –

Lecturer in Physical Geography

James is interested in ecosystem responses to environmental change and undertakes research mainly in cold (Arctic and the Antarctic) and deep oceanic environments. He combines skills in modelling and fieldwork



and his research will have strong synergies with microbiology colleagues in Queen Mary's School of Biological and Chemical Sciences. James will be joining the School in April 2019 on a permanent basis.

Dr Joe Penny –
Lecturer in Human Geography

Joe is interested in the restructuring or local governance under austerity, the financialisation of the local state, public land and council housing, and the nature and dynamics of urban politics and fiscal democracy. His work has a strong focus on London. Joe will be joining the School in January 2019 on a three-year fixed term contract.



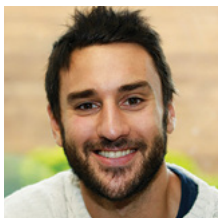
Dr Clementine Chirol –
Postdoctoral Research Associate

Clementine is a coastal geomorphologist and geodata analyst, who works with **Professor Kate Spencer** and **Dr Simon Carr** (formerly of Queen Mary) on the NERC-funded RESIST(UK) project, exploring the impacts of sediment structure and geochemistry on saltmarsh erosion. Clementine joined the School in June 2018 on a 27-month fixed term contract.



Dr David Geiringer –
Postdoctoral Research Associate

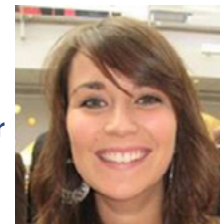
David works with **Professor Alastair Owens** on a new research project 'Clerical domesticity and the inner city: Vicarages and urban change in Britain, 1960-1990'. Prior to joining Queen Mary



he undertook his AHRC-funded PhD 'The Pope and the Pill: exploring the sexual experiences of Catholic women in post-war England' at the University of Sussex. David joined the School in August 2018 on a three-year fixed term contract.

Dr Amy Clarke – ESRC LISS-DTP
Postdoctoral Fellow

Amy Clarke will be joining the School in the autumn to work with **Professor Catherine Nash** as her mentor. The title of the fellowship is Urban Roots and National Belonging: hierarchies and scales of belonging in London. In addition, she will undertake some new ethnographic research toward the end of the fellowship on east London's genealogical community. She also intends to develop this new research into applications for further funding. Amy will be joining the School in October 2018 on a one-year fixed term contract.



Dr Azeezat Johnson – ESRC LISS-DTP
Postdoctoral Fellow

Azeezat continues to work in the School on a one-year fixed term contract. She will spend most of her time extending her PhD thesis (on the clothing practices of Black Muslim women in Britain) into a book manuscript, as well as preparing for future research on the British grammar of race. She plans to continue her work with the School's Equality and Diversity Committee, the RAFA2 BME attainment project, and contribute to elements of our teaching programme. She will be working closely with **Professor Alison Blunt**, who will be her mentor.



- Find out more about our staff at geog.qmul.ac.uk/staff and our research at geog.qmul.ac.uk/research

Volcanoes, Climate Change and Society

A new module called *Volcanoes, Climate Change and Society*, developed by **Dr Anna Bourne**, will be running from the second semester, which will aim to investigate the interrelationship between volcanic activity, the planet's climate and environment and societies both past and present. Students will consider events on a number of scales from local hazard mitigation of smaller eruptions

that occur regularly to large explosive eruptions that can effect global climate, and they will work in small groups to research case studies of specific eruptions and their effect on the environment and/or society and present their findings to the class. They will be exposed to current research in these areas and will undertake practical computer based

tasks to put the research into practice. This module is an addition to a number of new physical geography/environmental science modules that were recently introduced in the School of Geography, including *Ecosystem Science*, *Environmental Pollution*, *Future Coasts*, *Geospatial Science*, and *Ice Age Britain*.

Post-Brexit trade deals should go further to improve labour conditions

A new study led by Queen Mary University of London and Warwick University has found that current EU trade policy does not sufficiently take account of the structural causes of poor working conditions.

The paper, published in the journal *Economic Geography*, examined the relations between workplace and local labour regimes, global production networks and EU trade policy. The research focused on the Moldovan clothing industry, the leading export-orientated manufacturing sector in the country.

Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, the study found that structural pressures to meet the demands of EU buyers and retailers were driving working conditions. Wages in particular were impacted, which in Moldova are among the lowest in Europe. In newly established private firms

there was also pressure from factory management not to allow trade union representation despite freedom of association being at the heart of the EU's labour provisions.

Professor Adrian Smith, Professor of Human Geography said: "Our research has shown that current EU trade policy does not sufficiently take account of the structural causes of poor working conditions and as a result global production networks are able to exploit the current model, and indeed workers."

The paper has implications for the UK government as it negotiates



international trade agreements post-Brexit. The research highlights tensions in the role of governments in international trade policy - on one hand seeking to establish new spaces for market exchange whilst simultaneously trying to regulate employment conditions via international standards.

How salt marshes cope with storm surges

Salt marshes occur on shallow coasts influenced by tides. They provide a habitat for adapted plants and animals, protect the coast, and contribute to climate protection as they store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. However, if storm surges occur more frequently due to climate change, the system might become imbalanced and lose its protective function for the coast.



A team of internationally respected coastal scientists, including **Professor Kate Spencer** Environmental Geochemist at Queen Mary, is conducting a unique experiment into how salt marshes cope with storm surges, as part of **RESIST(UK)** – a collaborative research project between the University of

Cambridge, the British Geological Survey and Queen Mary University of London.

"We're already seeing some exciting results with sediments from different UK saltmarshes showing different levels of erosion," said Professor Spencer, after the team's visit to the EU Hydralab+ facility in Germany in August.

Researchers will examine sediment structure using a micro CT scanner at Queen Mary – this is one of the first times that this technique has been used to examine saltmarsh sediment and root networks.

Professor Spencer also recently appeared in a new BBC documentary called *The Secret Life of Landfill: A Rubbish History* and was co-author of an article with former PhD student **James Brand** which describes a new screening assessment method that can identify which historic coastal landfill sites pose the greatest pollution risk. Students interested in coastal erosion and pollution are able to learn more about these topics as part of two new modules: **Future Coasts** and **Environmental Pollution**.

- Read more at geog.qmul.ac.uk/news

Congratulations to the class of 2018

Over 130 students became graduates of the School of Geography during this year's summer graduation ceremonies – the largest event of the academic calendar at Queen Mary.



During the ceremony, **Jules Pipe CBE**, former Mayor of the London Borough of Hackney (2002–16), currently Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills at City Hall, received a Fellowship of Queen Mary University of London. Following the ceremony, graduates of the class of 2018 gathered on the lawn outside the iconic Queens' Building for the traditional group photo, and celebrated their achievements with peers, friends and family, as well as academic staff.

Each year, the School of Geography gives out a number of awards during graduation in recognition of exceptional academic achievement. Recipients included:

- **Jason Lynch** (Environmental Science BSc) received the A.E. Smailes Prize for the best dissertation, the Environmental Science Prize for outstanding performance, the Drapers' Company Prize for academic excellence, and the Student Service and Contribution Award.
- **Will Flynn** (Environmental Science BSc) and **Aqeeb Akram** (Geography BA) also received the Student Service and Contribution Award for making significant contributions to Queen Mary and the School of Geography throughout their studies.
- **Zainab Ravat** (Geography BA) received the Michael Alexander Jones Memorial Award for the best overall performance in the third year, and the Drapers' Company Prize.
- **Simon Hardy** (Geography BA) received the Roger Lee Prize for the best dissertation in the fields of economic geography, development geography or geography of social justice, the Simon Tavana Writing Prize for creative writing in human geography third year coursework, and the Drapers' Company Prize.
- **Laura Smith** (Human Geography BA) also received the Drapers' Company Prize for academic excellence.

"Reflecting back after an incredible three years in the School of Geography, my degree has given me the self-confidence to believe in myself," said **Jason Lynch** who was awarded a first-class degree. "I now feel equipped with the knowledge to discuss relevant, current local and global issues in depth with peers, friends and family. This acquired knowledge (along with hard work) will hopefully propel me towards a PhD and further research, something I didn't think I'd be capable of before coming to Queen Mary. Moreover, the School of Geography

has helped me develop as an individual by offering amazing guidance and opportunities that allowed me to speak at various conferences and work in the local community. I cannot thank the amazing staff enough!"

Aqeeb Akram, who is the first in his family to go to university and has just started a PgCE at Oxford University, said: "I'm extremely proud to have graduated with a 2:1 and to have received the Student Service and Contribution Award. I would like to thank all the staff at QMUL Geography who supported me throughout my degree, who I got to know well. I've thoroughly enjoyed my three years here!"

Head of School **Professor Alastair Owens** said: "My colleagues and I are delighted to celebrate the success of the graduating class of 2018. We have thoroughly enjoyed working with our undergraduate and PhD students who graduated today. Many congratulations on your achievements and very best wishes for the future. We look forward to keeping in touch and welcoming you back to alumni events."

- See more images at [flickr.com/photos/qmulgeog](https://www.flickr.com/photos/qmulgeog)

Forthcoming GA events



Events for teachers and sixth formers in 2018–19, hosted by the Geographical Association East London branch. Book your free place at geog.qmul.ac.uk/events or directly with **Kate Amis**, Schools Liaison and WP Officer, at k.amis@qmul.ac.uk

- **17 Oct 2018** **A series of short lectures by a selection of 3rd year undergraduates and their dissertation research** – for sixth formers, teachers, undergraduate and lecturers
- **14 Nov 2018** **Not all tectonic events are born equal – what turns risk into disaster?** – lecture by **Dr Anna Bourne** for sixth formers and teachers
- **26 Jan 2019** **A Sense of the East End** – fieldwork for teachers with **Kate Amis**
- **6 Feb 2019** **Who gives a dam? The role of the beaver in sustainable river management** – lecture by **Dr Gemma Harvey** for A-level students and teachers
- **Dates TBC** **Changing Places, Gentrification and Diverse Places** – fieldwork for A-level students with **Kate Amis**
- **Dates TBC** **A visit by QMUL Geography ambassadors to inspire Year 7 to sixth form students about geography**
- **Dates TBC** **University of London Taster Day Programme** – for A-level students considering studying geography and environmental science at university

Other events

- **17 Oct 2018** **Governing Buenos Aires: City, politics and society, from the 19th century to the present** – seminar with **Dr Matías Landua** from the University of Buenos Aires
- **7 Nov 2018** **Expert panel discussion on Brexit** – speakers include **Dr Gale Raj-Reichert** from the School of Geography
- **29 Nov 2018** **Popular understandings of tolerance: What can we learn from European societies with contrasting levels of diversity?** – the 15th David M. Smith Annual Lecture by **Professor Gill Valentine** from the University of Sheffield
- **5 Dec 2018** **Expert panel discussion on Immigration and Migration** – speakers include **Professor Kavita Datta** from the School of Geography

See further details and book your place at geog.qmul.ac.uk/events

News in brief

- Congratulations to **Professor Catherine Nash** who has been elected as a **Fellow of the British Academy** this summer, in recognition of her leading contributions to geography and the broader humanities and social sciences.
- Researchers developed new technique using satellite imagery in analysing a network of braided rivers. The study, led by **Gabriel Streich**, **Dr Alex Henshaw** and **Dr Gemma Harvey**, examined the potential to use graph theory (the mathematics of networks) to explore the structure of braided river networks, overcoming some of the shortcomings of traditional approaches.
- Students from **Mulberry School for Girls** and **Central Foundation Girls' School** received certificates this summer in recognition of their achievements on this year's **Stepping Stones project**. Year 12 students from the two local schools worked with student mentors from the School of Geography over two months to explore the topic of globalisation in depth. Successful students will be entitled to a reduced tariff offer if they chose to apply to study geography or environmental science at Queen Mary.
- Earlier this year, **Dr Simon Reid-Henry** and **Dr Tim Brown** set off with a group of masters students on the inaugural field trip to Switzerland, exploring Geneva's global health hub. This is a core module for students on the **Global Health Geographies MA** and is optional for those on **Development and Global Health MA** and for students from the School of Medicine and Dentistry taking the **Migration, Culture and Global Health MSc**.
- **Professor Kate Spencer's** application to the **Institute of Oil Sands Innovation** with colleagues from the University of Alberta and Deltares (an independent water research institute in the Netherlands) has been successful. The project 'Combining worms and vegetation to enhance tailings dewatering' (aka Bugs, Veggies & Worms) is funded by an environmental levy from the oil shale industry. The research looks at improving remediation of oil-polluted sediments, exploring whether worms and vegetation improve the structure of contaminated sediments and speed up the stabilisation and dewatering process. The award brings £18.5k to QMUL.

Read more news at geog.qmul.ac.uk/news