

# Geo News

Bimonthly Newsletter of GSI

Issue No. 58 March / April 2014

▪ <http://www.geographicalsocietyireland.ie> ▪ Geographical Society of Ireland

## Note from the Editor

Fellow Geographers,

Welcome to the second issue of GeoNews for 2014 – CIG2014 is just around the corner and personally I am looking forward to another engaging and interesting gathering of Irish Geography and Geographers.

The GSI has received lots of good news for inclusion in this issue, amongst them the recognition of two prominent Irish Geographers', Professor Rob Kitchen (NUIM) and Professor Ann Buttimer (UCD) who have been honoured by the RIA and AAG respectfully.

Professor Kitchen was the 2013 recipient of the Royal Irish Academy the **Gold Medal** for Social Sciences. He is the second Geographer since the establishment of the award to be so honoured by the Royal Irish Academy - Professor David N. Livingstone, Department of Geography Queen's University Belfast was the 2008 recipient.

The Association of American Geographers honoured Professor Buttimer with the AAG 2014 **Lifetime Achievement Award** in recognition of her five decades of distinguished and prolific scholarship. She is the first Irish Geographer to receive this honour.

In this issue there is a look ahead to CIG2014 in UCD with a breakdown of themes and topics at this year's conference.

The FLOOD event is also highlighted along with an overview of The Programmable City project which was recently launched in NIRSA.

Last but not least we have a special report from Eoin O'Mahony, PhD student in Geography, NUIM, who was the recipient of the GSI Postgraduate Fieldwork/Travel Award in 2013.

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Eoin has sent in his report from The 5th Nordic Geographers Meeting which was held in Reykjavík, University of Iceland, June 11-14, 2013.

Just to remind you that the Annual General Meeting of the Geographical Society of Ireland will take place in UCD *Saturday 10th May, 1-2pm in the Moore Auditorium, Science Centre, University College Dublin* during this year's Conference of Irish Geographers.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of GeoNews, I would like to thank all of our contributions over the past two months. The next issue will be out in June after CIG, and I would welcome special reports from themed sessions for inclusion in the next issue.

If you are interested in submitting something for inclusion in GeoNews 59, please get in contact at the details below.

Happy Reading!

Paul Alexander  
[paul.alexander@nuim.ie](mailto:paul.alexander@nuim.ie)



## Recognising Irish Geographers



We are delighted to announce the recognition of two prominent Irish Geographers', Professor Rob Kitchen (NUIM) and Professor Ann Buttimer (UCD) who have been honoured by the RIA and AAG respectfully.



On 12 April 2014, The Association of American Geographers honoured **Professor Anne Buttimer**, Emeritus Professor of Geography at **University College Dublin** with the AAG 2014 **Lifetime Achievement Award** in recognition of her five decades of distinguished and prolific scholarship at the AAG annual conference in Tampa, FL.

The AAG offers honours and awards annually to recognise outstanding accomplishments by members in research & scholarship, teaching, education, service to the discipline, public service outside academe and for lifetime achievement.

Professor Buttimer is a highly respected scholar whose reputation is truly global in scope. In the early part of her career, she was at the forefront of efforts to expand beyond the quantitative approaches. She later went on to produce a body of scholarship that explored important philosophical themes at the intersection of the bio-physical and human sciences, shaping research directions in social geography and serving as a model for bridging the theory-practice divide.

Anne previously chaired an EU-funded research network on sustainable development that had a significant influence on EU policy debates; her work provided important insights into the ways in which communication between scientists and planners can be improved. The extent of her scholarly impact can be seen in the many honours she has received from different universities and professional associations. Anne has also served our discipline as President of the International Geographical Union (IGU) and most recently as Vice-President of Academia Europea, the first geographer to be so elected. On 27 January 2012 she became the first woman to be awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Grenoble, France.

On February 19 2014 **Professor Robert Michael Kitchen**, Professor of Geography at the **National University of Ireland, Maynooth** was the 2013 recipient of the Royal Irish Academy the **Gold Medal** for Social Sciences. He is the second Geographer since the establishment of the award to be so honoured by the Royal Irish Academy.

Each year the Academy awards two gold medals to Ireland's foremost thinkers in the humanities, social sciences, physical & mathematical sciences, life sciences, engineering sciences and the environment & geosciences.

Rob's research in space and mapping has been hugely influential across the social sciences, especially with respect to understanding the relationship between technology, society and space.

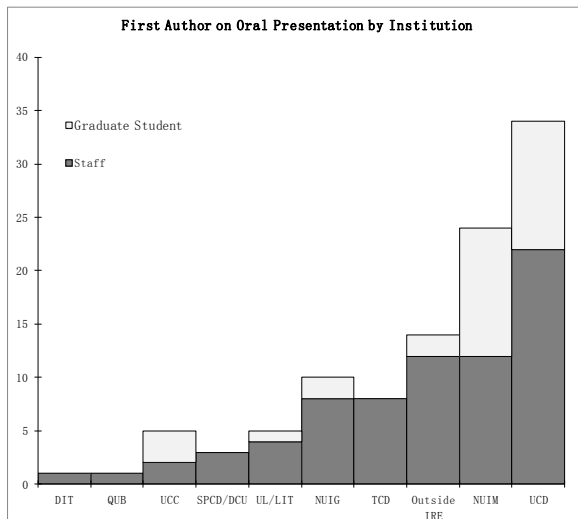
Tribute was paid to his recent success in securing an ERC grant for the Soft-City (*Programmable City*) Project. Rob is the second Geographer in Ireland to be endowed with such a prestigious accolade. Professor David N. Livingstone, Department of Geography Queen's University Belfast was the 2008 recipient.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate both Professor Buttimer and Professor Kitchen on behalf of all the member of the Geographical Society of Ireland.

## Look ahead to CIG-2014

CIG is just around the corner, here is just a look ahead to the largest annual gathering of Irish Geographers. The presenters and sessions are broken down and major themes are highlighted below.

### Presenter Breakdown by Institution



#### Highlights

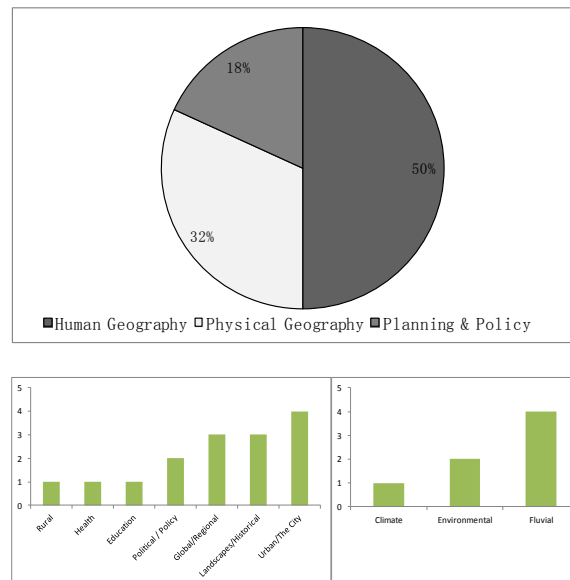
There are 105 oral presentations taking place over the 3 days. UCD represents the largest cohort of presenters, 34 in total, about 1/3 of UCD contributions are coming from students. UCD is followed by NUIM (24 first authors) exactly half of which are postgraduate students.

UCC has the largest proportion of graduate students (60%) from any institution presenting at the conference.

14 Authors outside of Irish institutions are named as first authors for the program – No location outside of Ireland is **particularly** dominant, authors are from institutions in the US, UK, Australia, Canada and China.

70% of all first authors are members of faculty, 30% are graduate students.

### Session Themes



#### Highlights

Half of the sessions could be termed as having a Human Geography theme, about one third of session have a Physical Geography theme and the remainder with Planning & Policy themes.

The Human Geography themed session have a much wider diversity than the Physical Geography themes. The dominant **Physical Geography** Theme for CIG-2014 is **Fluvial Systems** whereas the dominant **Human Geography** Theme is **Urban Geography** and **The City**.

Historical Geography remains a solid theme at the Conference of Irish Geographers.

## Getting to UCD

<https://myucd.ucd.ie/visiting/transport-maps.ezc>

## Outline conference schedule

Thursday May 8th			
	Moore Auditorium	Room H1.52	Room H1.47
8.30am	REGISTRATION		
9.00-9.15	Welcome and opening address		
9.15-10.45: Session 1	1.1 "Crisis in the North and the 'Rise of the South': a new development era?" Chair: Dr. Padraig Carmody	1.2 Research and Applications in River Science (1) Chair: Dr. Eoin O'Neill	1.3 The Neoliberal City in a Global Context Chair: Dr. Paula Russell
10.45-11.15	BREAK		
11.15-12.45: Session 2	2.1 Housing and Mortgages in a Post-crisis Context Chair: Dr. Rory Hearne	2.2 Research and Applications in River Science (2) Chair: Dr. Mary Bourke	2.3 Rural Geographies Chair: Dr. David Meredith
12.45-14.00	LUNCH		
14.00-15.30: Session 3	3.1 Critical Geographies of the Crisis Chair: Dr. Enda Murphy	3.2 Flood Risk Management (1) Chair: Dr. Jonathan Turner	3.3 Changing Geographies of Production and Consumption Chair: Prof. Anna Davies
15.30-16.00	BREAK		
16.00-18.00: Session 4	GSI Postgraduate Research Prize Special Session (Moore Auditorium) Chair: Prof. Anna Davies	4.2 Flood Risk Management (2) Chair: Dr. Anna Jones	
19.00-21.00	Keynote lecture: Prof Mike Raco (Moore Auditorium) Drinks reception		
Friday May 9th			
	Moore Auditorium	Room H1.52	Room H1.47
9.15-10.45: Session 5	5.1 Smart Cities Chair: Dr. Declan Redmond	5.2 Geographies of Health Chair: Dr. Arlene Crampsie	5.3 Enlivening and Locating Landscapes Chair: Dr. Jonathan Cherry
10.45-11.15	BREAK		
11.15-12.45: Session 6	6.1 Regional Economic Development (1) Chair: Dr. Dieter Kogler	6.2 Irish Historical Geographies (1) Chair: Dr. Mark McCarthy	6.3 Urban Environment Chair: Mr. Paul Alexander
12.45-13.30	LUNCH		
13.30-14.00	POSTER SESSION (Room H1.52)		
14.00-15.30: Session 7	7.1 Regional Economic Development (2) Chair: Dr. Chris van Egeraat	7.2 Irish Historical Geographies (2) Chair: Dr Kevin Loughheed	7.3 The Surface Energy Balance Chair: Ms. Stephanie Keogh
15.30-16.00	BREAK		
16.00-17.30: Session	RSA - Ireland Branch special plenary: Prof David Bailey (Moore Auditorium)		
19:00	Conference Dinner, Beaufield Mews, Stillorgan		
Saturday May 10th			
	Moore Auditorium	Room H1.52	Room H1.47
9.30-11.00: Session 8	8.1 Spatial Analysis: Informing and Challenging Public Policy Discourses (1) Chair: Dr. Niamh Moore-Cherry	8.2 Environmental Geography Chair: Dr. Gerald Mills	8.3 Geographical Skills and Education Chair: Dr. Almar Barry
11.00-11.30	BREAK		
11.30-13.00: Session 9	9.1 Spatial Analysis: Informing and Challenging Public Policy Discourses (2) Chair: Dr. Karen Keaveney	9.2 Social & Cultural Geography Chair: Dr. Mary Gilmartin	9.3 Coastal and Marine Chair: Dr. Kieran Hickey
13.00-14.00	LUNCH and Geographical Society of Ireland AGM		





## FLOOD Event and GAW13 Photo Winners



On February 27, the GSI, in conjunction with UCD, Cultúr Lab and Dublin City Council Public Arts Office, co-hosted an evening of talks to mark the launch of the DCC's Flood Commission, which invites proposals for public artwork(s) that respond to the work of the OPW in creating flood defences along the River Dodder.

An exhibition of winning images from Geography Awareness Week (GAW13) were also on display at the event and prizes awarded. Readers will recall the theme of GAW13 was “an exploration of water” and this was the first photo competition run as part of GAW.

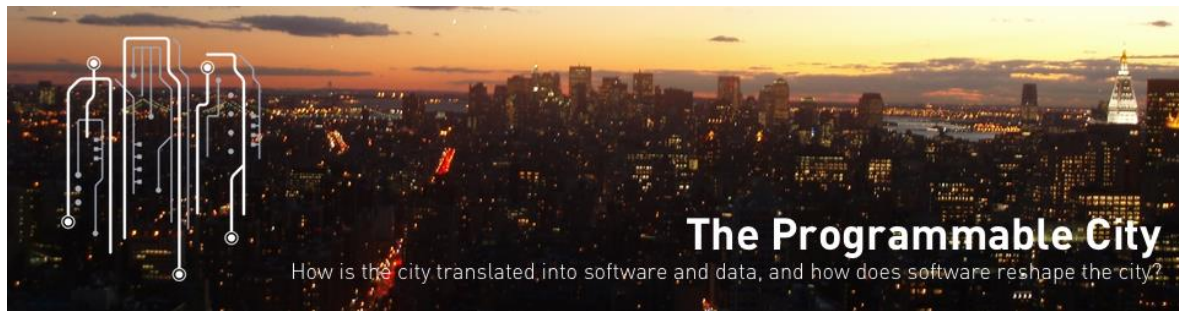


The winners each received a book voucher and the RIA Historical Town Atlas was presented to Aaron Mac Fhionnlaoich (teacher in Gaelcholáiste Na Mara)

- Stephanie Horgan (Shown Above)
- Liam D'Arcy
- Paula Maher
- Coimhe Molloy
- Becky Seoige
- Megan Swayne

**Congratulations to all the winners and special thanks to Dr. Niamh Moore-Cherry, UCD Geography, for coordinating this exciting evening!**

## The Programmable City Project



### People

#### Principle Investigator

Rob Kitchin

#### Postdocs

Leighton Evans  
Tracey P. Lauriault  
Sophia Maalsen  
Gavin McArdle  
Sung-Yueh Perng

#### PhD Students

Rob Bradshaw  
Darach MacDonncha  
Alan Moore  
Jim White

#### Admin

Rhona Bradshaw

On March 25 2014, The National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at NUIM launched The Programmable City project. The project was officially launched by the Minister for Research and Innovation, Sean Sherlock, TD.

Software is essential to the functioning of cities. It is deeply and pervasively embedded into the systems and infrastructure of the built environment and in the management and governance of urban societies. Software-enabled technologies and services augment and facilitate how we understand and plan cities, how we manage urban services and utilities, and how we live urban lives.

The Programmable City project is undertaking a sustained programme of research on how software makes a difference to how social, spatial and economic life takes place, providing a comprehensive and groundbreaking interdisciplinary analysis of the two core inter-related aspects of the emerging programmable city: (a) Translation: how cities are translated into code, and (b) Transduction: how code reshapes city life. In order to examine how software makes a difference to contemporary urbanism, the analysis is organized with respect to four

key urban practices – understanding, managing, working, and living in the city, with each sub-project focusing on a particular question.

	Translation: City into code	Transduction: Code reshapes city
<b>Understanding the city</b> (Knowledge)	How are digital data generated and processed about cities and their citizens?	How does software drive public policy development and implementation?
<b>Managing the city</b> (Governance)	How are discourses and practices of city governance translated into code?	How is software used to regulate and govern city life?
<b>Working in the city</b> (Production)	How is the geography and political economy of software production organised?	How does software alter the form and nature of work?
<b>Living in the city</b> (Social Politics)	How is software discursively produced and legitimated by vested interests?	How does software transform the spatiality and spatial behaviour of individuals?

You can find more information at the Project website <http://www.nuim.ie/progcity/about/>

**We would like to wish the entire project every success into the future!**

## Special Report: The Nordic Geographers' Meeting, Reykjavik, Iceland



By

Eoin O'Mahony, PhD candidate, NUIM  
GSI Postgraduate Fieldwork/Travel Awardee 2013

The mid-Atlantic Ridge meets the island of Iceland above sea level just south of Keflavik, the airport that serves international flights to the island. The ridge runs length of the island and means that the inhabitants have almost free and limitless hot water and cheap electricity. The tour guide on the bus tour that I took was very eager to tell us how green and energy efficient this makes the island as a whole. Hot water flows through Icelandic houses at all times of the year, day and night. It runs under some footpaths of the capital to keep them ice free in the winter. The geothermal plant which was the final part of the day's tour was an inspiring use of a renewable resource. What the tour guide neglected to tell us however is that Iceland has the world's 28<sup>th</sup> largest oil consumption per capita, just below the United States in 22<sup>nd</sup> place.

The 5th Nordic Geographers Meeting was held in Reykjavík, at the University of Iceland, from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2013. The usually broadly-interpreted conference theme was Responsible Geographies. I attended, with the financial support of the GSI Postgraduate Travel Awards, because I felt that a meeting of Nordic geographers would expose me to perspectives unavailable at a British or Irish conference. That, and I had never been to Iceland before. As it turned out, my geographical imagination was fed by both the conference and its host country. Iceland is ranked 121<sup>st</sup> in the world for GDP and the story of its a property speculation bubble and subsequent collapse is well reported by now. The revolution of 2008/09 saw thousands of people occupy the space in front of the country's small parliament building, the Alþingishús. The political pressure brought to bear meant that many foreign debtors were told that they wouldn't get their money back. There is the palpable sense in the city that the economy is slowly getting back on its feet. However, the scars of the property crash are found in the city in the form of half-finished buildings along the harbour. The city has a population of 119,000 which 37% of the island's population of 322,000. The entire island is just over 103,000 square kilometres in area which makes it larger than Ireland but the most sparsely population country of Europe. But is it Europe at all?

The tour on the Monday before the conference took us to Þingvellir, the site of Iceland's parliament for over 800 years from 930. It is situated directly within the rift valley that marks the crest of the mid-Atlantic ridge. From our vantage point, you could touch the north American plate with your hand and gaze on the Eurasian plate in the near distance. Because of its placement on the ridge, the physical landscape is marked by volcanic activity, with many dormant and active cones dotting the horizon. The landscape has provided the dramatic backdrop to many some series and films, most recently Game of Thrones and Prometheus. The recent history of Iceland is also marked by a politics not unlike that found in Game of Thrones. A notable 1986 summit in Iceland between US President

Reagan and Soviet Premier Gorbachev set the stage for the ending the cold war. In this sense then, Iceland spans various conceptions of space and its production. In physical terms, the ridge pulls apart the plates at a rate of about 2.5cm annually. Reykjavik is closer to the coast of Greenland than the Faroes, thought of as European. In urban geographical terms, it appeared to me that the city is not densely planned with a small city core like a US city. Housing in the city however resembled both a north American and crumbling former-Eastern Bloc styles that wouldn't have been out of place in Prague in the 90s.

What then of the conference itself? The workshop in which I participated was part of a COST action project called In Search of Transcultural Memory in Europe (how memories of the twentieth century are transmitted and received across Europe), and convened by two Tampere based academics, Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen and Maria Åkerman. Sam Saville's (Aberystwyth) exploratory paper on Svalbard was framed within a broader context of research which aims to investigate values and relationships between human life, non-human life and the material world on that island. The recollections of place through photographs and objects makes memory a performative practice. Anna-Kaisa's contribution focussed on how post-conflict, displaced children and young people, particularly after returning home, are practising subaltern geopolitics, that is, trying to reconstruct ties and sites of belonging. Maria's contribution was a way to pick apart how rational reasoning is defined to be the core of citizens' environmental agency. What this fails to recognise is that citizenship is an embodied activity, which takes place in particular sites and is connected to specific material-discursive practices. My own contribution was concerned with a number of questions about how memory is spatialised and how memories might be theorized; what kinds of methods serve this process? It was based on my fieldwork in 2010 / 11 on pilgrimage in Ireland and Spain. The workshop provided a context within which the representation of memories within geography were explored.

In general, the sessions I attended were of great interest. While the quality of the ideas presented by the plenary speakers was mixed, the smaller sessions outside of my own interests provided richer understandings of geography than many other conferences I have been to. In particular, there was not the same emphasis on drawing distinctions between human, cultural and physical geographies. Papers on mapping joint animal and human migration in Sweden, the impact of tephra on wetland vegetation in southern Iceland and farm ownership and inheritance in Estonia in particular remain the highlights. I also found little distinction drawn between students and university staff, something which I have noted at other conferences. Copious amounts of free coffee may have coloured this egalitarian vision.

Thanks to the GSI for awarding me their Postgraduate Fieldwork / Travel Award.



## Other News and Updates

### New GeoNews section on GSI Website and Digitising the entire GeoNews back-catalogue

The GSI website will host additional content highlighted the e-mail version of GeoNews. We will be moving towards bi-monthly editions.

You can get access to GeoNews past issues at the GeoNews section of the GSI website and get news highlights:

[www.geographicalsocietyireland.ie/geo-news.html](http://www.geographicalsocietyireland.ie/geo-news.html)

Over the coming year I will attempt to digitise the entire back-catalogue of GeoNews from issue 1 right up to this issue, if this is a project you would like to be involved in please email the editor

(paul.alexander@nuim.ie)

### Conferences

#### Wednesday, May 21

Rural Revialtization Conference,  
UCD School of Architecture, Red  
Room, Belfield, Dublin

#### Thursday, June 19

Ireland and Ecocriticism Second  
Interdisciplinary Conference, Cork

#### 18-22 August 2014

IGU Regional Conference in Kraków,  
Poland

### Call for Content!

If you would like anything featured in the next newsletter please email the editor (paul.alexander@nuim.ie)

We would also encourage members to send in discussion pieces / articles / research highlights for inclusion in GeoNews.

## Current Committee, 2013-2014

#### President 2012-2014:

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#### Secretary:

Dr. Joanne Rourke, Trinity College Dublin

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