Official School Launch

The School of Geography, Geology and the Environment was officially opened on Wednesday 24 January by Vice-Chancellor Paul Boyle.

There was a packed schedule throughout the morning which contained a teaching session, open discussions with Undergraduate and Postgraduate students, a research session and the official ribbon cutting.

During the Postgraduate session Professor Boyle also presented the winners of the PGR Photography competition Gregor Hahn and Ros Nicholls with personal canvasses of their prize winning pictures which can be viewed in F55.
Welcome to the Academic Year 2017/18 newsletter for the School of Geography, Geology and the Environment. The former departments of Geography and Geology formed a School on 1 August 2017. It has been a very busy year on all fronts and this newsletter is only able to provide a few highlights of our activities and achievements over the past 12 months.

We would like to thank our students for their support throughout this year. The School extends a big congratulations to all our 2018 graduates – we are incredibly proud of you!

We are delighted to announce two promotions: as of the 1st August 2018 Gavin Brown will be our newest Professor in Human Geography and Dan Smith becomes an Associate Professor in Applied and Environmental Geology. Congratulations to them both!

The next academic year starts on the 24th September. We will be looking forward to welcoming our returning students, our new undergraduate and masters students, and our new postgraduate researchers.

We love to hear from our graduates so do keep in touch with us and let us know what you are doing. You are always very welcome to come back and visit. We enjoyed meeting up with some of our alumni in June 2018 and we hope to have the opportunity to see more of our graduates over the next year. Keep an eye out for news.

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Congratulations

- **Daniel Hope** (3rd Year, MGeol student) is the winner of the naming competition for your new School of Geography, Geology and the Environment newsletter! Unfolded is a geological term but also can be interpreted in other (Geographical) ways too! Well done Daniel there is a £10 Amazon voucher finding it’s way to you!
- The UK Space Agency (UKSA) announced a total of £38million funding under its International Partnership Programme. From this, more than £6 million is allotted to three projects including:
  1. Peartland Assessment in SE Asia by Satellite (PASSES) (**Sue Page** and **Kevin Tansey**)  
  2. Improved resilience for Mongolian herding communities using satellite derived services (**Caroline Upton**)
     Read full article
- **David Ackerley** has successfully defended his PhD thesis on Wednesday 4 July "The Characteristics and Morphodynamics of sedimentary structure in gravel-bed rivers: implications for sediment entrainment". David’s supervisors are Mark Powell and Andy Carr.
- **Heiko Baltzer** alongside his researchers, Ciaran Robb and Pedro Rodriguez-Veiga, won an international award, under the umbrella of Copernicus, the European Programme for Earth Observation. This recognises their pioneering research to reduce the devastating effects of deforestation.
     Read full article
- Postgraduate Research students **Jordan Bestwick** and **Chris Nedza** were both awarded prizes at the Palaeontological Association Annual Meeting. Jordan won the President’s Prize for his talk and Chris won the Council Poster Prize for his poster. Jordan’s prize winning talk was also picked up by Nature News.
     Read full article
- PhD researchers **Daryl Blanks** and **Laura Ward** attended the Annual Mineral Deposits Studies Group Conference and were jointly awarded the Rio Tinto Best Student Talk prize for their research on the Munali Nickel deposit, Zambia, and the use of magnetite for new exploration approaches. **Laura Ward** also picked up the MDSG Best Project prize for her 2017 MGeol thesis.
- **Daryl Blanks** has been awarded funds from the Whitaker Award as a contribution to attend a post-conference field trip of the IPS meeting in Polokwane, South Africa in July.
- **Gavin Brown** has been promoted to Professor of Human Geography, effective from Tuesday 1 August, well done Gavin!
- Recent Geography graduate **Esther Chidowe** won the Royal Geography Society Institute of British Geographers (RGS-IBG) RACE working group Undergraduate Dissertation Prize in the 2017-2018 competition for her Dissertation entitled: “Black Hair: Centring the Offline and Online Geographies of Young Black British Women.” Esther graduated with first Class honours in July 2017, also winning The David Turnock Memorial Prize (BA student exhibiting the best overall performance in the final year examinations) and the William Kirk Prize (best Human Geography dissertation submitted by a final-year student). Esther is currently in China teaching English and is looking forward to her return to the UK to commence the MSc African Studies at the University of Oxford in October 2018.
- **Thomas Clements** has successfully defended his PhD thesis on 31 May “An investigation into soft-tissue preservation: controls on exceptional preservation in the Carboniferous Mazon Creek Lagerstatte, USA”. Thomas was supervised by Sarah Gabbott and Mark Purnell.
- **Efe Enaworu** presented his poster at the English Language Teaching Unit Research Festival on Wednesday 21 February and he was awarded two prizes: People’s Choice Award 1st Prize (Judges’ Choice) Award
- **Esther Chidowe**
- **Gavin Brown**
- **Esther Manwell**
- **Thomas Clements**
- **David Ackerley**
- **Heiko Baltzer**
- **Jordan Bestwick**
- **Chris Nedza**
- **Daryl Blanks**
- **Laura Ward**
- **Efe Enaworu**
- **Esther Chidowe**
- **Gavin Brown**
- **Esther Manwell**
- **Thomas Clements**
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Congratulations

- Sarah Gabbott successfully gave her Professorial Inaugural Lecture on Tuesday 28 November 2017. Her lecture was entitled 'The weird and the wonderful: interpreting the evolution of life through fossils'.
- Gawen Jenkin successfully gave his Professorial Inaugural Lecture on Tuesday 20 February. His lecture was titled 'Green gold? - How to get metals out of the ground in a ‘green’ and sustainable way'.
- Dan Smith has been promoted to Associate Professor in Applied and Environmental Geology effective from Tuesday 1 August. Well done Dan!
- Congratulations to Sara Thornton, a recent PGR graduate, on being awarded a Midlands Graduate School ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership postdoctoral position at Leicester. This is the only one awarded to the University of Leicester this year, so well done Sara!
- Jan Zalasiewicz is the 2018 recipient of the the Prestwich Medal awarded by the Geological Society of London. Read full article.

Staff Update

Welcome to
- Rachel Ard - Programme Administrator
- Hannah Brooking - Research Associate
- Lok Yung (Syrena) Chan - Research Associate
- Thomas Codd - Research Associate
- Mara Duer - Research Associate
- Fernando Espirito Santo - Associate Professor in Environmental Earth Observation
- Cesare Di Feliciantonio - Marie Curie Fellowship working with Gavin Brown
- Yaqing Gou - Research Associate
- John Gulliver - Professor and Deputy Director of Centre for Environment sustainability and Health
- Alexander Hamer - Research Associate
- Tony Hartwell - Network Director Security of Supply of Mineral Resources
- Angela Last - Lecturer
- Jonathan Lee - Research Associate
- Lyndsay McCarthy - Programme Administrator
- Patrick O’Reilly - Research Associate
- Matthew Payne - Research Associate
- Suzanne Picazo - Research Associate
- Stefano Portelli - Research Associate
- John Roberts - Research Software Apps. Developer
- Catherine Russell - Teaching Fellow

A fond farewell to...
- Mariano Garcia Alonso
- Carys Bennett
- Rob Goodall
- Jenny Inwood
- Manuel Keith
- Victoria McCoy
- Max Mookamp
- Sally Morgan
- Gemma Ollerenshaw
- Ciaran Robb
- Minerva Singh
- Dipal Soni
- Chris Stocker
- Surekha Tailor
- Donna Taylor
- Genna Tyrrell
- Catherine Walker

Maternity leave
- Hayley Keatley-Lill

News

The curse of zombie fossils
New research by Mark Purnell has revealed how the history of life can be distorted by the ways animals decompose and lose body parts as they decay - and the ways in which decayed bodies ultimately become fossilised. Read full story

The story of skeletons
What links the narwhal’s tusk, ancient trilobites, Richard III (and his drinking habits), tumbleweed, an argonaut, and the outstretched fourth finger of a pterosaur? They are among the cast of characters that feature in a new book by University of Leicester professors Jan Zalasiewicz and Mark Williams titled Skeletons: The Frame of Life. Read full story

Gentrification masks ugly truths
One of the country’s leading urban geographers, Loretta Lees, has outlined some of her key findings on gentrification in London. In a blog on ESRC Urban Transformations research, Professor Lees outlines some of the key findings from her research – including data showing that more than 135,000 London council tenants have been displaced since 1997. Read full article

Genetic properties help identify illegally traded tropical hardwood
Around 30-90 percent of all tropical hardwood is logged illegally. Checks on the origin of wood, however thorough, are not particularly effective because documentation may be fraudulent. Researchers from the University of Wageningen and Leicester (Arnoud Boom) have now developed a new method for identifying illegal timber. Read full article

Eradicating famine in Africa gets boost through new research
Leicester researchers are part of an international team spearheading a Newton-Utafiti Fund project delivered by the British Council to restore food security to millions of vulnerable households in Kenya following natural disasters. Read full article
University graduate involved in discovery of rare 450 million year-old ‘cone-shaped’ fossil.

International team led by Leicester researchers discover unique fossil of mysterious creature from the Ordovician period

Read full article

Scientists home in on a potential Anthropocene ‘Golden Spike’ in new research

Anthropocene Working Group led by Leicester scientists and invited specialists review the potential settings where a global reference section for the Anthropocene epoch might be searched for

Read full article

Indonesia Visit

Sue Page Visited Indonesia to hold meetings with Forests 2020 partners in Jakarta and Bogor. Meetings were held with key stakeholders for the project, including the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF).

In addition to the Forests 2020 meetings, Sue was also able to make an official visit to the Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) University to hand over the signed memorandum of understanding between the UoL and IPB which will cement the existing strong project and research partnerships between our two institutions.

The next phase of her visit to Indonesia, saw Sue visiting potential field sites for the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)-Sustainable project. She will be visiting West Kalimantan and then Central Kalimantan, before returning to Jakarta for another set of meetings concerned with carbon accounting methodologies.

New mining strategy in Oman

Dave Holwell was part of a team of highly experienced consultants that have completed a national strategy for the development of Oman’s minerals industry, presented to the Public Authority for Mining (PAM) in January. The Sultanate of Oman is currently seeking to develop its promising minerals industry and diversify from the traditional oil and gas sectors. The government contracted a group of consultants led by SRK Consulting, a major global mining consultancy group to review the mining sector and produce a white paper that sets out a new strategy for developing the mining industry within the country.

Annual Mineral Deposits Studies Group Conference

Thirteen members of the Applied Geology research group attended the annual Mineral Deposits Studies Group conference, which this year was held in Brighton on 3-5 January. The Leicester delegation comprised three academic staff (Gawen Jenkin, Dave Holwell, Dan Smith), one postdoctoral researcher (Manuel Keith), five PhD researchers (Daryl Blanks, Laura Ward, Vlad Ene, Eva Zygori, Lewis Banks) and four MGeol students (Sally Worbey, Rumana Khan, Sam Walding, Josh Smiles)

News

Dawn of the Anthropocene concept

New book by Professor Jan Zalasiewicz translates pioneering writings of French scientist Georges-Louis Leclerc, the Comte de Buffon.

The evidence is made widely available for the first time with the first full English translation of Buffon’s concise masterpiece The Epochs of Nature, which is published today – 230 years after the book first appeared.

Read full article

Tiny fossils unlock clues to Earth’s climate half a billion years ago

An international collaboration of scientists, led by the University of Leicester, has investigated Earth’s climate over half a billion years ago by combining climate models and chemical analyses of fossil shells about 1mm long.

Read full article

Reaching for the stars

Geography PhD Researcher Berivan Esen has been awarded a prestigious Amelia Earhart Fellowship, which recognises exceptional women working in the aerospace field.

Read the full article

Jurassic diet: why our knowledge of what ancient pterosaurs ate might be wrong

Whenever we think about extinct animals we often imagine them eating their favourite meals, whether it be plants, other animals or a combination of both.

Read full article

Scientists discover strange ‘nude’ fossil creature from half a billion years ago

Scientists from our School of Geography, Geology and the Environment have discovered the fossil of an unusual large-bodied ‘nude’ sea-creature from half a billion years ago.

Read full article

Video essays tell women’s compelling stories

The powerful testimonies of women’s lived experience in challenging environments is being captured in a series of compelling ‘video essays’ as part of a project by Brett Matulis to re-envision nature writing.

Read full article
**News**

**New species of rare ancient ‘worm’ discovered in fossil hotspot**

A team of researchers including Emeritus Professor David Siveter have discovered a new species of lobopodian, an ancient relative of modern-day velvet worms, in 430 million-years-old Silurian rocks in Herefordshire.

Read full article

**The biggest subject on Earth**

It really is the biggest subject on Earth – the story of a whole planet, what it’s made of, how it works, how it developed over 4.6 billion years, how it supports (and sometimes endangers) us — and how its many stories have been discovered (sometimes in the most unlikely ways, by the most unlikely of people).

Read full article

**Successful HEA Fellowship Applications**

**Senior Fellow**
- Margaret Byron

**Fellows**
- Victoria Lane
- Loretta Lees
- Clare Madge
- Toby White

**Fellows (via Professional Educational Excellence Recognition Scheme (PEERS))**
- Stefano De Sabbata PGCAPP (pass)
- Brett Matulis PGCAPP (distinction)

**Associate Fellows**
- Carys Bennett
- Cheryl Haidon

**IODP Expedition 381 Corinth Active Rift Development**

Erwan le Ber, Laurence Phillpott, Leah Nolan, Malgorzata Bednarz were working at the Onshore Science Party in Bremen.

Read Expedition blog

**Warwickshire Conservation Group**

On Wednesday 17 February Postgraduate Researcher Jordan Bestwick was the guest speaker at the Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group’s education meeting titled; “What did they eat? Converting microwear research into novel outreach and education activities.”

**Netball Success**

The UoL Geography Netball team which now also includes members from Geology played well this academic year, they finished their final game of the league by winning 16-5! The Geography teams have now finished 3rd and 5th in the league, so well done to them for their success this year.

**Snippets**

Thank you to our students who nominated staff for the Students’ Union Superstar Awards – we were awarded 11 in total. Recipients were:
- Simon Benson
- Gavin Brown
- Margaret Byron
- Ben Coles
- Stefano De Sabbata
- Sarah Lee

Loretta Lees gave an interview to the Independent newspaper commenting on the anti-gentrification posters appearing in our cities

View article

Loretta Lees was involved in the Aylesbury estate public inquiry in January, the inquiry overran and continued into April. Loretta gave evidence and was cross examined for a day and a half.

Loretta Lees has been filmed for a documentary which is now out. Watch this space for an exclusive screening. A day in the UK, documentary, ARTE. Caroline Hocquard.

Postgraduate Researcher Ros Nicholls wrote a post on her CENTA placement to the Lake District.

Marc Reichow visited the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand for his Erasmus + Staff mobility and teaching exchange grant.

Sara Thornton put together an A-Level resource with supervisor Sue Page on ‘Tropical Peatlands: Their global importance and role in the water and carbon cycles’. Access the resource

Gregor Hahn attended the IAVCEI 2017 Scientifica Assembly in August 2017, and the short movie from the pre-conference trip has finally been released – View the footage of Gregor in the wild!
Events

Upcoming

- We are delighted to announce that Professor Patricia Daley, Professor of the Human Geography of Africa at the School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford has accepted our invitation to give the Annual Geography Lecture. Details are yet to be finalised but we expect the Lecture to be early evening on 5th December 2018.

Past

- **Petrophysics Summer School**
  We hosted the 3rd Petrophysics Summer School Saturday 30 June - Friday 6 July organised by the NERC IODP Knowledge Exchange Fellow, Sally Morgan. This year 21 participants, from five different countries (by institution, 10 countries by nationality), travelled from all over the world to learn all about the great research tool that is petrophysics. Of note 71% of the participants pool were female scientists as a result of a high proportion of high-quality female applicants. The school provided attendees with a solid foundation of petrophysics knowledge and a framework to build and explore further research opportunities.

- **Cupcake Day fundraiser**
  The School hosted the 3rd annual Cupcake Day fundraiser on Wednesday 13 June. An amazing array of cupcakes were baked, bought and sold to raise money for Alzheimer’s Society and Age UK. The competition winners were Sue Easton and Genna Tyrrell who won yet more cake! The days total came to £174.00.

- **Alumni Open Day**
  It was great to catch up with some of our alumni on Saturday 9 June, we met up with our graduates from the 1950’s to recent years. Thanks to all of our staff who dropped by to chat with our alumni over tea and cake. We’ll be back with more information on 2019 events early next academic year. Watch this space!

GISRUK 2018

**Tuesday 17 April - Friday 20 April**

The Pete Fisher Laboratory for Geocomputation and the School of Geography, Geology and the Environment of the University of Leicester were proud to host the 26th annual GIScience Research UK conference here at the University of Leicester. High praise went out to Stefano De Sabbata and the rest of the GISRUK organising committee for their hard work and dedication in making the event a great success. [See website for further details](#).

- In March this year a high-level delegation from Yunnan University visited the School, interested in forging new links with geology, and indeed across the University. Several Geology staff have been working with Yunnan University for over two decades, examining a famous fossil site from 500 million years ago notable for preserving animals with their soft anatomy. The visit was a great success, cementing the formation of an International Laboratory for Palaeobiology developed between the two Universities.

- The 59th Annual Bennett Lecture took place on Monday 26 February and this year was presented by Dr Susan Loughlin (British Geological Survey, Edinburgh). The title was ‘The role of earth science in disaster risk reduction and development’. [See full details on webpage](#).

- Kevin Tansey hosted an Idea sharing workshop on 22 February, with presentations made by visitors from both Peking University and China Agricultural University (led by Professor Pengxin Wang of China Agricultural University). Staff and students from CLCR shared their experiences and knowledge gained from working on projects using Sentinel data.

- Loretta Lees, Clara Rivas-Alonso (Researcher) and Bahar Sakizioglu (Postgraduate Researcher) were all speakers at Transforming Cities? Gentrification and Urban Contestation in Istanbul & London event at the London School of Economics on Wednesday 7 February. The event was live streamed on Facebook.
Events

January Graduation

Geography Masters students and several Postgraduate Researchers across the School were awarded their degrees, and a couple attended the January Graduation ceremony to celebrate.

Congratulations to:

- Gregor Hahn (MPhil)
- Usman Isyaku (PhD)
- Peshawa Najmaddin (PhD)
- Andrew Tewkesbury (PhD)
- Sara Thornton (PhD)

Geography masters student prize winners were:

- Department of Geography MSc Prize winner *Emma Mai Eshelby* for the best student on a taught MA or MSc programme within Geography (excluding GIS and Environmental Informatics)
- RICS Prize winner *Joseph Lewis* for the best MSc GIS or MSc Environmental Informatics dissertation

A few of the graduates of the Blended Learning Postgraduate Certificate programme ‘Quarry Management and Operations’ joined the celebrations alongside a representative from LafargeHolcim, Keith Wills, and the Course Manager, Toby White.

*Chris Stocker* performed as a member of the choir at the graduation ceremony which was a wonderful way to contribute to the event.
Congratulations to graduating Postgraduate students:

- Hanadi Alharbi (PhD)
- Chloe Barnes (PhD)
- Stephanie Bond (MPhil)
- James Booth (PhD)
- Sarah Cook (PhD)
- Alex Hay (PhD)
- Saeid Hmmed (PhD)
- Sa’ad Ibrahim (PhD)
- Laura McLennan (PhD)
- Leah Nolan (PhD)
- Ajoke Onojeghuo (PhD)
- Janet Sherwin (MPhil)
- Zardasht Taha (PhD)
- Hao Wang (MPhil)
- James Wheeler (PhD)

Events

July Graduation

Undergraduate, Masters students and several Postgraduate Researchers across the School were awarded their degrees on Thursday 19 July at our School graduation reception in the Bennett marquee.

Student prize winners were as follows:

- **Omar Amri** - College of Science and Engineering Prize (best second year Geology Student)
- **Omar Amri** - Applied and Environmental Geology Prize (most outstanding second year Applied and Environmental Geology student)
- **Berivan Esen** - Geography Postgraduate Seminar Prize (best research talk given by a Geography postgraduate student)
- **Joseph Gillen** - Rhoda Bennett Prize (Geology student receiving an outstanding mark in the assessment of an overseas field course in their third or fourth year of either BSc or MGeoL degree)
- **Thomas Gray** - Palaeontology Association Prize (student achieving the best performance in palaeontology in the second or penultimate year of the degree course)
- **Evelyn Granat** - Alumni Prize (final year Geology student who displayed academic excellence)
- **Evelyn Granat** - BNOC-CONOCO-Gulf Mapping Prize (most outstanding geological map and thesis)
- **Thomas Green** - Geography Best First Year Student Prize
- **Amy Harris** - John H Paterson Prize (Geography second year student achieving the highest mark for their dissertation proposal)
- **Matthew Harris** - Institute of Quarrying Award (current second year student who achieved the highest marks in the first year module GL1104 Natural Resources and the Environment)
- **Rob Hayes** - East Midlands Geological Society Beryl Whittaker Prize (Geology undergraduate who achieves the highest mark for the fourth year Masters Research Project)
- **Rob Hayes** - Dick Aldridge Award (Geology final year student who has promoted interest in the field of palaeoecology)
- **Joshua Hudson** - Head of School Prize for Geography (best third year student that has made the greatest contribution to Geography)
- **Naren Kondhia** - Head of School Prize for Geography (best third year student that has made the greatest contribution to Geography)
- **Rumana Khan** - The Institute of Minerals and Mining Prize (best final year student in Applied and Environmental Geology)
- **Daniel Lynch** - David Turnock Memorial Prize (BA Geography student exhibiting the best overall performance in the final year examinations)
- **Lucy Mitchell** - William Kirk Prize (Best Human Geography Dissertation)
- **Irina Napoleao** - London Petrophysical Society Award (student demonstrating special interest, understanding and ability in Petrophysics)
- **Chris Nedza** - Sylvester Bradley Award (best research talk given by a Geology postgraduate student)
- **Shawn Odukwe** - Shell Geophysics Prize (Best third year Geophysics student)
- **Richard Palmer** - Shell Geophysics Prize (most outstanding geophysical project report of the MGeoL Geophysics course)
- **James Pearson** - PESGB Individual Mapping Award (Student who achieves the highest mark for Introductory Field Based Project)
- **Alex Rutson** - British Geophysical Association Prize (second year achieving highest mark in GL2108)
- **Ella Sample** - Mineralogical Society Award (Highest ranking second year in Mineralogy and Petrology)
- **Ella Sample** - PESGB Individual Mapping Award (student who achieves the highest mark for Introductory Field Based Project GL2010)
- **Michael Sekula** - Micropaleontology Society Student Award (meritorious grades in Advanced Micropaleontology module)
- **Stuart Sopp** - College of Science and Engineering Faculty Prize (Best second year in Geography)
- **George Stonadge** - MICROMINE Exploration Award (best Micromine project in Mineral Exploration Techniques GL3036)
- **Jarvis Suslowicz** - Michael Read Memorial Prize (Best first year in Geography)
- **Lucy Tomlinson** - Bruce May Dissertation Prize (best physical geography dissertation by a final year student)
- **Amy Wood** - Norman Pye Prize (final year student of merit in Geography)
- **Lori Yates** - Dennis Field Award (final year Geology student who has displayed qualities of scholarship, enthusiasm, determination and integrity throughout the course)

View the graduation videos
Events

Postgraduate Research Event

On Wednesday 9 May, we held the first Postgraduate Research Day. The event combined the previous presentation day in Geography with the Sylvester Bradley Talks from Geology.

We had a programme packed with presentations and posters covering a huge range of topics, from Mars to melanosome morphologies, and text mining to microplastics.

The prize winners were:

- Geography Award for best talk: **Berivan Esen**
- Geography Poster prize: **Tom Newman**
- SB Award for best talk: **Chris Nedza**
- Geology Poster prize: **Laura Ward**

Thanks to everyone who took part!