

Mapping out the future

Strategic planning was introduced at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) in 1998 as a way to involve committees, Fellows and members, staff and other interested parties in helping to shape what we do to deliver our objective of 'advancing geographical science'. The Society benefits from being a broad church with many different interest groups and this process enables everyone to have a voice.

In recent years, the strategies have helped in a number of ways: for example, they enabled the Society to open fully to the public, including access to our wonderful collections in our enhanced facilities on Exhibition Road; to double our grants programme to support scientific expeditions and field research; to grow new areas of activity to support and promote geography at schools, in universities, and as a profession and create a national Ambassadors programme for young people; and to develop a respected voice in our advocacy for geography across government.

Equally as important has been the huge expansion of our work with geography enthusiasts. These are the huge numbers of non-specialists and travellers in our membership as well as in the public beyond and in the UK's many diverse communities, whom we inspire and engage in learning about our world through discussions, lectures, interviews, exhibitions, informed travel and, most recently, through our walking websites Walk the World and Discovering Britain.

Building on what the Society has achieved in recent years through its full breadth of activities, our third strategy - introduced in January following a year of consultation - looks to retain most of our 'core' activities. We also have ambitious and exciting new strategic projects that meet the needs we have identified. We hope that we can successfully fundraise to support them. Among them are projects to improve the teaching of local fieldwork, to develop a Society-led field-research



expedition, to grow professional accreditation, to strengthen further our international work and to extend our regional activities in the UK.

Above all, the strategy recognises that the Society has now reached a position where its reputation is well established in all its operating areas - both traditional and newer - using geography to inspire everyone to understand our world.

The Society's full commitment to being a broad church will continue, encompassing its wide range of audiences and activities, in the many ways it acts for public benefit as a charity, and in the breadth of members and Fellows it welcomes. As the most active and innovative of the geographical learned societies worldwide, and the one with the greatest breadth of work, it's often cited as an exemplar of good practice.

The Society's top-level objectives for the next five years, in brief, are to support and promote the discipline at a time of significant change at school, university and in fieldwork; to advance and share geographical knowledge; to inspire, train and accredit those studying and working with geography; to raise further the Society's profile and standing; to support and develop the Society's

membership and staff; and to ensure that we have a sustainable financial future.

Fieldwork is a strong theme that runs through the strategy in our work with different audiences, as is the use of communications technologies, and membership recruitment that doesn't add further pressure on the enormously popular London lectures.

The recently introduced changes in government policy will undoubtedly bring challenges and opportunities, too. For example, decisions are anticipated by mid-2012 on geography's position in the new National Curriculum and on the timetable for creating it. As a Society whose expertise is sought and respected, we anticipate being involved in that work.

In short, the near future won't be easy for us as the recession continues to bite. But the world's leading scholarly geographical society is in good heart and is looking forward to the next five years. We have an essential role to play shaping and sharing the understanding of a world whose future is being threatened by the very success of the human species in exploiting our planet. Thank you for supporting us!
Dr Rita Gardner Director, RGS-IBG



The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) promotes enjoyment and understanding of our world. Membership is open to all. You may use geography in your profession, have a thirst for geographical knowledge or a passion for travel. *Geographical* is the Society's magazine and is available as part of membership. To find out more, call the Membership Office on 020 7591 3080



ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY (WITH IBG)

SELECTION OF EVENTS FOR MAY

2 May, 7.30pm
The search for the Inca gold in the Llanganates National Park in Ecuador
 (Lecture, Bath)

Major Ken Hames (BBC *Beyond Boundaries*) and Jacki Hill-Murphy tell the story of the first British-led expedition into this remote and hostile area in the Andes to follow Valverde's Gold Trail. Beautiful photographs and film footage will highlight the magical, fairytale appearance of this biodiversity hotspot.
 For further details, visit www.rgs.org/westandsouthwales

9 May, 7pm
Landscapes of South Island, New Zealand
 (Lecture, Basingstoke)

Dr Trevor Bennetts gives a geographer's insight into the remarkable range of landscapes that makes up New Zealand's South Island.
 For further details, visit www.rgs.org/south



16 May, 7pm
Keeping pace with a digital revolution
 (21st Century Challenges, London)

Are societies equipped to keep pace with the consequences of our reliance on digital technology? Speakers include Ben Hammersley, Downing Street's adviser on post-digital geopolitics, Nick Harkaway, author of *The Blind Giant: Being Human in a Digital World*, and Dr Aleks Krotoski, technology journalist and broadcaster.
 Tickets: RGS-IBG members £7, non-members £10. Visit www.rgs.org/whatson or call 020 7591 3100

21 May, 6.30pm
High Caucasus
 (Lecture, London)

Tom Parfitt, Moscow correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*, describes his 1,600-kilometre walking expedition across Chechnya, Dagestan and other republics of the Greater Caucasus mountain range in Russia, a journey that was supported by the Society's 2008 Neville Shulman Award.
 Open to RGS-IBG members only. Repeated at the Society's City branch on 22 May. For further details, visit www.rgs.org/whatson

29 May, 7pm
Discovering Tajikistan
 (Travel event, London)

Come along to an informative evening for first-time travellers to the Central Asian republic of Tajikistan. Network with exhibitors and fellow travellers and ask questions of our expert panel, which will include Huw Thomas, co-author of the Odyssey guidebook *Tajikistan and the High Pamirs*.
 Tickets: RGS-IBG members £10, non-members £15. Price includes wine and an information pack. Visit www.rgs.org/travel or call 020 7591 3100

30 May, 8pm
Ski 8000
 (Lecture, Stamford)

Accomplished British mountaineer Kenton Cool relives his exhilarating expeditions, during which he descended, on skis, a series of 8,000-metre peaks, including Cho Oyu, the world's sixth highest mountain. Venue: Stamford Arts Centre, 27 St Mary's St, Stamford, Lincs, PE92DL.
 Tickets: Open to all; RGS-IBG members and one guest £9 each (quote membership number). To book, call 01780 763 203



The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) is a leading world centre for geographers and geographical learning. One of our aims is to stimulate the awareness and enjoyment of the subject to a diverse range of people.

Geography is about the understanding of the people, places and environments of our world, the processes by which they are changing, and the interconnections between them - both locally and globally.

The Society carries out a wide range of activities to support these aims. We support research groups; promote geography within the national curriculum; produce scholarly publications; provide training in scientific field techniques and expeditions; offer information through our large map collection, library and picture library, and engage the wider public through our popular national lecture series.

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