The Geography Programme is a foundation member of the large and diverse School of People, Environment and Planning. Over the last couple of years the School has expanded dramatically to become in all but name the faculty of social sciences. Of course this change has caused teething troubles and anxieties as old disciplinary and administrative relationships have been transformed. However, opportunities exist alongside these anxieties; opportunities to talk and act between the disciplinary silos; and opportunities to consider the rich ways of understanding the world offered by the natural and social sciences. But to grasp these opportunities we need to create and maintain conversations amongst ourselves and our wider colleagues.

With this goal in mind, and with thanks to the sterling efforts of Dr Martin Brook, we decided to (re)launch Compass Points as the newsletter of the Geography Programme at Massey University. Whilst each issue of Compass Points will respond to current events in the Geography Programme, the broad emphasis will be on producing a newsletter that will keep our current students, graduates, and the wider geographic community informed about the many interesting things currently going on in the Geography Programme at Massey University.

Throughout this newsletter we thus plan to include news of novel developments in the courses we are offering, celebrate the success of our students through scholarships attained and thesis completions, list publications from our staff and students, and weave in stories from people involved in the geographic community. If you have any other suggestions, or would like to make a contribution to the newsletter, please email Martin with your ideas or snippets of information (m.s.brook@massey.ac.nz).

You come back impressed, once you’ve been up there, with how thin our little atmosphere is that supports all life here on Earth. So if we foul it up, there’s no coming back from something like that.”

John Glenn, Astronaut

Introducing our staff

Dr Matt Henry is head of the Geography programme and coordinates 145.216 Urban Environments, 145.301 Research Practice in Human Geography and 145.701 Critical Histories in Human Geography. Matt’s current research involves a series of projects that examine the intersection of space and governing.

Prof. Mike Roche coordinates 145.111 Society, Environment & Place 145.213 Resource Conservation, 145.214 Social Change & Environment and 145.318 Geopolitics and 145.706 Historical Geography. Mike’s interests are varied and have recently focused on the New Zealand timber industry and soldier settlement in the 1920s &1930s, and agriculture.

Dr Juliana Mansvelt coordinates 145.311 Geographies of Globalisation and 145.710 Consumption & Place. Juliana is involved with research into the leisure and work experiences of the elderly, as well as experiences of retirement village living and consumer ethics.

Dr Ian Fuller coordinates 145.121 Introduction to Physical Geography, 145.222 Rivers & Slopes, 145.327 River Dynamics, 145.303 Alpine Physical Geography and 145.705 Fluvial Geomorphology. Ian’s research focuses on river behaviour, especially sediment budgeting.

Mr David Feek is our technician, and supports all aspects of Geography. David loves undertaking fieldwork.

Mrs Olive Harris is our friendly Geography administrator.
Mike has organised an excellent range of speakers for semester 2. Seminars are held in GLB3.02, and look out for precise timings and dates on the Geography Programme website and posters up around the Building. Undergrads, members of the public and fellow academics are all welcome!

Dr Libby Robin (Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, ANU)
Prof Phil Morrison (Geography, Victoria University of Wellington)
Dr Juliana Mansvelt (Geography Programme, Massey University)
Dr Nigel Parsons (Politics Programme, Massey University)
Dr Matt Henry (School of Geography, University of Auckland, New Zealand)
Dr Martin Brook (School of Geography, University of Plymouth, UK)

New Zealand Geographical Society Conference

The 24th NZGS conference ("Inequality, Sustainability, Policy: Geography Across the Divide") was held at Victoria University of Wellington July 2-5, 2008. A substantial Massey contingent headed down State Highway 1 to present work, including the following presentations:

Fuller IC, Richardson J, Bashier L & Dykes R. Morphological budgeting as a tool to manage gravel extraction in the upper Motueka River, Nelson, New Zealand.

Fuller IC & Marden M. Connectivity in steepland environments: complex behaviour at the slope-channel nexus and implications for sediment delivery.

Mansvelt J. Consuming Narratives: shopping stories in later life, and the ageing work I am doing now focuses on consumption and ageing rather than leisure and work.

Roche M & Firdos S. Forests and forestry: India and New Zealand.

Schwendel AC, Death R & Fuller IC. Influence of bedload transport on benthic invertebrate communities in mountain streams.

More details can be found at:
http://www.vuw.ac.nz/nzgs2008/

Geopolitics 145.318

In a decisive moment in 2007 we decided to disestablish our Regional Studies Asia Pacific paper and replace it with another 300 level human geography offering – 145.318 Geopolitics. This is the only Geopolitics paper in New Zealand (and possibly Australia as well)! It dovetails nicely with the related teaching interests and research interests of Matt Henry and Mike Roche. It has also given Mike the excuse to explore the Antarctic display at the Canterbury Museum and visit the International Antarctic Centre in Christchurch. We also look forward to students from other programmes coming on board.

New Zealand being the host country for the 2008 United Nations World Environment Day, Dr Martin Brook was invited to take part in a climate change debate with Ruud Kleinpaste (TV’s “Bug Man”) and others in Christchurch. Unfortunately the other team won, but the importance of global environmental issues was the real winner on the night, Martin claims.

Research Grants

Geography Programme staff have been very successful in securing research funding from a range of sources recently. As well as Massey University Research Fund monies, recent grants obtained include the following:
Prof. Mike Roche was awarded $48,000 by the BRCSS Biological Economy team
Prof. Mike Roche was awarded funding from the International Visitor Fund (Massey University) for a project entitled “TimeTeam”.
Dr Juliana Mansvelt and co-researchers were awarded $45,143 by the Ministry of Education for a project entitled ‘Professional Development for E-learning: Adoption, implementation and improvement’.

Dr Martin Brook was awarded $108,000 to purchase a ground penetrating radar (GPR). The GPR looks downwards below ground and images the subsurface. It can be used in a range of disciplines such as glaciology and sedimentary stratigraphy, as well as for civil engineering and archaeological applications (e.g. “TimeTeam”).

Dr Matt Henry was awarded $3000 from the International Visitors Research Fund to bring Dr Richard Yarwood from the UK to look at rural policing issues.

The Perils of Fieldwork
(Guess who?)

Fieldwork can be hazardous for human geographers as well, and I’m not referring to dust allergies or paper cuts from archival work. Earlier this year, a member of the Geography staff ventured into suburban Miramar in order to look at some houses built in the 1920s under the Workers Dwelling Act in order to meet a severe shortage of affordable housing in the capital (does this sound familiar?). For some unknown reason one of these houses now has a flag pole and was flying the royal standard (though I doubt HRH was in residence – Ed.). Further along the road while photographing a house and comparing the street number and the address on the plan (on his little clip board) the doughty researcher was roundly verbally abused by a neighbour who had decided that the researcher in question was an underling for a real estate company and shouted out in the choicest possible language that the house was not for sale!!

On May 27, we hosted the Manawatu/Wanganui round of the Maataangi Whenua New Zealand Schools Geography Competition. After 10 rounds of activities the team from Tararua College came out on top – well done to all!
GeoNews

A Ministerial Appointment was made in 2007 which has elevated Prof. Mike Roche to the lofty position of the New Zealand Geographic Board. In late October 2007, Dr Ian Fuller was invited to give a paper at a joint GNS-Japan workshop in Gisborne. Ian’s presentation was on "rapid cutting and filling of the Taradale Fan, Waipaoa catchment: response to sediment supply and base level control". Dr Martin Brook’s research team (Team Tasman) grabbed global headlines in April this year. The towfish sonar study of the rapidly growing lake in front of the Tasman Glacier in the Southern Alps found that the lake is over 250 m deep. A time-series analysis of satellite images showed that the lake is now over 7 km long, and growing rapidly, as sections of the glacier snout break off (“calve”) into the lake. The work confirmed a prediction of extreme retreat of the Tasman Glacier snout put forward by Dr Martin Kirkbride in 1999 in the journal Global & Planetary Change. Geography honours student Rob Dykes is now working on a model of 21st century glacier retreat and lake growth, while the project has also acted as a pilot study for Clare Robertson’s PhD studies.

The research created somewhat of a media frenzy, mainly because the Tasman Glacier is iconic – its New Zealand’s longest glacier at 22 km (it was 29 km long until 2 decades ago). Dr Martin Brook appeared on TV1 and TV3 news, as well as being interviewed live on the TV3 Sunrise breakfast show by Carly and James. Martin was also seen internationally on CNN and also across Australia on ABC News. The work also featured heavily on radio, including BBC radio 5 in London. The research was supported by Massey University Research Fund (MURF).

Thesis completions 2007/08

2007/08 has been a very busy year for several postgraduates within the programme. The following students completed their theses:

Master’s theses
Stephanie Mandolla Reconstructing debris transport pathways on constructional ridges: Wahianoa Glacier, Mt Ruapehu.
Erin Nolan Relative age dating of the Wahianoa moraines, Mount Ruapehu, New Zealand.
John Appleby Strain and structure of a temperate, maritime glacier: Te Moeka o Tuawe / Fox Glacier, South Westland, New Zealand.

Honours/Postgraduate Diploma theses
Tyne Crow Glaciation of Park Valley, Tararu Range: geomorphology and chronology based on OSL, cosmogenic dating and tephra chronology. PGDip.
Lisa Hardie Music to My Ears? How the New Zealand Government has shaped the production, distribution and consumption of New Zealand Music. Hons.

Current Postgraduates

PhD students
Simon Boyce No pastoral estate is an island.
John Appleby Ground penetrating radar of the structure and hydrology of alpine glaciers.
Alastair Clement Holocene geomorphic evolution of the Manawatu coastal plain.
Arved Schwendel (Ecology & Geography) Bedload transport and benthic invertebrate communities in mountain streams.

Masters students
Andy Wilson The human geography of the Manawatu coastal plain.
Celeste Milnes Visitor perceptions of natural hazards at Whakapapa and Turoa Skifields.

Honours students
Rob Dykes Rapid retreat of the Tasman Glacier and evolution of a proglacial lake.
Sheryl Paine Assessing long-term bank erosion from aerial photos in the Pohangina River: contributing causes and potential impacts.
Jane Richardson River channel change over the last 50 years in the Rangitikei River and its potential effects on the trout fishery. Funded by Fish & Game (Wellington Region).
Emmie Shaw The Early Nurserymen: Agents of Landscape Change in Canterbury.

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The work on Tasman Lake was particularly difficult, with the two boats, outboard motors and sonar equipment having to be dropped nearby the lake by helicopter (thanks to Helicopter Line, Gislenman Station). Also, there are several hazards, such as icebergs bobbing up at the surface from subaqueous calving (that’s ice breaking off the glacier under water), and also icebergs submerged just under the surface. Near the margins, rockfall into the lake can also be a bit of a hazard. Nevertheless, the project was completed successfully, and it is hoped the work can be extended to the Mueller, Hooker Godley and Maud glacial lakes.

**Fuller’s Fluvial Fascinations**

As well as helping with other people’s glacier projects, Dr Ian Fuller even finds time for some of his own research on rivers! In March this year, on the Motueka River in Nelson, Ian, along with Rob Dykes, David Feek and Les Basher (Landcare Research, Nelson) re-mapped the 3-Beaches reach near Tapawera in the upper river to generate digital elevation models (DEMs). Annual morphological budgets can then be derived. The project used the Geography Programme’s Trimble RTK-GPS (global positioning system). The following month, Ian, along with Sheryl Paine (BSc Hons student) and David Feek, working with Mike Marden (Landcare Research, Gisborne), re-mapped the Tarndale fan near Gisborne. This is part of an ongoing assessment of cutting and filling of the fan, and uses laser scanning, and RTK-GPS.

**Recent Staff Publications**


