

Media Release

Friday 26.08.11

● Geographers to address key issues of the world at International Conference in London next week

All roads lead to London next week (Wednesday 31st August – Friday 2 September 2011) as 1,500 delegates come together for the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) annual International Conference.

More than 350 sessions and 1,500 delegates make this year's conference the biggest ever. The breadth of papers being presented at conference from geographers across the discipline, as well as multi-disciplinary teams, demonstrates the importance of a geographical approach in engaging the public with the challenges facing the world today. From localism and big society, energy management and low-carbon initiatives, to farming and social welfare – geographers, economists, historians and more will be joined by artists to explore the conference theme of the 'Geographical Imagination'.

Highlights from the conference include research findings on:

- How inner London and ex-industrial areas of Britain will be hardest hit by proposed cuts to housing and social benefits
- How 'ID cards' for non-EU national migrants to the UK are as yet serving little use or purpose
- What the 'value' of our atmosphere and the air that we breathe
- Why compulsory energy meters won't save energy and money as the UK government expects
- How a teenagers' sense of place is influenced by the role of historic buildings
- Whether students who volunteer can be viewed as part of David Cameron's Big Society project
- How surfing culture is a model for global citizenship

Field experiences include artist and cartographer Jeremy Wood who will be using Hyde Park as his blank canvas to explore the power of GPS with delegates to create art and prompt public debate. Meanwhile, Mikey Tomkins from the University of Brighton, who also works on promoting community beekeeping in London as Capital Bee Officer, will be taking delegates out onto the streets of London to explore the food production potential of Hackney with his 'Edible Hackney' map.

Media wishing to receive copies of these media releases throughout the conference, as well as details of research highlights and interview opportunities which will be released in advance each day, should

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contact the RGS-IBG media team on press@rgs.org, +44(0)20 75913019, +44(0)20 75193008, or +44(0)7719 712 978.

Please note that the Society is unfortunately unable to offer any specific facilities for the media at the Society during conference, though we are able to arrange interviews with the authors of the research – either in person at the Society, or by telephone. We are also able to assist with any requests for radio and television interviews within central London.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. For further details contact the media and communications office on +44(0)20 75913019; +44(0)20 75913008; +44(0)7719 712978; or email press@rgs.org
2. The annual International Conference is the largest gathering of academic geographers in Europe, with more than 350 sessions, featuring more than 1,300 speakers from more than 35 countries. Delivered over three days, 1,500 delegates will be involved sessions on topics as diverse as localism and big society, health and quality of life, energy management and low-carbon initiatives while artistic performances and plenary speakers will explore the conference theme 'The Geographical Imagination'. Chaired by Professor Stephen Daniels from the School of Geography, University of Nottingham, the conference is 15% bigger than 2010 in terms of sessions, papers and attendance. Delegates and speakers represent a variety of fields both inside geography and from across multiple fields including economics, history, art, philosophy and public health. One third of delegates are postgraduate researchers, while one quarter are from outside the UK (predominantly Europe, North America and Australasia). Full details on the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2011 "The Geographical Imagination" can be found at www.rgs.org/AC2011
3. Commenting ahead of the conference, Professor Stephen Daniels, chair of the conference, said: "We're working in troubling times, environmentally as well as economically, and a geographer's ability to envision the world, its physical and cultural processes, and its potential for change, has never been more important to wider society. Geography matters."
4. The Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers) is the learned society and professional body for geography. Formed in 1830, our Royal Charter of 1859 is for 'the advancement of geographical science'. Today, we deliver this objective by developing, supporting and promoting geography through research, expeditions and fieldwork, education, and public engagement, while also providing geographical input to policy. We aim to foster an understanding and informed enjoyment of our world. We hold the world's largest private geographical collection and provide public access to it. We have a thriving Fellowship and membership and offer the professional accreditation 'Chartered Geographer' www.rgs.org