

GEOGRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION – INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Annual Report 2010-2011

This has been another busy year and once again I would like to thank members of the Special Interest Group for their continued support. We said goodbye to both Julian Maslin and Sam Walker and thanked them both for their contributions to the GAs work. Julian (third from right below) is leaving us after providing tremendous support to new members as our official 'mentor'. Sam (first on left below) is leaving us to take up a teaching post in Turkey. GA Certificates were presented to Roger Nash, Catherine Owen and also to Ashley Kent who, for several years, chaired the GA International Initiatives Fund Committee.

We welcomed Miriam Kybird as our new NGO/charity link member. Miriam works for Plan International and we are able to make use of their facilities for our London meetings. We received requests to join the Group from teachers Mike Govinder, Kate Mawer, Laura Shawyer and Tara Sleggs and hope that they will all decide to become members after attending their first meeting. If so, we will be at full strength with a committee of 10 members. We also have a rapidly growing cohort of corresponding members such as Sarah Maude in China ably looked after by Roger Nash.



Members of ISIG relax at a recent meeting. From left to right: Sam Walker, Roger Nash, Lizzie Biddulf, Susan Knight, Catherine Owen, Adam Nichols, Julian Maslin, Kevin Cook and Marc Titcombe

Notable activities during 2009-2010

The highlight of the year was perhaps, the Study Tour to Poland ably organised by Adam Nichols in the UK and Alex, our Polish guide. The north to south journey through Poland from the Baltic to the Tatra Mountains, investigated the impact of EU membership on environment, economy and society. The programme included visits to Gdansk, Toruń,

Warsaw, Kraków, Owiścim and the Tatra Mountains, providing a range of urban and rural environments full of contrasts.

Margaret Roberts, one of the Study tour participants kindly submitted a delightful article to GA Magazine for its Spring 2011 edition. Her article provides a glimpse of what we geographers get up to on these Tours. Unfortunately, Margaret fell in the Tatra Mountains and broke her ankle. We wish her a speedy recovery. Another publication arising out of the Tour was an article entitled 'Should Jerzy stay or should he go'? Written by ISIG Assistant Secretary Catherine Owen, this is a class activity that looks at the life of a Polish migrant to the UK.

ISIG member Lizzie Bidulph (nee Wilshaw) is leading on the Tanzania 2011 Study tour and on 30th July fifteen intrepid geographers will depart from the UK bound for Zanzibar and northern Tanzania. Lizzie has arranged for willing participants to deliver lessons to the pupils of her Link school just outside Moshi. Those of us who have not taught a 14 year old for many years are naturally dreading the experience. Participants will also have the opportunity to look at aspects of the tourism industry both on Zanzibar and in other National Parks. We are most grateful to Lizzie for organising the Tour this year and would also like to thank, once again, Janice Dickson of Dickson Travel, Edinburgh for looking after all our travel arrangements. Whilst on the Tour we will have the opportunity to celebrate Lizzie's recent marriage to Glen, a previous Study Tour member.

Plans are well advanced for the Sangam India Study tour 2012. This is being organised by ISIG member Susan Knight in conjunction with Sam Woodhouse whose daughter runs the Sangam Centre and it promises to be fantastic experience. Because Sangam can only host up to 10 visitors at a time, we have decided to make this a two centre Tour. Whilst half the party is based at Sangam, the remainder will be based in Mysore and other centres. The Tour starts on August 18th (after the Olympic Games) and participants return to the UK on September 1st. Full details are available on the GA website.

ISIG continues to publicise the Study Tour Bursaries. The amounts available are now more closely related to the overall costs of a Tour with a maximum of £500 being available to one primary and one secondary teacher in their first five years of teaching. One of the teachers taking part in the Tanzania Tour has been awarded a bursary.

We were delighted that the GA, through its GAIF awards, was able to help three geographers. Two, Marietta Dezheva from Bulgaria and Peter Ouma Lusi from Kenya, attended the GA Guildford conference. Peter was hosted by ISIG member Catherine Owen and spent a week teaching in The King Alfred School, Highbridge, Somerset. His school, Kandaria Mixed Secondary School near Kisumu is linked with Catherine's school. The visit was ably supported by Plan UK and Plan Kenya who looked after visas and travel arrangements to the UK. GAIF also funded the visit by secondary geography teacher, Ian Grant, to Ecuador.



Marietta Dezheva (second from left) with members of ISIG Susan, Adam and Catherine at the Guildford Conference



Peter Ouma Lusi relaxing in the grounds of The King Alfred School Highbridge. Both Peter and Marietta (above) were recipients of GAIIF awards and were able to join us at the Guildford Conference.

Both recipients have submitted reports on their visits. We are also grateful to the many publishers at conference who donated atlases and other resources for use at Peter's school.

Thanks to the sterling efforts of Catherine Owen, we were able to produce our second e-Newsletter. This again ran to 8 pages and contained details of the work of ISIG during the year. It was circulated widely including being sent to all overseas visitors and to our corresponding members. It was also distributed at conference.

5 members of the committee were able to attend the Guildford conference and several made contributions to the programme. Susan Knight and Sam Woodhouse presented a workshop entitled 'Places and Spaces'. This looked at the ways in which overseas field visits could be used to generate interesting and challenging lessons. It also provided an opportunity to publicise the 2012 Study tour. Peter Ouma delivered an excellent T2T session outlining differences between geography teaching in Kenya and the UK. ISIG once again hosted an International Rendezvous that provided an opportunity to meet the many overseas visitors to conference. The ISIG was represented at the Association at Work afternoon.

At each of our meetings we have an agenda item entitled 'Travellers' Tales'. This allows members to report on their travels around the globe and to mention geographical initiatives in which they are involved. During 2010-2011 members reported the following:

- Miriam Kybird had visited Colombia, Kenya and Malawi in connection with her work on Shoot Nation and Development Education with Plan UK.
- Adam Nichols visited Malawi and was hosted by McDonald Gunde and Stawa Shaibu, GAIIF visitors to conference in 2009 and 2010. He was able to discuss the development of a GA Branch at Kamuzu Academy.
- Kevin Cook visited Machakos in Kenya on several occasions and was the guest of Veronica Kioko and Elizabeth Mueni, GAIIF visitors in 2006 and 2008.
- Susan Knight spoke of her school taking part in the Olympic Dreams Project. She has offered to provide an article on this for next year's ISIG Newsletter.

GAIIF

This was the first year of the new arrangements for GAIIF as agreed by the GAs Governing Body. Applications continued to be sent directly to GA HQ and were then forwarded electronically to all ISIG members before their meetings. A regular agenda item at ISIG meetings then enabled discussion to take place and recommendations regarding funding to be made. These recommendations were then passed to the Governing Body for their decisions.

During the year GAIIF awards were made as follows:

- Peter Ouma Lusi, geography teacher from Kandaria Mixed Secondary School, Kenya to enable him to attend conference
- Marietta Dezheva, geography teacher from Bulgaria, to enable her to attend conference
- Ian Grant, UK geography teacher to enable him to develop his school's links with a school in Ecuador

Requests for information from overseas geographers

GA HQ continues to receive many requests for information and advice from overseas geographers and ISIG members were able to respond to many of these. ISIG continued to develop its overseas members' database to include such enquiries and details of overseas visitors to conference. The database continues to be managed by Roger Nash.

Kevin L Cook Chair ISIG June 2011