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# Annual Conference 1999

## Welcome from the local secretary

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**Royal  
Geographical  
Society**

with IBG

Advancing geography  
and geographical learning

The Department of Geography, University of Leicester, is delighted to offer you a most warm welcome to the final RGS-IBG Annual Conference of the millennium. We are particularly pleased to welcome back a significant number of delegates who remember the 1981 Conference that was also held in Leicester.

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This year our conference theme is ***Geographies of the Future*** and we are glad that most research groups have taken this as an opportunity to look forward to the new millennium. Our sub-themes include centrality and marginality, ethnicity and earth observation. As you will have noted from the RGS-IBG Research Newsletter, or a visit to our web-site <http://www.geog.le.ac.uk>, our programme contains exactly 50 sessions and well in excess of 470 papers—so there should be something of interest for all our delegates. As an added attraction we are holding our conference alongside the winter meeting of the British Ecological Society. It has been agreed that RGS-IBG delegates will be free to attend papers being given by the BES at the other sides of the campus. We will also be hosting a joint publishers' and trade exhibition in the main Sports Hall adjacent to the RGS-IBG Registration Desk.

In constructing the conference programme we have attempted to avoid clashes of interests, but some overlap has been inevitable. We have also incorporated the new initiative of lunchtime lectures to afford all our delegates an opportunity to hear at least two of our high profile speakers. We are conscious of the local difficulty of commuting between the main University Campus and the Halls of Residence, and have therefore tried to reserve the evening periods for the more social and informal activities.

We are particularly grateful—or should it be 'grapeful'—to Tony Laithwaite, Chairman of *Direct Wines* of Reading, and a geography graduate, who has generously agreed to be our main sponsor this year. In addition, we are pleased to acknowledge the generous support of *Midland Mainline*, *Severn Trent Water* and the *University of Leicester* who have provided valuable sponsorship for particular elements. In addition, the Residential and Catering Services and the Conference Office of the University under the direction of Tim Wragg and Rebecca Wyatt have provided invaluable assistance at every stage in the planning process. And finally our long-suffering printer, Ron Billings, is to be applauded for his professionalism, inexhaustible patience and constant good humour in enabling us to meet a number of extremely tight publication deadlines.

We trust that you will find the programme both stimulating and worthwhile and that your stay in Leicester will be comfortable and congenial. If we can help in any way please do ask – through either the Registration Desk or a local host identifiable by the blue badge.

### **A Word from the Local Secretary**

From a personal point of view, I would wish to record my wholehearted gratitude to every member of the staff in the Geography Department here for their support and encouragement in helping to bring this mammoth enterprise to fruition. They have been constantly bullied and badgered by myself over the past 18 months; they have rallied round to cover for my many oversights and omissions; and yet surprisingly most are still speaking to me!

Although it may appear invidious to highlight particular colleagues for special mention, I am sure that the Department as a whole would wish to record its appreciation to David Turnock, for his herculean labours involved in compiling and editing this attractive Conference Handbook, and within an extremely restricted time frame. Also to David Orme, our departmental Chief Technician, a special word of thanks for taking on the substantial responsibility and workload involved in running the financial side of the conference—and for being a 'good mate'!

And finally, may I record my appreciation of the most generous help, guidance and encouragement I received from Nigel Walford, Kingston University, the previous local secretary. I would also like to thank Lorraine Craig, the Academic Officer at RGS-IBG, who has been my constant mentor and crisis counsellor over the past 18 months.

*Johnathan Young*