Geographical Fieldwork Grant

Royal Geographical Society with IBG

Advancing geography and geographical learning

Recipients 2013

Rachel Blow (Newcastle University and The Centre Ecologique de Libanona). 'Exploration of biodiversity and historic sites, Vohitsiombe Mountain, SE Madagascar'

The mountain of Vohitsiombe in South Eastern Madagascar is special for hosting both threatened endemic wildlife and unique historical and geological sites. The aim of the expedition is to collect data on the biodiversity of the area so that a conservation management plan can be put in place. We will also be collecting data on the ruins of the region's largest Manda Settlement.

Ben Toulson (University of Exeter). 'Expedition Samloem 2013: Exploring Koh Rong Samloem's Hidden Treasures – Cambodia'

The island's dry forests and mangroves are rich in both flora and fauna species. Recent small studies have revealed new species of orchid and a new subspecies of terrapin was discovered earlier this year. Working with a number of groups including Marine Conservation Cambodia, The Seahorse Trust and Koh Rong Samloem Island Resorts Co Ltd the expedition team will perform the first ever thorough terrestrial survey of Koh Rong Samloem, aiming to aid conservation efforts for the island through their findings

Lydia Bach and Emily Waddell (University of Glasgow). 'Glasgow and Suez Canal University Marine Expedition – Egypt'

The project will investigate how coral reefs cope with the effects of climate change and human pressures. The team will compare different Marine Protected Areas with unprotected areas, focusing on main target species. There are two strands of enquiry: to investigate the socio-economic supply chains of the local fisheries, in particular those relating to Bedouin tribes people; to investigate the ability of coralline algae to adapt to more variable environments - these are highly susceptible to climate change and important contributors to reef structure.

Anna Bidgood (University of Oxford). 'Oxford University Geological and Educational Outreach Expedition South-West Greenland'

The expedition is to be undertaken in South West Greenland in a poorly studied, geologically enigmatic area dominated by a 'fossil' magma chamber. The team of four will produce two geological maps and document the geological history of the area using both observation and examination of rocks in the laboratory. The team will document the expedition using a blog and photographs to produce material detailing the geology of the area and the science involved in gathering this information to aid the Education Through Expeditions team in making field science more accessible to schools.

- **Bernard Lundie** (University of Glasgow). 'University of Glasgow Iceland Expedition 2013'

The undergraduate research expedition will take place in Skálanes reserve in Eastern Iceland. The expedition aims to increase bio-geographical knowledge of this fragile high latitude environment. The team will work in partnership with reserve staff and finding s will feed into the management plan for the reserve.

- **Aaron O'Hare** (University of Glasgow). 'The Glasgow University Peru Expedition 2013'

The team will conduct biodiversity inventories of both mammalian and amphibian species to assess the biodiversity of regenerating tropical rainforest. The study will compare three areas with differing human disturbance histories in the Manu Biosphere Reserve, Peru. The project builds on datasets from previous expeditions.

- **John (Christopher) Thorpe-Dixon** (Plymouth University). 'A comparative biogeographic study of the Sadas, Northern Western Ghats'

The northern Western Ghats, are characterised by lateritic plateaus, Sadas, which have a barren appearance in the dry season and as a result were ecologically un-researched – until recently. Sadas are one of the most specialised and fragile habitats in Western Maharashtra, supporting a rich diversity of organisms, they have a key role as micro-watersheds maintaining perennial water supply to surrounding villages. Working with local counterparts, the study will produce a report relating the spatial arrangement and environmental gradients to the biota of the plateaus to answer to ascertain conservation priorities.

- **David MacFarlane** (Durham University). 'A Comprehensive Study of Vatnajökull, Europe's Largest Ice Cap - Southern Iceland'

The team will investigate glacial landscape processes and evolution for outlet glaciers along the South West region of Europe's largest ice cap, Vatnajökull. The 15-strong team will study a wide breadth of processes including hydrological characteristics, supraglacial and englacial sediment transport pathways and proglacial depositional features.

- **John Groves** (Queen Mary, University of London). 'Multi-scale dynamics of Icelandic marginal glaciers: causes & signatures'

This project aims to examine the causes and resulting signatures of glacial change. By correlating discharge and surface lowering with supraglacial debris cover and meteorological variability it will be possible to examine the factors responsible for changes in melt at a large scale. The team also aim to study the signatures of these types of change recorded in the sediment by using macro and micro scale analysis, both in the field and in the lab. They aim to detect signals of retreat, advance and hydrological change by examining sediments located at glacial margins.

- **Anne Toomey** (University of Lancaster). 'The Madidi workshop team: Exploring local perspectives of scientific research – Bolivia'

The project aims to explore the gap between research and the management of natural resources in the region of Madidi National Park, Bolivia. This will be done by holding a series of community workshops to which a diversity of local stakeholders (community members, park staff, municipal government, and scientists) will be invited to discuss the past, present and future of research in the region. The project will facilitate a space for the sharing of different types of knowledge in order to make conservation science and management more participatory and locally relevant.

- **Samantha Kendall** (Royal Holloway). 'Water and Livelihoods within the Imlil catchment area, Morocco'

Over the last decade the semi-arid region of Imlil has experienced increased climatic extremes culminating in the driest summer on record in 2012. A reconnaissance trip in August 2012 found that although lengthy droughts were having substantial impacts on the local community subsistence activities, such as farming. However, people were adapting to changes in climate and beginning to innovate with water management. The research will assist the Imlil community in their development of water management strategies in the face of climatic change.