



Historical Geography at Large

Research in historical geography and in the history and philosophy of geography in the UK, 2001–2011: an overview



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Abstract

This report, commissioned by the UK's Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of an international review of research in human geography in the UK, considers the quality and impact of research within two related fields of particular interest to readers of this journal: historical geography and history of geography. The report, submitted in March 2012 and published here for the first time (with a new introduction) provides an account of the core themes addressed in these sub-disciplines over the last decade; gives examples of key outputs in these fields; and evaluates evidence of the impact of such research beyond the academy, notably in terms of policy and public engagement. The review is particularly concerned with the influence of geographical research beyond the boundaries of the discipline. What we as historical geographers think of ourselves is one thing; our influence within and beyond the academy is another, and it is the latter which provides the focus for the report.

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Keywords: Historical geography; History and philosophy; ESRC; Impact

Foreword

The following report was commissioned by the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Royal Geographical Society with IBG (RGS-IBG), as part of an international review of research in human geography in the UK. The ESRC periodically conducts such assessments of research in subject areas falling within its remit. These reviews are designed to 'benchmark' research quality, capacity and impact in the UK academic community against international standards. Amongst various reports commissioned for this exercise, which also included statistical studies of human geography in higher education, bibliometric analysis and a survey of users, were nine overviews of research quality and impact in substantive areas of the discipline. These included the following report, published here for the first time, on two fields of particular interest to readers of this journal: historical geography and history of geography. The authors of these subject reports were required by ESRC to consult as widely as possible in their fields, especially with relevant subject bodies, and to submit their draft reports to scrutiny prior to the presentation of final reports. Their remit reflects the imperatives of academic research governance at a national level, notably the priority accorded to evaluating 'national' performance against

'international' standards (a priority which is of course far from unique to the UK government).

The report is concerned with the work of a relatively small group of researchers in the UK, making up a fraction of a large and diverse global community of scholars. Moreover, as a description of the actual nature of the research practice of contemporary historical geographers – as expressed, for example, in the workings of an international journal such as this one – the account it presents is necessarily compromised by such a 'national' framework. Nonetheless, as a synthesis of research themes and the health of the discipline in one region over the span of a decade, it is hoped that the report will be of interest beyond the UK. In particular, the paper seeks to correct some widespread misapprehensions concerning the limited impact of historical geography research within and beyond the discipline by presenting evidence, in a succinct and accessible form, of research initiatives which have had significant interdisciplinary and non-academic impacts, notably in the areas of public engagement and heritage policy. It also presents evidence of significant research activity involving both individual scholarship and research in collaborative teams, including work within the arts and humanities as well as the social sciences. In some respects, notably collaborative postgraduate research in the arts and humanities, UK historical geographers have succeeded in expanding the opportunities available to the discipline at a time of significant

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austerity, no mean achievement in itself, reflecting intellectual and institutional developments which may be of much wider interest. For these reasons, the JHG editors believe it fitting to publish the report in the section of the journal devoted to 'Historical Geography at Large'.

Completed in March 2012, the report is published here for the first time. It is presented in its original form apart from changes to the format including referencing (to suit JHG conventions) and some points of clarification that may be especially useful for non-UK readers (added in footnotes). The report of the main Panel, consisting of eight non-UK academics and chaired by David Ley (University of British Columbia), was published in March 2013.¹

Introduction

In the UK, historical geography and the history and philosophy of geography share a number of characteristics. They are conspicuously interdisciplinary fields, connecting geography with a range of other disciplines such as history, archaeology, philosophy and science studies; they have bridged research traditions within social science, natural science, arts and humanities; and they are areas in which the authorship of books remains a key form of scholarship. Moreover, over the last decade, the two fields have become more closely related, notably through work on the history of geographical knowledge. There are nevertheless some significant differences between them and a fuller account would require separate treatment, as in the annual reports for *Progress in Human Geography*. For the purposes of brevity, they are treated here as cognate but not identical fields.

The evidence base for this Overview includes consultation with the two relevant RGS-IBG Research Groups,² communications from individuals within the UK and overseas, published reviews and data from Research Councils and organizations beyond Higher Education. The period covered encompasses the most recent Research Assessment cycle (2001–7) but extends well beyond it.³ The review is particularly concerned with the influence of geographical research beyond the boundaries of human geography itself. What human geographers think of themselves is one thing; how they have influenced and perhaps shaped the broader landscape of the social sciences is another. In terms of the disciplinary balance of trade, the emphasis here is more on exports than imports.

Overview of research

Core themes

The breadth and diversity of work in historical geography and the history and philosophy of geography is generally acknowledged: these fields cover a wide territory.⁴ This breadth is reflected in the number of themes listed here.

1. *Global historical geographies*: geographical research on globalization in the 1990s stimulated new approaches to the history of global economic, social, political and cultural networks. In this field, previous work on the economic history of industrialization and trade has been joined by new emphases on cultural, social and political aspects of globalisation. Exemplary texts, such as Ogborn's *Global Lives*,⁵ or in-depth scholarship (such as Newson and Minchin's work on the Portuguese slave trade in early modern Spanish America),⁶ reflect a new degree of maturity of work by historical geographers in this field, setting new agendas for the coming decade.
2. *Geography and empire*: UK historical geographers have provided influential models for research into the political economy, culture and societies of empire.⁷ Historical geographers have contributed significantly to research on British imperial government and regulation,⁸ while geographical studies of settlement, migration and identity have contributed to the social and economic history of empire.⁹ The impact of such work is evident within the influential *Studies in Imperialism* series published by Manchester University Press: as an invited contribution to the 100th volume confirms, new approaches to space and place have had a major impact within imperial history.¹⁰
3. *Geography, science and technology*: historical geographers have made key contributions to the study of science and technology. At a general level, geographical research has provided new insights into the production, circulation, embodiment and governance of science. This is reflected in works such as Livingstone's book *Putting Science in its Place*,¹¹ for example, and in the ESRC-sponsored 'Locating technoscience' project.¹² At a more specific level, new research by historical geographers in the history of science has significantly shaped the research agenda of scholars in cognate fields: the geography of Enlightenment science;¹³

¹ International benchmarking review of human geography, <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/tools-and-resources/impact-evaluation/UK-human-geography.aspx> (consulted 5 July 2013). The Report's positive portrait of the health of human geography in the UK was widely highlighted in the geographical profession. See: Research and higher education policy, <http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Advocacy+and+Policy/Research+and+higher+education+policy.htm> (consulted 5 July 2013).

² Historical Geography Research Group (HGRG) and the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG), both affiliated to the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG).

³ The UK's first Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) was held in 1986; the most recent was held in 2008, covering the period from 2001 to 2007. The Research Excellence Framework, due to report in 2014, will evaluate research over the period from 2008 to 2013. It should be noted that the ESRC Benchmarking reports were unrelated to these exercises and have no direct bearing on funding to universities: their role is to inform ESRC about the health of disciplines within its remit, and to inform future strategy.

⁴ A.R.H. Baker, *Geography and History: Bridging the Divide*, Cambridge, 2003; G. Winder, Historical geography, in: R. Kitchin, N. Thrift (Eds), *International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography*, Oxford, 2009, 152–157; J. Agnew and D. Livingstone (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*, London, 2010; R. Johnston, J. Sidaway, *Geography and Geographers*, 6th edn, London, 2004.

⁵ M. Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550–1800*, Cambridge, 2008.

⁶ L. Newson and S. Minchin, *From Capture to Sale: The Portuguese Slave Trade to South America in the Early Seventeenth Century*, Leiden, 2007.

⁷ A. Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain*, London, 2001; D. Lambert and A. Lester A (Eds), *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire*, Cambridge, 2006; D. Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity During the Age of Abolition*, Cambridge, 2005.

⁸ R. Phillips, *Sex, Politics and Empire*, Manchester, 2006; P. Howell, *Geographies of Regulation: Policing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the Empire*, Cambridge, 2007; S. Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities*, Oxford, 2007.

⁹ R. Butlin, *Geographies of Empire: European Empires and Colonies c. 1880–1960*, Cambridge, 2009; A. Blunt, *Domicile and Diaspora: Anglo-Indian Women and the Spatial Politics of Home*, Oxford, 2005.

¹⁰ A. Lester, Spatial concepts and the historical geographies of British colonialism, in: A. Thompson (Ed), *Writing Imperial Histories*, Manchester, 2013.

¹¹ D. Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place*, Chicago, 2003.

¹² Locating technoscience, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/jsts/locating-technoscience/> (consulted 28 June 2013).

¹³ R. Mayhew, *Enlightenment Geography: The Political Languages of British Geography, 1650–1850*, London, 2004; C. Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically about the Age of Reason*, Chicago, 2007.

science, exploration and travel;¹⁴ the science and politics of 'race';¹⁵ geographies of Victorian science;¹⁶ epistemology and practice in the field sciences;¹⁷ and geography, museums and collections.¹⁸

4. *Historical geographies of environment*: interest in contemporary issues of climate change and environmental policy has given added impetus to historical research on environmental themes: this research has not just added new data, it has sought to understand the way environmental problems are incorporated into wider political and moral narratives.¹⁹ Examples of recent historical research topics include the politics of Antarctic science,²⁰ the role of climate science in urban design,²¹ the socio-technical politics of drought and water demand,²² and the public discourse of climate change.²³
5. *Geography's core concepts*: research on the genealogy of geography's key concepts – including territory, space, place, region, landscape and environment²⁴ – has inspired researchers in many other disciplines, including archaeology, anthropology, sociology, history, literature, the creative arts, politics and science studies. This influence was particularly visible within AHRC's high-profile interdisciplinary Landscape and Environment research programme, directed by Stephen Daniels.²⁵
6. *Geography and philosophy*: the discipline's continued engagement with philosophical writing on space, place and experience is reflected in work on continental European philosophers, including Kant, Foucault and Badiou, as well as key thinkers more generally.²⁶ In recent years, many UK geographers interested in philosophies of practice have embraced the rubric of 'non-representational theory'.²⁷ While the term itself has not travelled far beyond the discipline, within geography it has been associated with philosophical writing on landscape, embodiment and dwelling.²⁸
7. *Maps, print and visual culture*: many UK historical geographers continue to undertake significant research on map history. Scholars are contributing significantly to volumes in preparation for the authoritative University of Chicago *History of Cartography* series, notably its nineteenth-century volume (edited by Roger Kain).²⁹ In parallel with developments in the history of cartography, UK historical geographers have pioneered a vibrant new area of scholarship on the historical geography of script, print culture and publishing.³⁰
8. *Historical GIS*: The emergence of HGIS as a distinct sub-field has been a notable development over the last decade, with UK geographers producing significant research and publically accessible output.³¹ The ESRC-funded HGIS Research Network, established in 2007, is active in international collaborations.³² Publishing practices in the field are also undergoing significant change to reflect the new technical possibilities for analysis and presentation of geographical data.
9. *Other notable or emerging themes*: Other emergent foci within the fields of historical geography and the history of geography include: *Memory studies*, developing geography's longstanding concerns with heritage, landscape and material culture;³³ *Biography and geography*, reflecting new perspectives on life-writing, historical geographers' role in the new edition of the *Dictionary of National Biography* and the UK re-launch of *Geographers Biobibliographical Studies* (edited by Withers and

¹⁴ L. Dritsas and Zambesi: *David Livingstone and Expeditionary Science in Africa*, London, 2010; F. Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire*, Oxford, 2001.

¹⁵ D. Livingstone, Race, space and moral climatology: notes toward a genealogy, *Journal of Historical Geography* 28 (2002) 159–180; D. Livingstone, *Adam's Ancestors: Race, Religion and the Politics of Human Origins*, Baltimore, 2010.

¹⁶ S. Naylor, *Regionalising Science: Placing Knowledges in Victorian England*, London, 2010; C. Withers, *Geography and Science in Britain, 1831–1939*, Manchester, 2010; D. Livingstone and C. Withers (Eds), *Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Science*, Chicago, 2011.

¹⁷ S. Naylor (Ed), Historical geographies of science (special issue), *British Journal for the History of Science* 38 (2005) 1–100.

¹⁸ H. Geoghegan, Museum geography: exploring museums, collections and museum practice in the UK, *Geography Compass* 4 (2010) 1462–1476; J. Hill, Travelling objects: the Welcome collection in Los Angeles, London and beyond, *Cultural Geographies* 13 (2006) 340–366.

¹⁹ S. Daniels and G. Endfield (Eds), Narratives of climate change (special issue), *Journal of Historical Geography* 35 (2009) 215–404.

²⁰ S. Naylor, K. Dean and M. Siegert, The IGY and the ice sheet: surveying Antarctica, *Journal of Historical Geography* 34 (2008) 574–595.

²¹ M. Hebbert, V. Jankovic, V. B. Webb (Eds), *City Weather: Meteorology and Urban Design, 1950–2010*, Manchester, 2011.

²² V. Taylor, H. Chappells, W. Medd, F. Trentmann, Drought is normal: the socio-technical evolution of drought and water demand in England and Wales, 1893–2006, *Journal of Historical Geography* 35 (2009) 568–591.

²³ M. Bravo, Voices from the sea ice: the reception of climate impact narratives, *Journal of Historical Geography* 35 (2009) 256–278; D. Liverman, Conventions of climate change: constructions of danger and the dispossession of the atmosphere, *Journal of Historical Geography* 35 (2009) 279–296.

²⁴ S. Elden, Land, terrain, territory, *Progress in Human Geography* 34 (2010) 799–817; D. Massey, *For Space*, London, 2005; T. Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, Oxford, 2004; D. Matless, Sonic geography in a nature region, *Social and Cultural Geography* 6 (2005) 745–766; J. Wylie, *Landscape*, London, 2007; S. Daniels and H. Lorimer (Eds), Narrating landscape and environment (special issue), *Cultural Geographies* 19 (2012) 3–121; S. Whatmore, Remaking environments: histories, practices, policies (special issue), *Environment and Planning A* 40 (2008) 1777–1900.

²⁵ Landscape and environment, <http://landscape.ac.uk/landscape/index.aspx> (consulted 28 June 2013).

²⁶ S. Elden and E. Mendieta (Eds), *Reading Kant's Geography*, New York, 2011; J. Crampton and S. Elden (Eds), *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*, Aldershot, 2007; J.D. Dewsbury, Unthinking subjects: Alain Badiou and the event of thought in thinking politics, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32 (2007) 443–459; P. Hubbard, R. Kitchin and G. Valentine (Eds), *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, London, 2011.

²⁷ N. Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory*, London, 2008; B. Anderson, P. Harrison (Eds), *Taking-Place: Non-Representational Theories and Geography*, Aldershot, 2010.

²⁸ M. Rose and J. Wylie (Eds), Animating landscape (special issue), *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24 (2004) 475–554.

²⁹ The history of cartography, <http://www.geography.wisc.edu/histcart/> (consulted 29 June 2013).

³⁰ M. Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the East India Company*, Chicago, 2007; R. Mayhew, Materialist hermeneutics, textuality and the history of geography: print spaces in British geography, c.1500–1900, *Journal of Historical Geography* 33 (2007) 466–488; I. Keighren, *Bringing Geography to Book: Ellen Semple and the Reception of Geographical Knowledge*, London, 2010; M. Ogborn, C. Withers (Eds), *Geographies of the Book*, Aldershot, 2010.

³¹ I. Gregory, P. Ell P, *Historical GIS: Technologies, Methodologies and Scholarship*, Cambridge, 2007; I. Gregory, R. Healey, Historical GIS: structuring, mapping and analyzing geographies of the past, *Progress in Human Geography* 31 (2007) 638–653.

³² The historical GIS research network, <http://www.hgis.org.uk/> (consulted 28 June 2013).

³³ C. DeSilvey, Art and archive: memory-work on a Montana homestead, *Journal of Historical Geography* 33 (2007) 878–900; B. Graham, P. Howard (Eds), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, Aldershot, 2008; H. Lorimer, Herding memories of animals and humans, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24 (2006) 497–518; J. McGregor, The social life of ruins: sites of memory and the politics of a Zimbabwean periphery, *Journal of Historical Geography* 31 (2005) 316–337.

Lorimer);³⁴ *Geography and art*, focussing especially on creative practice as a mode of collaborative knowledge production.³⁵

Health indicators

One indicator of the size of the sub-disciplines is membership of the two RGS-IBG Research Groups representing them: the HGRG estimates its current membership at around 500, making it one of the Society's larger Research Groups, while the HPGRG has around 200 members. These Groups are active, organizing regular conferences and conference sessions and, in the case of HGRG, undertaking regular publication, postgraduate training and support, and sponsoring regular seminar series, such as the longstanding fortnightly Historical Geography seminar series at the Institute of Historical Research, in London.³⁶ A notable feature of both Groups is the prominent role of early and mid-career geographers on their Committees, a demographic profile reflecting the intellectual dynamism of these fields.³⁷

In evaluating the health of these sub-disciplines, it is necessary to move beyond their own limits and also beyond human geography. Excellent 'historical' research may today be found in many of geography's sub-disciplines, including highly significant works of economic, cultural and political geography,³⁸ and in general disciplinary journals such as *Transactions IBG*, *Cultural Geographies* and *Society and Space*. Moreover, the influence of historical research in geography is also evident well beyond the discipline, notably within history, archaeology and science studies. The case of archaeology is especially interesting, given its common inheritance of spatial analysis and theory, and common interests in landscape and heritage. Over the last decade, numerous archaeological research projects in the UK have drawn significantly on techniques developed by geographers (indeed, many UK Geography departments contain significant archaeological units) and there is also much common ground in conceptual terms, notably in ideas of landscape.³⁹ Meanwhile UK historical geographers are publishing new research on the history of field archaeology, archaeology and regional identity, landscape and performance, archaeology and oral history, archaeology and the history of 'race', and archaeology and heritage.⁴⁰

Key indicators of the strength of these sub-disciplines include:

- The quality and impact of individual books by UK scholars, notably as published by the University of Chicago Press, now the

world's leading publisher in the history of geography and cartography

- The reputation of key journals and book series, leading the field internationally: these include the *Journal of Historical Geography* (publishing many more papers from a much wider disciplinary and international base than a decade ago), cognate journals such as *Imago Mundi*, and four book series within the UK (Cambridge University Press, HGRG, I. B. Tauris, and Ashgate), two established since 2001
- The prominent role of UK scholars in international specialist conferences, including the triennial ICHG, as well as in sessions at general conferences (the HGRG sponsored nine sessions at the 2011 RGS-IBG conference)
- The presentation of keynote lectures by UK scholars in international series, including the Hettner Lectures at the University of Heidelberg⁴¹
- The role of UK historical geographers in major interdisciplinary research programmes, notably the £5.5m AHRC Landscape and Environment Programme
- The significant number of early-career geographers in historical geography and history and philosophy of geography winning prestigious Philip Leverhulme Prizes (including P Adey, A Blunt, C Bresse, K Dodds, G Endfield, D Lambert, S Legg, R Mayhew, M Ogborn, and S Reid-Henry), representing between a third to a half of all the Prizes awarded to geographers since 2001⁴²
- The significant number of established geographers in historical geography and history and philosophy of geography elected as Fellows of the British Academy (since 2001, A Baker, S Daniels, F Driver, C Withers) and Fellows of the Academy of Social Sciences (N Castree, S Daniels, F Driver, D Livingstone, D Massey, P Ogden, C Philo, S Whatmore, C Withers, R Woods)⁴³
- The number of geographers in historical geography and history and philosophy of geography awarded Leverhulme Major Research Fellowships (S Daniels, F Driver, S Elden, D Livingstone, C Withers), RGS-IBG prizes (A Baker, A Blunt, N Castree, S Elden, G Kearns, D Livingstone, N Thrift, S Whatmore), and RSGS medals (D Livingstone, C Withers)
- The contribution of UK geographers in historical geography and history and philosophy of geography to major reference or review works, for example the *Sage Handbook of Geographical*

³⁴ S. Daniels and C. Nash, C (Eds), *Lifepaths: geography and biography* (special issue), *Journal of Historical Geography* 30 (2004) 449–551; E. Baigent, The geography of biography, the biography of geography: rewriting the *Dictionary of National Biography*, *Journal of Historical Geography* 30 (2004) 531–551; R. Johnston, Learning our history from the pioneers: UK academic geographers in the Oxford DNB, *Progress in Human Geography* 29 (2005) 651–667; F. Driver and E. Baigent, Biography and the history of geography: a response to Ron Johnston, *Progress in Human Geography* 31 (2005) 101–106; <http://www.oxforddnb.com/>; <http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/series/geographers> (consulted 29 June 2013).

³⁵ F. Driver, C. Nash and K. Prendergast (Eds), *Landing: Eight Collaborative Projects between Artists and Geographers*, London, 2002; C. DeSilvey, S. Naylor and C. Sackett (Eds), *Anticipatory History*, Axminster, 2011.

³⁶ The London Group of Historical Geographers was established in 1981. Since 1989 it has held regular fortnightly seminars throughout the academic year in the University of London's Senate House: see <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/geography/documents/pdf/events/lghgthirtyyearson.pdf> (consulted on 5 July 2013).

³⁷ For more details see Historical Geography Research Group, <http://historicalgeographyresearchgroup.wordpress.com/>; History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group, <http://hpgrg.org.uk/> (consulted 28 June 2013).

³⁸ For notable examples, see: B. Parry, *Trading the Genome: Investigating the Commodification of Bio-Information*, New York, 2004; S. Whatmore, *Hybrid Geographies: Natures, Cultures, Spaces*, London, 2002; S. Elden, *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty*, Minneapolis, 2010.

³⁹ M. Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape*, Oxford, 2006.

⁴⁰ F. Macdonald, Doomsday fieldwork, or, how to rescue Gaelic culture? The salvage paradigm in geography, archaeology, and folklore, 1955–1962, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29 (2011) 309–335; D. Matless, Properties of ancient landscape: the present prehistoric in twentieth-century Breckland, *Journal of Historical Geography* 34 (2008) 68–93; D. Matless, Describing landscape: regional sites, *Performance Research* 15 (2010) 72–82; M. Riley and D. Harvey, Landscape archaeology, heritage and the community in Devon: an oral history approach, *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 11 (2005) 269–288; D. Tolia-Kelly, Narrating the postcolonial landscape: archaeologies of 'race' at Hadrian's Wall, *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers* 36 (2011) 71–88; H. Geoghegan, 'If you can walk...': being enthusiastic about industrial archaeology, *M/C* 12 (2010), <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/viewArticle/140> (consulted 29 June 2013).

⁴¹ D. Livingstone, *Science, Space and Hermeneutics*, Heidelberg, 2012; M. Heffernan, *The European Geographical Imagination*, Heidelberg, 2007.

⁴² Philip Leverhulme Prizes (data from 2001), <http://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/news/awards/plp.cfm> (consulted 28 June 2013).

⁴³ British Academy, Section S3 Anthropology and Geography, <http://www.britac.ac.uk/fellowship/sections/index.cfm?section=74>; Academy of Social Sciences, Member Academicians, <http://www.acss.org.uk/about5.htm> (consulted 29 June 2013).

Knowledge, in which 32 of 46 chapters are written by UK geographers⁴⁴

- The international reputation of key centres of postgraduate research training in historical geography and history and philosophy of geography, producing generations of highly skilled researchers in the UK and overseas. The HGRG has organised a successful annual conference for postgraduates for 17 years.
- The profile and impact of research in these fields beyond Higher Education, notably in the UK museum and heritage sectors (see below)

Areas of weakness identified in the consultation process include:

- Concerns over the greater concentration of expertise in historical geography within a smaller number of Departments, meaning some researchers feel isolated (a challenge for collaborative capacity building)
- Pressures for a more utilitarian approach to curriculum content at undergraduate level in many Departments (these may have an impact on the skills provided to potential postgraduate researchers)
- Perceptions that ESRC increasingly favours research with direct policy relevance (while research in social history continues to be funded, including for example the *Legacies of British Slave Ownership* project which has a significant geographical dimension,⁴⁵ it has been suggested that ESRC is reluctant to fund scholarly research in historical geography)
- Relatively limited development of environmental aspects of historical geography within the UK compared to North America, continental Europe or New Zealand (there is potential for greater interaction between historical geographers and environmental scientists)
- Concerns about the concentration of research on the relatively recent past: this is not an inexorable process, as witnessed by the resurgence of interest in the relations between archaeology and historical geography (noted above) and in classical geographical knowledge⁴⁶
- The relatively low level of foreign language competence amongst UK university teachers and students of geography, reinforcing the neglect of non-Anglophone traditions (this

might be addressed by including language training within core postgraduate training, though there are implications for the duration of the PhD)

- Lack of infrastructural support for transnational publishing projects, including translations and editions of non-English language canonical geographical works (a pressing issue in the history of geography, exacerbated by the previous point)

Examples of key academic outputs

Many key works by UK scholars in the fields of historical geography and history and philosophy of geography have already been cited above. Here the significance attached to the monograph deserves particular emphasis. The publication of substantial works of specialist scholarship, often based on research undertaken over many years, is a vital sign of the continued health of the discipline.⁴⁷ Given the quality and quantity of books published since 2001, it seems that announcements of the death of the monograph in British geography have been premature. While the ever-growing ‘tsunami’ of periodical publication is reflected in the preponderance of this form of output in the RAE,⁴⁸ high-quality research monographs continue to be published by historical geographers. Ensuring appropriate infrastructural support for the production of scholarly books, through the continued provision of major research grants and fellowships, remains of critical importance for the future health of the fields under review.

Also of significance are influential edited collections, on subjects including postcolonial geographies, visual culture and tropical landscape, Kant and geography, British modernity, geography and revolution, twentieth-century exploration and geographical knowledge and photography.⁴⁹ We should also consider theme issues of journals representing significant innovation in the field: topics include historical geographies of science, historical geographies of the sea, narratives of climate change and counterfactuals in historical geography.⁵⁰

Examples of non-academic impacts

UK geographers working in historical geography and the history and philosophy of geography have made significant contributions

⁴⁴ Agnew and Livingstone, *The Sage Handbook of Geographical Knowledge* (note 4).

⁴⁵ Legacies of British slave-ownership, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/> (consulted 28 June 2013).

⁴⁶ R. Jones, What time human geography? *Progress in Human Geography* 28 (2004) 287–304; V. della Dora, Topia: landscape before linear perspective, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103 (2013) 688–709.

⁴⁷ In addition to the many books already referenced above, see for example: E. Aiken, *Scriptural Geography: Portraying the Holy Land*, London, 2010; R.J. Bennett, *Local Business Voice: The History of Chambers of Commerce in Britain, Ireland and Revolutionary America, 1760–2011*, Oxford, 2011; Blunt, *Domicile and Diaspora* (note 9); V. della Dora, *Imagining Mount Athos: Visions of a Holy Place, from Homer to World War II*, Charlottesville, 2011; R. Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840–1930*, Cambridge, 2008; P. Elliott, *Enlightenment, Science and Improvement: Geographies of Scientific Culture in Georgian England*, London, 2010; G. Endfield, *Climate and Society in Colonial Mexico: A Study in Vulnerability*, Oxford, 2008; D. Finnegan, *Natural History Societies and Civic Culture in Victorian Scotland*, London, 2009; M. Gandy, *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City*, Cambridge, MA, 2003; P. Glennie and N. Thrift, *Shaping the Day: A History of Timekeeping*, Oxford, 2009; D. Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790–1870*, Aldershot, 2010; N. Johnson, *Nature Displaced, Nature Displayed: Order and Beauty in Botanical Gardens*, London, 2011; G. Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire: The Legacy of Halford Mackinder*, Oxford, 2009; K. Lilley, *City and Cosmos: The Medieval World in Urban Form*, London, 2009; A. Maddrell, *Complex Locations: Women’s Geographical Work in the UK, 1850–1970*, Oxford, 2009; P. Merriman, *Driving Spaces: A Cultural-Historical Geography of England’s M1 Motorway*, Oxford, 2007; C. Nash, *Of Irish Descent: Origin Stories, Genealogy and the Politics of Belonging*, Syracuse, NY, 2008; L. Newson, *Conquest and Pestilence in the Early Spanish Philippines*, Honolulu, 2009; C. Philo, *A Geographical History of Institutional Provision for the Insane from Medieval Times to the 1860s in England and Wales*, Lampeter, 2004; H. Scott, *Contested Territory: Mapping Peru in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Notre Dame, IN, 2009; M. Williams, *Deforesting the Earth*, Chicago, 2002.

⁴⁸ K. Richards *et al.*, The nature of publishing and assessment in Geography and Environmental Studies: evidence from the RAE, *Area* 41 (2009) 231–243. The language of the ‘tsunami’ derives from Phillippe Baveye’s challenging argument concerning the perverse effects of systems of evaluating academic productivity which, he suggests, have led to an unsustainable expansion of periodical publishing; P.C. Baveye, Sticker shock and looming tsunami: the high cost of academic serials in perspective, *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 41 (2010) 191–215.

⁴⁹ A. Blunt and C. McEwan (Eds), *Postcolonial Geographies*, London, 2002; F. Driver and L. Martins (Eds), *Tropical Visions in an Age of Empire*, Chicago, 2005; Elden and Mendieta, *Reading Kant’s Geography* (note 26); D. Gilbert, D. Matless and B. Short B (Eds), *Geographies of British Modernity*, Oxford, 2005; D. Livingstone and C. Withers (Eds), *Geography and Revolution*, Chicago, 2005; S. Naylor S and J. Ryan (Eds), *New Spaces of Exploration*, London, 2009; J. Schwartz and J. Ryan (Eds), *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination*, London, 2003.

⁵⁰ Naylor, Historical geographies of science (note 17); D. Lambert and L. Martins, M. Ogborn (Eds), Historical geographies of the sea (special issue), *Journal of Historical Geography* 32 (2006) 479–688; Daniels, Endfield, Narratives of climate change (special issue) (note 19); D. Gilbert, D. Lambert (Eds), Counterfactual historical geographies (special issue), *Journal of Historical Geography* 36 (2010) 243–366.

Table 1
Selected examples of research impact.

Type of Project	Title	Website	Partners	Description
1. Public history & heritage	<i>Scotland: Charting the Nation</i> (2011)	http://www.chartingthenation.lib.ed.ac.uk/	Charles Withers (Edinburgh), with Christopher Fleet and Margaret Wilkes, supported by SHEFC and National Library of Scotland	Web resource, facsimile publications, book. (<i>Scotland: Mapping the Nation</i> was the best-selling book in Scotland, November 2011)
	<i>A Vision of Britain Through Time</i> (2005; revised 2009)	http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/	Humphrey Southall and the Great Britain HGIS project (Portsmouth) in association with UK National Lottery and JISC	Web-based portal of the Great Britain HGIS project giving access to maps, census data, statistics, election data, travel writing and learning resources
	<i>Old Maps Online</i> (2012)	http://www.oldmapsonline.org	Collaboration between Great Britain HGIS project and Klokan Technologies GmbH, Switzerland, in association with JISC	Portal giving access to digitized maps including the Visions of Britain project, the British Library, the National Library of Scotland and the David Rumsey map collection
	<i>The Cultures of Enthusiasm: Technology, Material Culture and Museums</i> (2008)	http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/PTA-026-27-1611/read	Hilary Geoghegan (Royal Holloway), in collaboration with the Science Museum, supported by ESRC	ESRC postdoctoral fellowship following on from CASE studentship with Museum
2. Research exhibitions	<i>Paul Sandby: Picturing Britain</i> (2010)	http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibitions/paul-sandby-ra-1731-1809-picturing-britain-a-bicentenary-exhibition/	Stephen Daniels (Nottingham), in collaboration with John Bonehill, Royal Academy and Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery	Public exhibition at Royal Academy, National gallery of Scotland and Nottingham, book, public outreach
	<i>Hidden Histories of Exploration: Researching Geographical Collections</i> (2009)	http://hiddenhistories.rgs.org/	Felix Driver and Lowri Jones (Royal Holloway) in association with RGS-IBG, supported by AHRC	Public exhibition at RGS-IBG, web resource, book, public engagement
	<i>Art of the Garden</i> (2004–5)	http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/artofthegarden/	Stephen Daniels and Nicholas Alfrey (Nottingham), co-curators and editors	Major public exhibition at Tate Britain, Belfast and Manchester
	<i>Landing: Eight Collaborative projects between Artists and Geographers</i> (2002)	http://www.gg.rhul.ac.uk/VG/landing/	Catherine Nash, Felix Driver and Kathy Prendergast (Royal Holloway) in association with AHRB	Small-scale art exhibition and webiste, involving 8 collaborations between researchers, technicians and well-known artists
3. Communicating climate change	<i>The Empire of Climate</i> (2010)	http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00wfhgg	David Livingstone (Queens Belfast)	5-part BBC Radio series, audience of 1.6 m
	<i>POLAR: The Art and Science of Climate Change</i> (2007)	http://www3.open.ac.uk/media/fullstory.aspx?id=12102	Kathryn Yusoff (Geography, Exeter) and Katrina Dean (British Library) in collaboration with The Arts Catalyst	Season of public events at the British Library, speakers including Michael Bravo, Doreen Massey, Denis Cosgrove and Klaus Dodds
4. Engaging with new media	<i>Memoriscapes: Voices from the Hidden History of the Thames</i> (2005)	www.memoriscapes.org.uk	Toby Butler (Royal Holloway), supervised by David Gilbert in collaboration with the Museum of London	Downloadable audio-walks for MP3 and commercially-produced CDs, using oral history interviews produced for an ESRC CASE studentship
	<i>Ports of Call</i> (2007)	www.portsofcall.org.uk	Toby Butler (University of East London) in collaboration with the Heritage Lottery Fund, Tate & Lyle and Royal Docks Trust	Downloadable audio-walks, and art trails
5. Other research initiative	<i>Vision for the Canadian Arctic Research Initiative: Assessing the Opportunities. Report of the International Expert Panel on Science Priorities</i> (Council of Canadian Academies, Ottawa, 2008)	http://www.scienceadvice.ca/en/assessments/completed/canadian-arctic.aspx	Michael Bravo (Circumpolar History and Public Policy Group, Cambridge)	Panel report and associated official documentation
	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (2004–)	http://www.oxforddnb.com	Elizabeth Baigent (Research Director of the <i>Oxford DNB</i> , 1993–2003) and others	New edition of an authoritative national reference work, including hundreds of new entries on geographers, augmented with new biographies and theme essays. Historical geographers continue to serve as advisors to the <i>Oxford DNB</i>
	<i>Naturalists: Animals and Human Nature</i> (2009)	http://www.bbc.co.uk/search/schedule/?q=animals%20and%20human%20nature	David Matless (Nottingham) and Hayden Lorimer (Glasgow)	5-part BBC Radio series
	<i>Passengerfilms</i> (2011–)	http://passengerfilms.wordpress.com/	Postgraduate researchers in Geography (Royal Holloway)	Student-led geographical film society organising public showings and talks on themes of historical change, mobility and landscape

Note: This shows selected examples, at various scales, of the non-academic impact of UK research in the fields of historical geography and the history and philosophy of geography. It should be emphasised that these forms of impact may themselves be part of the research process, or may give rise to further research, rather than simply being the means of its dissemination.

to practice, policy and public engagement beyond the academy. The growth of various forms of public engagement in recent years is reflected in a new feature in the *Journal of Historical Geography* entitled 'historical geography at large'.⁵¹ Table 1 provides selected examples of non-academic impact and links to some of the supporting evidence. Appendices 1 and 2 provide a list of external project partners supporting collaborative research studentships in historical geography and heritage.

Themes and exemplars

In thematic terms, researchers in historical geography and the history and philosophy of geography have contributed significantly to non-academic impact in several areas. A variety of projects, including both major national initiatives and smaller projects undertaken by postgraduate researchers, are highlighted here as exemplars (see Table 1 for further details, websites and other examples).

1. *Public history and heritage.* Exemplars include *Scotland: Charting the Nation*, a nationally significant web resource and book project devoted to maps and mapping in Scotland's historical geography, undertaken by Charles Withers in association with the National Library of Scotland;⁵² *A Vision of Britain Through Time*, a major publically accessible web resource created by Humphrey Southall and the Great Britain HGIS project (Portsmouth) in association with UK National Lottery and JISC; and *Cultures of Enthusiasm*, Hilary Geoghegan's ESRC-funded doctoral and postdoctoral research into technology enthusiast groups in collaboration with the Science Museum.
2. *Research exhibitions.* Exemplars of exhibitions based on scholarly research include *Hidden Histories of Exploration*, a public exhibition and web resource produced in collaboration with the RGS-IBG;⁵³ and *Paul Sandby: Picturing Britain*, a public exhibition shown at the Royal Academy, National Gallery of Scotland and in Nottingham.⁵⁴
3. *Communicating climate change.* Exemplars include *Polar*, a season of public events in 2007 held at the British Library devoted to the arts and science of climate change co-organized by Kathryn Yusoff in collaboration with the Library's curator for the history of science; and *The Empire of Climate*, a five-part BBC radio series written and presented by David Livingstone, also featuring Georgina Endfield and Mike Hulme.
4. *Engaging with new media.* Exemplars include *Memoryscapes*, an ESRC-funded oral history doctoral project supervised by the historical geographer David Gilbert in collaboration with the Museum of London, whose outputs included downloadable audio-walks for MP3 player and commercially-produced CDs;⁵⁵ and the *Atlas of Rural England GIS* (2011), a web resource produced by English Heritage, converting the research of historical geographer Brian Roberts into downloadable spatial data files, maps and text.

Impact pathways⁵⁶

The above non-academic impacts have been achieved in three main ways:

- *Public engagement:* Historical geographers have long contributed to specialist and public debate over heritage.⁵⁷ Today trained historical geographers hold key positions within UK heritage organizations (such as National Trust Director of External Affairs, Ben Cowell, or English Heritage Senior Property Historian, Andrew Hann), and the museums and library sector (such as Social Science curator at the British Library, Philip Hatfield). In the last decade, historical geographers have been involved in collaborative web-based public history projects producing geographical databases, maps, audio and visual materials. They have curated public exhibitions, and undertaken research leading to the redesign of museum galleries (for example at the Museum of London). Finally, they have written and presented radio and television programmes for a wide public audience (see Table 1).
- *Policy-related research:* Historical geographers have undertaken commissioned research for many public bodies in the UK. They have served on the governing bodies or advisory boards of major heritage institutions, including the National Trust, Museum of London, Natural History Museum and National Maritime Museum, and public bodies such as UK Office of National Statistics, the AHRC Council and the Research Information Network. In the international arena, historical geographers have contributed to government policy review, as in for example a report by an international expert panel on science priorities for the Canadian Arctic, feeding directly into federal funding of \$87m in 2009 for a field research station in Nunavut (see Table 1).
- *Collaborative doctoral studentships:* CASE (Cooperative Awards in Science and Engineering) studentships have played an important role in bridging academic and non-academic sectors. As noted in a 2005 study, 'human geographers have been far and away the most active participants in the [ESRC] CASE programme, with 28 per cent of all awards classified as human geography...[H]uman geographers' success in the CASE programme suggests that the wide ranging and synthetic skill sets possessed by geographers are in considerable demand by public, private and voluntary sector organizations alike'.⁵⁸ In addition these ESRC awards, the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme funded 37 geography projects from 2005 to 2012 (excluding those in the Landscape and Environment programme), most of them supervised by historical geographers: this represents 7.5% of the total number of CDAs awarded over this period.⁵⁹ This is an excellent performance given the small size of the sub-discipline (for comparison, geographers represent less than 2% of the current membership of the AHRC Peer Review College). Both ESRC and AHRC schemes have proved an effective way of initiating and developing collaborations between historical geographers and external organizations, notably on public engagement and collections-related research.

⁵¹ F. Driver, Historical geography at large, *Journal of Historical Geography* 36 (2010) 243–244.

⁵² C. Fleet, M. Wilkes and C. Withers, *Scotland: Mapping the Nation*, Edinburgh, 2011.

⁵³ F. Driver and L. Jones, *Hidden Histories of Exploration: Researching the RGS-IBG Collections*, London, 2009.

⁵⁴ J. Bonehill and S. Daniels, *Paul Sandby: Picturing Britain*, London, 2009.

⁵⁵ T. Butler, Memoryscape: integrating oral history, memory and landscape on the River Thames, in: P Ashton and H. Kean (Eds), *People and their Pasts: Public History Today*, London, 2009, 223–239.

⁵⁶ 'Pathways to Impact' is terminology used by the UK Research Councils to refer to the variety of channels through which academic research may have non-academic impacts: see Pathways to impact, <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/kei/impacts/Pages/home.aspx> (consulted 5 July 2013).

⁵⁷ D. Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge, 1985; Graham and Howard, *The Ashgate Research Companion* (note 33).

⁵⁸ D. Demeritt and L. Lees, Research relevance, 'knowledge transfer' and the geographies of CASE studentship collaboration, *Area* 37 (2005) 127–137 [134].

⁵⁹ The data have been updated to include the 2012 round (the equivalent figure to 2011 was 30, or 7% of the total); see: F. Driver, Historical geographers in collaboration: patterns and prospects, in: R. Craggs, H. Geoghegan and I. Keighren (Eds), *Collaborative Geographies: Historical Geography Research Group Research Series* 43, 2013.

A significant proportion of all collaborative doctoral studentships awarded to geographers have involved partners in the heritage and museum sectors (see [Appendices 1 and 2](#)).

Conclusion and key points

External evaluations of historical geography and the history and philosophy of geography in the UK paint a notably positive picture. According to an influential survey of the discipline of history, for example, 'Historical geography is in an exceptionally healthy state at the moment'.⁶⁰ A leading US-based historian of empire has recently described her field as 'highly interdisciplinary, drawing on scholarship in literary studies, anthropology, and geography – geography being perhaps the most influential in the long run for recourse to spatial ways of thinking and interpreting'.⁶¹ The President of the Royal Anthropological Institute, also a British Museum Trustee and one of the UK's leading archaeologists, confirms the impact of historical geography on archaeology and anthropology, and also notes the importance of collections-related collaborative research by geographers: 'I anticipate that as institutions such as the British Museum come to define their identity as a world museum these geographical connections, based on the discipline of historical geography, will assume even more significance'.⁶² And for historians of science in recent years, the work of geographers has become essential reading: as Sam Alberti succinctly put it in a recent review of two books by historical geographers for the *British Journal for the History of Science*, 'The geographers have arrived'.⁶³

Fifteen years ago, historical geography was warmly characterized as 'a haven of intelligent eclecticism',⁶⁴ and remains a diverse field today. However, intellectual and research funding agendas in the UK over the last decade have shaped the direction of research in historical geography and the history and philosophy of geography in particular ways. Judged by their record of research innovation and their active involvement in major national research programmes, scholars in these fields have responded positively to the development of initiatives encouraging interdisciplinary and experimental research across traditional boundaries – notably the boundaries separating the social science, natural sciences, arts and humanities. They have also shown enthusiasm for collaborative research initiatives, especially at postgraduate level, as borne out by the studentship data.

The degree of historical geographers' openness to innovation and commitment to interdisciplinarity are features that frequently attract comment from beyond geography and indeed beyond the academy. Dr Tim Boon, Head of Research and Public History at the Science Museum (which has collaborated on five studentships with UK Geography Departments on historical geography projects

relating to science, technology and public engagement) puts it this way: 'We have encountered amongst geographers a liveliness of debate and openness to interdisciplinary studies, coupled with a genuine engagement in the history and meanings of material culture that has led to significant opportunities for good students to give of their best'.⁶⁵

In conclusion, the key points are as follows:

1. Research in historical geography and the history and philosophy of geography continues to be characterized by a healthy diversity of approach and topic.
2. The strength of research in these fields is shown by their influence within geography as a whole, and within cognate disciplines across the social sciences and humanities.
3. Particularly strong research foci include: geography and empire; the historical geography of science and technology; concepts of landscape and environment; history of cartography, print and visual culture; historical GIS.
4. The publication of book-length works remains a distinctive feature of scholarship in these fields, and requires continued support in appropriate forms to ensure its continued health.
5. There are many excellent examples of non-academic impact in the field of historical geography.
6. Interdisciplinarity and partnership are notable features of recent research initiatives, especially involving collaboration with institutions in the heritage and museum sectors.
7. There is a need to address the relatively low level of foreign language competence amongst UK researchers in human geography.
8. There is a perception that ESRC has been reluctant to fund scholarly research in historical geography and history and philosophy of geography in recent years: a clearer statement concerning the value of historical research within major RCUK thematic priorities would be welcomed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the help and advice of those who provided views and responses to a circular sent out in February 2012. Particular thanks are due to the committee members of the HGRG and HPGRG, members of the editorial board of this journal, Dr Catherine Souch, Head of Research at the RGS-IBG for her support and advice, and David Demeritt for supplying historical data on ESRC studentships. I am also grateful to Christian Brannstrom, Miles Ogborn and the referees for additional comments. This report is published with the permission of ESRC.

⁶⁰ L. Jordanova, *History in Practice*, 2nd edn, London, 2006, 85.

⁶¹ A. Burton, *Empire in Question: Reading, Writing, and Teaching British Imperialism*, Durham, NC, 2011, 14–15.

⁶² C. Gamble, The relations between historical geography, archaeology, anthropology and museums research, email communication, 8 March 2012.

⁶³ S. Alberti, Review of D. Finnegan, *Natural History Societies and Civic Culture in Victorian Scotland* and S. Naylor, *Regionalising Science British Journal for History of Science* 44 (2011) 294–296 [294].

⁶⁴ M. Heffernan, Editorial: the future of historical geography, *Journal of Historical Geography* 23 (1997) 1–2.

⁶⁵ T. Boon, Collaboration with historical geographers, email communication, 13 February 2012.

Appendix 1. Partners on AHRC CDA studentships in UK Geography Departments, 2005–12⁶⁶

Arts Catalyst
 Audiences Yorkshire
 Botanic Gardens Conservation International
 British Geological Survey
 British Museum*
 Cittaslow
 Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
 Cornwall County Council
 Derby Museums and Art Gallery
 Dify Biosphere
 Environments Systems Ltd
 Geffrye Museum+
 Glasgow Museums Service
 Imperial War Museum
 Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site
 London Transport Museum
 Museum of London*
 National Library of Scotland+
 National Maritime Museum*
 Oslo Lufthavn AS
 Porthcurno Telegraph Museum +
 Ragged School Museum
 Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)*
 Rufford Abbey Country Park
 Science Museum*
 SouthWest Coast Path
 V&A Museum of Childhood+

* Partners with multiple Awards awards in different rounds.
 + Partners with multiple studentships within a single Award.

Source: <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Pages/Collaborative-Doctoral-Awards.aspx> (consulted 28 June 2013).

Appendix 2. Partners on ESRC CASE studentships on heritage-related projects in UK Geography Departments since 2001 (an indicative list)

British Empire and Commonwealth Museum
 British Library
 Department of Culture, Media and Sport
 Environment Agency
 Forest Research
 Geffrye Museum
 Highlands and Islands Enterprise
 Museum of London
 National Archives
 National Trust
 Science Museum
 Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums

Source: 2001–5 unpublished data supplied by David Demeritt, Feb 2012 (pers. comm); 2005–9 unpublished data supplied by RGS-IBG, Feb 2012; 2009–11 based on web searches (this data is indicative rather than complete).

⁶⁶ This table has been updated to include outcomes from 2012. For more detailed data on AHRC collaborative studentships and historical geography, see: Driver, Historical geographers in collaboration (note 59).