

#KGeogAt100

KING'S
College
LONDON

**DEPARTMENT
OF GEOGRAPHY**

**100
YEARS**

Place, space and time – Geography is all around us! It is in the air we breathe, the food we eat, the fabric of our cities and transport systems, the nature we enjoy.

Equally, it is in climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, homelessness and biodiversity loss. Encompassing both human and physical perspectives, Geography shapes our understanding of the world – and for the past 100 years, Geography at King's has been contributing to this knowledge.

In that time, we have become one of the largest Geography departments in the UK: a vibrant, engaged and increasingly diverse community actively committed to identifying and addressing pressing matters of concern around the world. Today, our staff and students are conducting field work across seven continents. Closer to home, London is a 'laboratory' in which physical and human geographers co-operate on projects ranging from analysing personal air pollution exposure to supporting local government to mitigate floods and adapt to heatwaves.

We are increasingly committed to a co-production of knowledge with societal partners. This involves collaboration with industry, government and civil society, both internationally and within the UK. Long-standing relationships between researchers, policymakers and communities lie at the heart of our collaborative culture.

Our flagship internship programme for master's students is a demonstration of this. Through this programme, we engage with over sixty London-based organisations, with several



internships having been made possible through connections with alumni.

As we grow, we are also increasingly committed to the provision of equality of opportunity and the recognition and promotion of diversity for all our community. This extends to the use of innovative research methods – such as visual and art-based approaches – that enable us to explore issues like colonial legacies and violence against women that are otherwise difficult to articulate.

As the Department celebrates its 100th anniversary, we look forward to deepening collaboration with our partners to contribute to a more sustainable and just future for people and the planet.

Professor Kate Schreckenber

Head of Department
Department of Geography

ABOUT US

Geography making the world a better place

The Department of Geography at King's sits within the School of Global Affairs, Faculty of Social Science & Public Policy.

Located in the centre of London, our horizon for geographical research and study is the world, but also the many ways in which our home city is deeply connected with the wider world. For example, through environmental processes, human mobility, finance and power, ideas and culture.

Along with teaching, our community undertakes problem-solving research on critical environmental, urban and social issues such as climate change, disasters, smart cities, risk regulation, water, human migration and wildfire hazards.

Our research findings contribute to public debates and policy development on global, national and local scales. Three interdisciplinary hubs – King's Climate, King's Water Centre and Earth Observation & Environmental Sensing – bring together academics and practitioners to generate impact. Our geographers are outward-looking and entrepreneurial, seeking to understand the social and environmental challenges faced by different societies around the world and demonstrating how geographers can make a difference.

In the latest UK Research Excellence Framework, the Department ranked in the top 10 for research power, with almost 90 per cent of our research rated as internationally excellent or world leading in quality.

360+
undergraduate
students



250+
master's
students



100+
PhD students



60+
countries
sending students



42%
undergraduate
students are
BAME



95+
countries
home to field
research
collaborations



100+
staff &
researchers



£22.8
in research
grants in the
past 5 years



26th
ranking in the world
according to the 2022
QS rankings of universities
and departments &
9th in the UK



TIMELINE

1922

The Department of Geography was established as part of the 'Joint School' in collaboration with London School of Economics (LSE)

1954

60+ students registered on the BA and BSc degrees in Geography in the Joint School



1960s

Geography moves to the Norfolk Building. John B Thornes begins a tradition of taking students to Spain for field work

1987

Alice Coleman becomes the first female member of staff promoted to a Professorship

1947

Geography finds a permanent home in the East Wing on Surrey Street and the first Professor of Geography, Sidney W Wooldridge, appointed



1960

Second Land Utilisation Survey launched at King's

1979

The Department is now formed of 18 academic staff



1995

The Joint School arrangement ends and King's Geography becomes a separate entity

1997

New master's introduced responding to global challenges: Cities, Culture & Social Change MA, and Monitoring, Modelling & Management of Environmental Change MSc



2006

Geography moves to the King's Building



2017

Geography achieves Gold status in the NUS Green Impact Awards

2019

Geography receives Athena Swan Bronze and both undergraduate degrees accredited by Royal Geographical Society

2001

King's Geography merges with SOAS Geography and establishes BA Geography joint Honours with SOAS

2009

John B Thornes laboratory opened, facilitating the study of physical sciences



2018

Geography moves to Bush House, North East Wing



2022

Inauguration of the Tony Allan Room. The Department now has 100+ staff and researchers, and 700+ students



RESEARCH THAT MAKES AN IMPACT

Helping balance conservation needs with growing pressures for land

As the global demand for land increases, we need both to meet this demand and ensure we address climate change and nature conservation. Yet, how does a government know which land is most important to protect? How do policymakers know what the impact of new agricultural or infrastructural developments might be on nature and society?

Professor Mark Mulligan has developed user-friendly online tools, including Co\$tingNature and WaterWorld, and monitoring stations that allow anyone with access to a computer the ability to better understand the multiple impacts of land use and land use change. The tools also help support better decisions about land use and identify the most important areas for conservation investment.

Around 3,500 organisations in more than 180 countries, including governments and non-governmental organisations, have used the tools to inform decision-making on land use. This includes guiding conservation decisions in Ecuador and Brazil, to establish 1.5 million hectares of protected area in Bolivia, and to support land use and management



projects that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with international climate commitments.

Improving the way big data is used to identify failing hospitals

Many healthcare systems across the world are making use of digital patient records and other routinely collected administrative data to monitor, regulate and, ultimately, improve hospital quality and safety.

However, organisations seeking to exploit such 'big data' are encountering persistent difficulties in making their systems work. Professors David Demeritt and Henry Rothstein have shown the effectiveness of big data is all in the way you collect and use it.

Their research on how the Care Quality Commission (CQC) – the independent regulator of all health and social care services in England – used statistical surveillance, influenced the Commission to redesign the way it uses big data to detect poor quality hospital care. Subsequent research demonstrated the relevance of Demeritt and Rothstein's findings for many international healthcare regulators using similar statistical surveillance systems. In particular, they have shown how fundamental differences in the way healthcare quality indicators are constructed, measured and used could be impeding international efforts to benchmark quality and identify best practice.

Helping keep track of wildfires around the world

Every year an area about the size of India is burned in landscape fires worldwide. While some are an ecological necessity, fires in areas that do not naturally burn can be ecologically damaging and are also responsible for significant greenhouse gas emissions.

Fires can also put homes, infrastructure and human lives at risk – most notably through their effect on air quality. Smoke from landscape fires has been linked to hundreds of thousands of early deaths worldwide every year – and could account for almost 1 in 10 deaths around the world in children under 5, mostly in the developing world.

Thanks to research from Professor Martin Wooster and his team, we are now better able to monitor, map and understand where such fires are occurring in real time and at a global scale. This means fire response agencies, landscape managers, public organisations and individuals have the knowledge to be able to act appropriately where they can, to help protect themselves, their property and the natural habitats they value.

Understanding and resisting gender-based violence transnationally

According to research by Professor Cathy McIlwaine, 4 out of 5 Brazilian women living in London have experienced gender-based violence in their lifetime. Meanwhile back in Brazil, more than half of those living in the favelas of Mare in Rio de Janeiro also face such violence.

In London and Rio de Janeiro, the majority of women are afraid to report to the authorities because they feel they will be deported, not believed or will face even further incidents by

perpetrators (intimate partners or even state officials themselves).

Alongside grassroots community organisations and a campaign called Step Up Migrant Women, McIlwaine's research was presented in UK parliament as evidence calling for changes in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This led to some concessions being made for migrant women with insecure immigration status, even if they remain marginalised.

In Brazil, her team trained the Municipal Council of Policies for Women using research on resistance practices against gender-based violence.



RESEARCH THAT MAKES AN IMPACT

Micro homes and the housing crisis

London has seen a rise in ‘micro homes’ over the years. This could be because it’s possible to develop flats in former office buildings without planning permission.

Professor Phil Hubbard led a project examining the move towards increasingly compact, high-density, vertical living in London, often designed to appeal to young professionals. The results showed that although the UK Government stipulated one-bed, one-person flats should be at least 37 square metres, as many as 4–8 per cent of new homes built between 2009-2019 were smaller. Hubbard also found that the COVID-19 pandemic illuminated the issue of small homes, as people

struggled with their physical and mental health during the lockdowns (small homes give little space for combining living, working and leisure).

The research contributed to campaigns that ultimately led to changes in permitted development rights and better protection for people living in an increasingly urbanised environment.

Landslide forecasting in hazard-prone regions of India

More than twelve per cent of India is prone to landslides, with most being caused by intense rainfall, snowmelt, earthquakes and human activity. These landslides directly affect settlements and infrastructure, particularly hill towns, national highways, strategic trade corridors and heritage sites.

Professor Bruce Malamud and Dr George Adamson co-developed a prototype system for forecasting rainfall-triggered landslides in susceptible regions of India. The prototype is now helping to assess risk more accurately and protect local lives and livelihoods. Via a daily landslide forecast bulletin, local authorities in the hazard-prone districts of Nilgiris and Darjeeling can improve early warning communications and produce more accurate risk assessments for summer monsoons.

The team working alongside Malamud and Adamson was multidisciplinary and from multiple agencies in India, Italy and the UK. It included the Geological Survey of India (GSI) – the principal government agency for landslides in India.

Limiting global warming to 1.5°C can help slow rising sea levels

By creating 900 simulations of glaciers and ice sheets, a study led by Dr Tamsin Edwards showed that if we meet the Paris agreement target of keeping global warming to 1.5°C, sea level rise from the melting of ice could be halved this century.

The research team, which consisted of 84 people working at 62 institutes across 15 countries, used data points from glaciers across the world to map





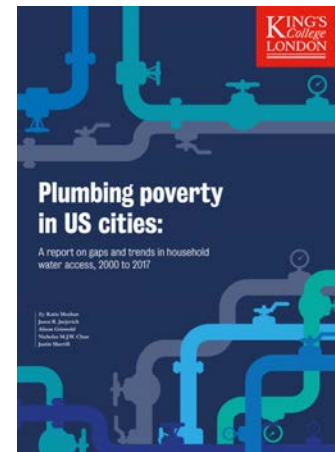
to safe and secure running water is a basic human right. In a series of journal articles and a 2021 report, Meehan and collaborators identified trends in household water insecurity in the places we may least expect, such as America's wealthiest and most progressive cities. Alarming, they found a subset of wealthy US cities have increased plumbing poverty since the Great Recession of 2008. For example, San Francisco has the highest share of households without running water, followed by Portland (OR), Milwaukee, San Antonio and Austin. Since 2000, these numbers (and share) have increased in San Francisco. Even in a city as large as Los Angeles, over 44,000 people live without access to running water.

the possible rising sea levels. The research was unique in its scale and was used by the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) to form the core of the sea level projections in its sixth assessment report.

Edwards is also a lead author on the IPCC sixth assessment report published in 2022, by Working Group I. The first of three reports, it examines the science around climate change. For the report, she outlined a range of possibilities for the future of ice sheets and how that contributes to sea-level rise.

Water poverty is on the rise in wealthy US cities

There is a clear link between unaffordable housing, income inequality and a lack of piped running water for households in the United States, according to research by Dr Katie Meehan – with renters and people of colour disproportionately living without running water in their homes. This includes households that spend 40-50 per cent of their monthly income on rent – for a home without adequate sanitation and water. Access



CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY

Maaria Lohiya

Geography BA



'Thinking like a Geographer and the mindset we were taught through the degree – you know, the idea of thinking on different scales, and not only zooming out to look at the bigger picture but also being able to zoom in and look at the little details – that idea has really helped me in my photography and my filmmaking.'

Maaria is a photographer & filmmaker.

Julia Sequeira

Disasters, Adaptation & Development MSc



'My studies helped me to understand the impacts of climate change from different perspectives. I've worked with government, researchers and the United Nations, and now I'm able to engage and influence the private sector to reduce their impact on the climate.'

Julia is a Managing Consultant at Corporate Citizenship, an environmental consultancy.

Heather Needham

Geography & Environmental Science BSc



'I'd recommend the Geography degree at King's because it's very broad, diverse and interdisciplinary. As well as there being loads of opportunities to develop skills, conduct fieldwork and travel, there's many career opportunities and doors that open with a Geography degree from King's.'

Heather has recently completed a Biodiversity, Conservation & Management BSc at the University of Oxford.

Dr Justin Sharpe

Geography PhD



'For me, being at King's was a transformative experience. It transformed my knowledge, it transformed my learning, but it really transformed my confidence, and it made me from someone who thought I knew stuff into someone who did know stuff.'

Our student society

Formerly known as Geog Ass during the 'Joint School' days, today's Geography Society (GeogSoc)



represents over 600 students and offers social and career activities to support students during their studies.



Current GeogSoc committee

Justin is a Research Scientist at University of Oklahoma Cooperative Institute for Severe and High Impact Weather Research and Operations.

Professor David Green



'I first started at Geography as a lecturer in human geography and basically taught anything that I was

asked to do! I designed a course on nineteenth-century London, which is still running and still getting students interested in finding out more about the history of the place in which they live and study.

It's been a privilege and a pleasure to work with such great students and colleagues over so many years. Each year has brought its own challenges but one thing stands out – we've worked together to make sure that our research and teaching makes a difference to those that we teach and to the society that we serve.'

Professor of Historical Geography, David Green has worked in the Department of Geography for 44 years. He joined in 1979 and is the current longest-serving academic member of staff.

Dr Margaret Kadiri



'I'm proud of our student-centred approach to teaching and learning and our ability to provide a conducive

environment for serious academic work. Our teaching is research-led, and students have access to the high-quality research that is undertaken in the department.

I think by placing students at the centre of their learning, I can help them become active and independent learners and support them in achieving their maximum potential.'

Dr Margaret Kadiri is a Lecturer in Physical Geography. She joined the Department in 2016.



Together, we have achieved a great deal over the last 100 years. However, there are still many challenges to address, both locally and globally. With your philanthropic support, we can nurture the next generation of scholars and propel the impact of our research even further. If you are interested in supporting our ambition, contact mylen.namocatcat@kcl.ac.uk



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