

## *Area* Prize: The Wiley-Blackwell Publishers *Area* Prize for New Research in Geography

The 2008 winner of the *Area* Prize was announced at the RGS-IBG Annual General Meeting on 1 June 2009 held at the RGS-IBG headquarters in London.

### 2008 Winner

Emilie Lagacé, John Holmes and Rachael McDonnell

[Science-policy guidelines as a benchmark: making the European Water Framework Directive](#)

*Area* 40 (40). pp.421-434

The promotional information on the paper, composed by the Editor, runs as follows: 'A convincing mixture of argument and evidence, this paper tackles the important issue of how science is incorporated into public policy. This well-written article questions many assumptions held by physical scientists as well as those policy makers who claim to be adopting 'evidence-based' approaches to scientific advice.'

### 2007 Winner

Jessica Graybill

[Continuity and change: \(re\)constructing environmental geographies in late Soviet and post-Soviet Russia](#)

*Area* 39 (1), pp.6-19

This is an empirically rich, well-argued and thought-provoking paper that challenges all environmental geographers to think carefully about the roots of environmental knowledge and how that knowledge is transferred in different cultures. Based on a painstaking analysis of journal articles from the late Soviet and post-Soviet period, Graybill illustrates not only how Russian geographers (re)construct environmental knowledge but also the ways in which changing theorizations of society-nature interactions have shaped attitudes towards environmental and resource management over time. Above all else, Graybill provides a fascinating gateway into a very different tradition of geographic inquiry in a study that should be required reading for anyone interested in 'non-western' conceptualizations of nature.

*Dr David Nash, University of Brighton*

### Previous winners

#### 2006

Christine McCulloch

[Transparency: aid or obstacle to effective defence of vulnerable environments from reservoir construction? Dam decisions and democracy in North East England](#)

*Area* 38(1), pp.24-33

This is a provocative and well-informed paper that challenges some of the well-worn clichés of environmental consultation. Based on a series of case studies that detail how communities were engaged in dam construction decisions, McCulloch shows that success in opposing dams may be better achieved by behind- doors bargaining rather than by public debate. The author

reveals some uncomfortable facts about the current emphasis on participation and transparency. This is a paper that should be read by all those with an interest in environmental management and the modern political process.

*Professor Alastair Bonnett, University of Newcastle*

**2005**

**Clare Herrick**

[Cultures of GM: the discourses of risk and labelling of GMOs in the UK and EU](#)

*Area 37(3), pp. 286-294*

This paper by Clare Herrick puts forward a clear and important argument. Her investigation into 'cultures of GM' and foodstuff labeling provides a balanced mix of the current theoretical material and her own empirical data. The paper has an original and urgent quality that illustrates why such issues are important to geographical enquiry.

*Professor Alastair Bonnett, University of Newcastle*

**2004**

**Pauline Couper**

[Space and time in river bank erosion research: a review](#)

*Area 36(4), pp.387-403*

Pauline Couper here provides us with a substantial review of research on river bank erosion, with a bibliography of over 100 items covering the diversity of scale, method, and purpose of this research. The paper is a novel synthesis, which adds value in using abstract concepts of space and time to show how these can help us understand this process, and guide further experimental research. The paper also critically evaluates theoretical means of bridging across scales (such as hierarchy theory, extrapolation methods, and modelling).

*Professor Keith Richards, University of Cambridge*

**2003**

**Markus Hassler**

[Crisis, Coincidences and Strategic Market Behaviour: The Internationalization of Indonesian Clothing Brand Owners](#)

*Area 35(3), pp. 241-250*

This paper by Markus Hassler encapsulates the essence of a good 'Area paper'. It is theoretically informed, placing analysis of the Indonesian clothing industry within the global commodity change framework. It utilises a sound methodology to provide original insight into the trading activities of Indonesian brand-owners. It is well structured and clearly presented and it does all of this within the word limit! This paper is proof that is possible to produce a theoretically grounded, methodologically rigorous and informative empirical paper in 5,000 words.

*Professor Mike Bradshaw, University of Leicester*

**2002**

**Richard C Powell**

[The Sirens' voices? Field practices and dialogue in geography](#)

*Area 34(3), pp. 261-272*

There are few greater challenges in geography than the constant re-evaluation of the role, approaches and outcomes of fieldwork - yet few of us in higher education take the time; Powell's paper is a painstaking analysis of current dilemmas that will hopefully find an audience beyond 'the community of philosophically minded earth scientists' (p.265)!

*Professor Malcolm Newson, University of Newcastle*

2001

**Matt Bradshaw**

[Contracts and member checks in qualitative research in human geography: reason for caution](#)

*Area* 33(2), pp. 202-211

Bradshaw's article marks a significant intervention in qualitative methodology. He explores the way contracts and member checks can be used by powerful groups to shape research processes and outcomes. Bradshaw's brilliant, crystal clear analysis makes it clear that researchers are facing new sets of methodological dilemmas and choices.