

**How to make a PhD? (*"How do I know that I know"...*)**  
**3 days in Cumberland Lodge (Windsor): the BSG workshop 2011**

I arrived in the middle of a sunny winter afternoon in Cumberland Lodge, where the BSG Postgraduate workshop took place. I was immediately amazed by this wonderful old house, lost in the middle of the Great Park of Windsor, where I felt almost at home. Was it that cozy room with this warm fireplace? Was it the other attendees with whom I started talking and sharing some stories during the welcome tea? Was it the friendly and efficient facilitators? I must say that it was all these elements together which made me have a real great time during the 2011 BSG workshop. During 3 days, the meeting, led by Brian Whalley, Tom Coulthard, Paul Farres, Tony Parsons and David Favis-Mortlock enlightened many aspects of what should be a PhD. Indeed, such a work must not be seen as a dissertation, but also as a personal involvement in a scientific project. The frame of the workshop has been clearly focused on the intellectual posture of the young researcher, who has to learn to ask himself the right questions at the most appropriate time. In addition to these very valuable points, we discussed about models in geomorphology through the experience of our facilitators, and made exercises by groups.

This workshop is clearly built for PhD beginners, as were many of the attendees, but more advanced PhD candidates will also find very interesting topics, and should not hesitate to apply. While beginners learn to build their project, the more advanced students have the opportunity to make a meaningful retrospective consideration about the evolution of their own thesis. Before writing the dissertation, they must put together the various pieces they gathered from their fieldwork, from their models and analyses. Like a gigantic puzzle, the general picture only appears when all the pieces (properly selected and sorted) are combined together. Moreover, advanced PhD candidates can also share some experience with the beginners. I told the other students of the group how some unexpected event might change some parts of a PhD project, as it happened to me at the beginning of my second year, when a volcanic eruption of great intensity forced me to rethink certain aspects of my work.

These 3 days have been very interesting, providing key questions about research and how to lead a long-term project. I could meet very friendly PhD colleagues, mainly from the UK, with whom I will stay in touch. To conclude, I would like once again to thank the IAG and BSG committees who gave me the opportunity to attend this workshop by awarding me the 2011 grant.

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