



Report on the BSG Post-Graduate Training Workshop (Windsor, UK, 4th – 7th December 2017)

I arrived at Cumberland Lodge at 14:30 on Monday, just an hour before the workshop activities were planned to start, and I was very impressed by the location and the whole context of the Windsor Great Park. After introductions and presentation of the workshop there was the icebreaker activity which consisted in the brief explanation of everyone's PhD project to the closest person and then (surprise!) tell everyone else what the project you listened was about. After the icebreaker activity, Brian Whaley talked about the nature of the PhD and, after a good dinner, of the research itself.

The second day starts with an inspiring lecture about the philosophy of science and then it turns more practical with a session about the use of the NETLOGO software for modelling in geomorphology. Before lunch we were split in groups based on our research topics, mine was the "heterogeneous group" also known as "The Others". Group activity consisted in the definition of a good-structured PhD project about a topic far from ours in about three hours. This was a great exercise about time management, planning activities and group work and the result was also great! After the presentation of our fresh project we reached the third place in the final groups ranking (yes, there was a ranking for projects presentations with a first prize!) and realizing that your team actually can produce something good in only three hours was really motivating. In the evening talk we had a lecture by Steve Darby, current BSG chair, about his personal experience in research and career development.

Third day started with Python programming class lead by Dave Favis-Mortlock showing us how to deal with large data-sets using programming skills. Later we had a fun outdoor activity about experimental design taking molehills as example. The afternoon was dedicated to the individual presentations of everyone's PhD project with a subsequent Q&A session. In the evening talk we had a lecture by Josh Ahmed about his PhD experience.

The final day was dedicated to the use of social media in academic environment and how useful this could be for personal visibility and before lunch we had a lecture about publication by Heather Viles. After lunch we left Cumberland Lodge with the first and only glimpse of sun in four days.

The nature of this workshop was mainly non-technical, in fact it was intended to give an overview on what is a PhD and mostly what is research and what are the best practices to deal with it (aside passion of course!). I think that, aside of the contents themselves, the best feature of this workshop was that it gave the chance to meet other people in your same position, at the beginning of their PhD, to confront with them, exchanging opinions and ideas and, most of all, receive feedbacks from different points of view about your own project. It was also a good opportunity to have a look at how PhD works in different countries.

Final thoughts: evening talks are great as well as having an undefined number of cups of tea each day.

I would like to thank the International Association of Geomorphologists for have granted my attendance to this great event and to all the workshop organizers and staff for the amazing work they've done.

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