



Members in Profile

August 2012

Martin Plüss

My story is one of places and communities, merging my interest in Geography in all I do. My eyes were opened attending a primary school which is now the site of Westfield's, Liverpool – only a Geographer would pick up on that. During secondary schooling in Strathfield I observed the suburb was like an oasis in Sydney's west and this became my Honours thesis topic a decade later.



Upon entering university I intended to be a teacher, studying Economics, Psychology, History and Geography. Initially, my attention was drawn to History and Geography though I could not make up my mind and started Honours for both. The History Faculty was not interested in my thoughts on geographical history. In the Geography department Dr Dennis Jeans' spoke to me about historical geography and my Education Faculty lecturer Dr Kevin Laws' thesis research was on historical geography. The deal was sealed because geography was fun - Geographers were very social in the era of Professor Maurice Daly.

Geography followed me into my teacher training and postgraduate study in education. I did third year Geography twice - not because I failed. I had to choose between human and physical geography and opted for human geography first and decided to squeeze physical geography during the following Diploma of Education year. The topic for my Masters of Education was on Non-formal Education in South East Asia and the Pacific. I did not want to let go of my other possible Honours thesis topic on third world countries, inspired by Professor John Connell.

On completion of my Honours thesis on the historical Geography of Strathfield I attended, probably the first, Honours Conference, which the Geographical Society now hosts. At the end of the day Dr Ian Burnley and Dr James Forest asked if I would contribute a chapter for their book *Living in Cities*. Although I am not an academic this opportunity started me on a yearly cycle of researching, planning and writing at least one article a year since the 1980s on Geography teaching. This is my substitute for never submitting the couple of PhD proposals I had prepared.



THE GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Members in Profile

October 2012

Emma Power

I'm a Lecturer in Geography and Urban Studies in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at the University of Western Sydney. I started at UWS in early 2010, having finished my PhD at Macquarie University in 2009 and having 'cut my teeth' lecturing at Macquarie Uni and The University of Newcastle. I joined the GSNSW in my Honours year, and have been a councillor of the Society since 2011. I'm currently the GSNSW representative on the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales.



I developed an interest in geography during my undergraduate degree and decided that I would become a geography teacher. While doing my Graduate Diploma of Education two things pushed me down the path to my PhD and current research: the first was undertaking my teaching prac at St Ignatius College, Riverview, with Sharon McLean who is the Head of Geography at Riverview and the Vice President of the Geography Teachers Association of NSW (GTA NSW). This school has a large number of students from rural areas. I was struck while teaching a series of classes relating to salinity and land management about how different the awareness of environmental issues and change was among these students', compared to the 'city' students. I began to think and read about the connections between urban residents and nature. Second, the dynamic and always inspiring Sue Bliss took me to an event run by the GSNSW and GTA NSW, where early career academics talked about their current research. This event gave me a taste for the possibilities and excitement of research (which was pushed by Sue!), and led me to my Honours year where I began my work about human – nature relations in urban Australia, first in gardens and then during my PhD through the homemaking practices of suburban residents who cohabited (with varying degrees of willingness!) with dogs and common brushtail possums. Since finishing my PhD I have become increasingly interested in the ways that human and nonhuman relations are governed in urban places. Recent research has examined the place of dogs within strata apartments as a window on the operation of strata governance. A current project in partnership with the Petcare Information and Advisory Service (www.petnet.com.au) is looking at the place of pets in Sydney's private rental housing market, including the experiences of people renting with pets, the perceptions of real estate agents, and the management of pets within rental agreements.



Members in Profile

September 2012

Bruce Ryan

During my final years at Sydney Technical High School, I began thinking of myself as a geographer, probably because Fred Gallie (the geography master and Balmain cricketer) invited me to meetings of the Geographical Society in Science House. I joined the Society in 1954, as a freshman at Sydney University. Luck and design have sustained me as a geographer ever since, a staunch defender of the faith, even after retiring from academia 45 years later.



Photograph by Carolyn B Miller

Becoming a professional geographer meant completing degrees at Sydney University and ANU, and then teaching at universities in Western Australia, Wales, and the United States. During my 33 years at the University of Cincinnati, it meant serving as Department Head for a decade, guiding research on Appalachian regional development, directing heritage surveys, instituting a rudimentary Australian studies program (for parochial Americans), leading excursions along the Ohio River and into the coal-mining hollows of Kentucky and West Virginia, organizing national and state conferences, and keeping geography afloat during tempestuous weather.

But it also meant building my own wonderfully compatible, comfortable nest. How fortunate the man whose paid employment can be so deeply rewarding, so close to his heart's desire, whose colleagues are so boundlessly stimulating. Becoming a geographer allowed me to pursue my love of cartography (and calligraphy), to explore the world without the scampering tourist's guilt, to confer with planners and executives about serious matters. It enabled me to engage intellectually with students from every continent, and to beam with pride when they became National Park rangers, military surveyors, airport developers, location analysts, realtors, entrepreneurs with executive jets, heritage conservators, college presidents, attorneys, state senators, ambassadors, environmental scientists, and care-giving saviours in every corner of the under-privileged world. My own halo merely reflected their glory.

Yet I still can't say what geography is. My parents had no notion of what I was up to. Everyone is concerned about the world, they said, not just you geographers. Everyone needs to understand the Earth's environment, its human settlements, its resources, and human migration--those abiding pillars of the discipline. Geographers attending a conference were always