



# ISISA

## Newsletter

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### EDITORIAL

The second edition of the ISISA newsletter is here. You will find interesting articles and notices by our members. This newsletter is what you make it, so please keep the contributions coming. Photos, articles, forthcoming publications, upcoming conferences, and news on 'research in progress' is more than welcome. **Contributions for the June 2013 issue are to reach me at [abaldacchino59@gmail.com](mailto:abaldacchino59@gmail.com) by not later than May 15, 2013.**

Read and Enjoy. Suggestions for improvement are also appreciated.

*Anna Baldacchino*  
Newsletter Editor

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of their respective authors and are not necessarily endorsed by ISISA.

### Island specialists meet in Norway

Many places don't think of themselves as island countries, as was mentioned for Norway in the last Newsletter. When I attended a SICRI conference in Finland, I flew in across the former Soviet Union and as we came into Helsinki in June 2008, I was impressed by how many small islands are scattered about that country.

Norway has a similar landscape, although in both Finland and Norway this islandness is obscured for much of the year by snow and, especially, ice linking those outcrops.

I really don't think that there is any island feeling in Norway, though, that explains why the 9th Conference of ESfO (European Society for Oceanists) is going to be held in Bergen from 5 to 8 December 2012, round about the time this Newsletter appears.

When the hosts, Edvard Hviding and Knut Rio, made the announcement in 2010, I could see the smirk they shared as they invited specialists in the Pacific Islands to come along to a conference in the cold north. I think it was some kind of a Viking challenge!

The programme is coming along very nicely with a number of special features and whilst the welcome might be "warm", as the website says, the sauna and aquavit is going to have to be equally ready for us delegates who like to do our research under swaying palms:

<http://www.esfo2012.com/en/programme>

Grant McCall

University of Sydney

## TO THE ISLANDS!

*Ilan Kelman, Center for International Climate and Environmental Research (CICERO) - Oslo*

As 'island studies' continues its expansion, so do island-related conferences with their island field trips. They are perfect for seeing more of conference locations while understanding the on-the-ground island realities of the topics which we present on and discuss. This year, I had the privilege of attending three trips.

First, *Islands of the World XII*, [ISISA](#)'s conference, was held in May on the sparkling Caribbean isle of Tortola, Virgin Islands. I opted for the pre-conference field trip to Anegada, the territory's only coral island. We saw several shoreline villas toppled by beach erosion, with sand nourishment ongoing in an effort to save the remaining ones.

Then, on to the Cow Wreck Grill and Beach Bar. According to the owners, it was not named because they serve beef, but because in the nineteenth century, a ship carrying cow bones (used for making various items before plastics were available) sunk nearby, leading to a period of cow bones frequently washing up on the beach.

The next stop was an iguana farm followed by lunch and a lazy afternoon at a beach resort. While the white sand beaches right at the resort were stereotypically tropical, wandering a little way along the shore in either direction revealed a coastline of hard, jagged coral backed by grassed dunes. Never take a small piece of an island to represent the whole.

After ISISA's thoroughly enjoyable conference, it was several planes to Sydney, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada, for the 8th *International Small Island Cultures Initiative* conference ([SICRI](#)). The pre-conference field trip was a bus journey along the Cabot Trail around Cape Breton Island. On board, we learned that Cape Breton Island is neither a cape nor an island. It is an archipelago with its Celtic origins being more rooted in Scotland than Brittany. Meanwhile, the archipelago's central Bras d'Or Lake is actually an inland sea.

At the Gaelic College of Celtic Arts and Crafts, we participated in a milling frolic and were treated to foot-stomping Celtic fiddling. Next up was spectacular coastal scenery, from a shingle beach wild with waves to gorgeous cliffs melting into the mist. Moose sighting occupied us through Cape Breton Highlands National Park on the way to Charlie's Music Store's fine collection of *Musique Acadienne*.

The Wagmatcook Culture and Heritage Centre proudly represented Mi'kmaq culture. Finally, Baddeck's placid shore permitted us to pay tribute to Alexander Graham Bell who invented the telephone so that Canadians could talk to someone other than their household members during the long winter evenings.

Completing the trio of island conference field trips was Norderney in Germany's North Sea, following the island sessions at the [32nd Congress of the International Geographical Union \(IGU\)](#) in Cologne. During the train journey north from Cologne, the trip's organiser, Beate Ratter, briefed us on the island's history and human and physical geography. Coastal erosion is common across many islands and beach nourishment was in progress during our time on Norderney.

Our on-island activities included walking barefoot across tidal mudflats to learn about intertidal ecology, playing a match of local street bowling, and partaking in a tea ceremony at a heritage building. We also had a day trip to Norderney's island neighbour, car-free Juist. All our tour guides were local and enthusiastic; and one of the local papers published an article on our visit.

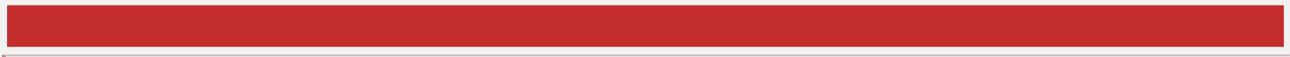
Study islands, and the world is at your fingertips.



Island studies on the mudflats of Norderney (photo: Ilan Kelman).



Damaged beach villa on Anegada, BVI. Sandbags trying to support beach nourishment are visible (photo: Ilan Kelman).



## COMPARING LAKSHADWEEP AND THE MALDIVES

*Himani Upadhyay, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi, India*

Islands experience plenty of migration: in, out, and circular. From the perspective of islanders, there is even an aphorism indicating how islandness stays with the people who leave islands: "You can take the child out of the island, but you cannot take the island out of the child".

Many reasons contribute to islander migration. Family ties and a better life are amongst the most popular cited. Environmental changes influence these decisions, often leading to forced migration. That can be from volcanoes erupting suddenly such as on Heimaey, Iceland in 1973 or from the aftermath of a powerful cyclone such as Heta hitting Niue in 2004.

Debates now ensue about migration from low-lying islands due to climate change. In fact, climate change can dominate island migration discussions even where there is limited empirical evidence to show that climate change is influencing islander mobility.

To fill in this data gap, we have been awarded a grant from the Norwegian Research Council from 1 October 2012 to 30 September 2015. We will interview people on the Maldives and on Lakshadweep, India, to determine their interests and reasons for migrating from their islands.

Other project partners are UNEP/GRID-Arendal, the Ministry of Environment and Energy in the Maldives, the Centre for Earth Research and Environment Management (CEREM) in Kerala, India, and the Universities of Manchester and Reading in England. This project links to UNESCO's [Many Strong Voices](#) which brings together the peoples of the Arctic and Small Island Developing States to meet the challenges of climate change.

For more information, please contact Ilan through: <http://www.ilankelman.org/contact.html>

The project's full title and description are:

*Perceptions and understandings of climate change and migration: Lakshadweep and the Maldives*

It has been long recognized that changes in the environment can influence human movement patterns and behaviour. It is also increasingly being suggested that climate change impacts will induce and increase such movements because migration becomes a potential adaptation strategy. While the term 'climate change migration' implies that a direct causal line can be drawn between climate change and migration, researchers are increasingly questioning that assumption, especially due to poor empirical evidence to support that direct causal line.

This study investigates the assumptions and challenges to the assumptions in work on climate change and migration. It aims to conceptualize and contextualize the relationship between climate change and migration. The first aspect, conceptualizing, refers to the knowledge gaps and the need to understand and detail conceptual issues associated with climate change and migration such as terminology/definitions, links, drivers, thresholds, implications, data requirements, methodological challenges, and other associated complexities. The second aspect, contextualizing, refers to understanding climate change and migration debates within the nexus

of migration, climate change, environment, and social development along with governance and policy perspectives at different scales ranging from international to local.



Some of the project team members, meeting in Oslo, Norway, in October 2012.

***Islands of the World  
XIII Conference, 2014***  
*will be taking place at  
the Highlands College  
University Centre,  
Jersey, Channel Islands,  
British Isles.*

*27 – 30 May, 2014*

***Island Studies:  
West Coast Canada & Beyond:  
By, For, About Islanders and Islands***  
**Co-organized by:**  
**Athabasca University,  
Thompson Rivers University and  
Vancouver Island University**  
**in association with ISISA –**  
**May 10-12, 2013**  
**An opportunity to celebrate 25**  
**years of ISISA, and more...**

[islandstudiesconference2013.org](http://islandstudiesconference2013.org)