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Conference Report

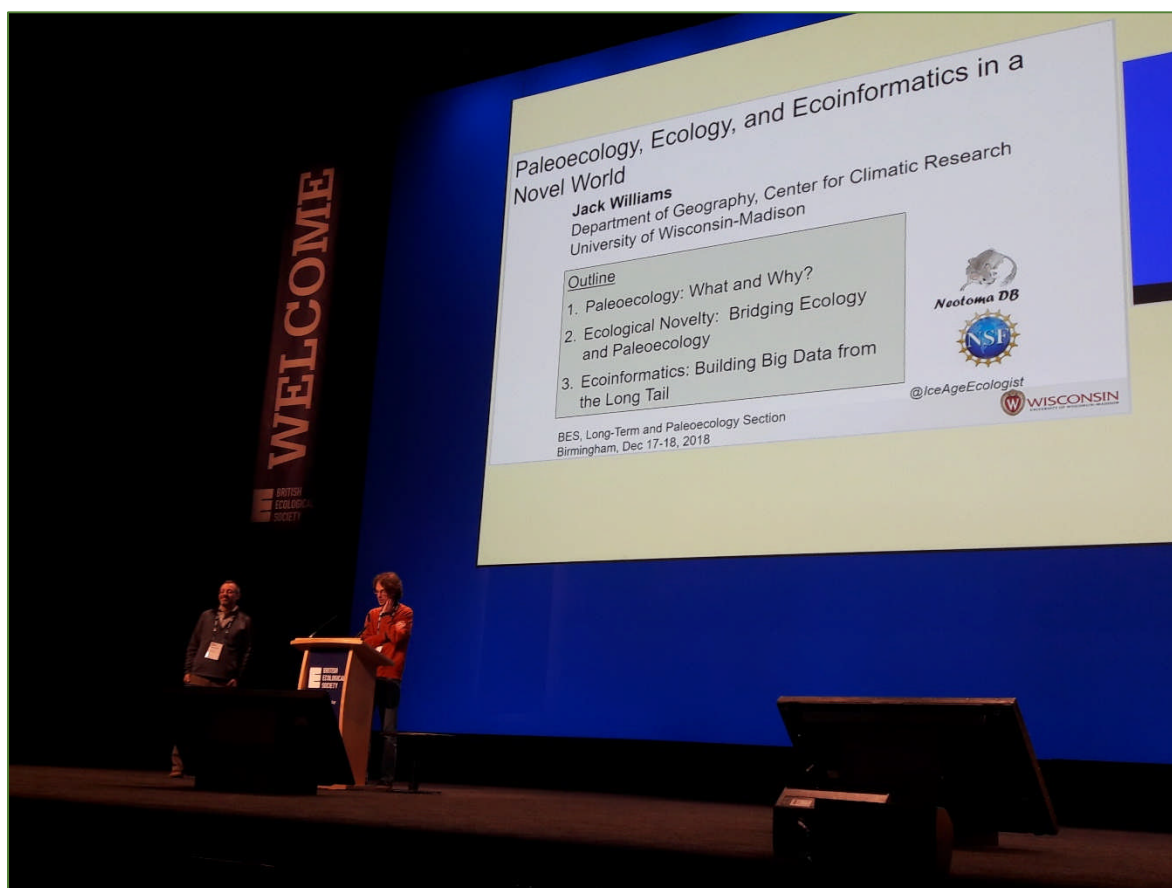


Canals around the conference venue at the British Ecological Society Annual Meeting in Birmingham, UK (December 2018).

The British Ecological Society annual meeting was held in Birmingham from 16-19th December and included our first ‘official’ representation of palaeoecology as a Special Interest Group. We convened a thematic session on ‘*Advancing our understanding of long-term ecology*’ (organised by Althea Davies & Ambrose Baker) and there were sufficient submissions for a second session, simply entitled ‘*Palaeoecology*’ (chaired by Will Gosling). We are grateful to *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution* and the BES which provided sponsorship to offset some speaker costs for the thematic session.



Jane and Althea were invited to write a short blog about these sessions for *Methods in Ecology and Evolution (MEE)*, in which we offer some selected highlights: <https://methodsblog.com/2018/12/20/methods-in-temporal-ecology/>. *MEE* is published by the BES and they are keen to receive more submissions from palaeoecologists. See below for advice from Crystal McMichael, one of the Associate Editors for *Journal of Ecology*, on publishing in other BES journals.



Ambrose Baker welcoming Jack Williams to the stage to give the plenary talk in our thematic PalaepSIG session.

The presenter list is as follows for talks and posters (apologies to anyone whose work we have missed):

Thematic session:

- **Maria Dornelas:** Temporal change in biodiversity change in the Anthropocene
- **Elizabeth Jeffers:** Plant controls on Late Quaternary whole ecosystem structure and function
- **Will Gosling:** Advancing palaeo-fire ecology: A new method for reconstructing past fire temperatures
- **Helen Bennion:** Assessing the potential for aquatic plant recolonisation after local extirpation: linking historical baselines, contemporary distributions and connectivity to guide lake restoration
- **Alistair Seddon:** Assessing ecological resilience using long-term ecological data: perspectives and prospects
- **Sandra Nogu e:** Comparative ecology of the Laurel forest pollen rain from Tenerife and La Gomera
- **John Williams** (plenary speaker): Ecological and Environmental Novelty: Bridging Among Paleoecology, Ecological Forecasting, and Ecological Management



Palaeoecology session:

- **Thomas Ezard:** The alternative dimensions of palaeoecological competition
- **Emily Mitchell:** The relative influence of niche versus neutral processes on the first Eumetazoan ecosystems
- **Keechy Akkerman:** Local versus regional controls on aquatic production in two adjacent low-arctic lakes in West Greenland
- **Helen Roe:** The 'ECOTRAIT' Project: Understanding the links between functional traits and palaeoecological processes in lake Arcellinida (testate lobose amoebae)
- **M. Jane Bunting:** A British everglades? The ten thousand year story of the formation and destruction of the Humberhead Levels wetlands
- **Milan Teunissen van Manen:** Environmental response in leaf wax n-alkane composition of six tropical tree species along the NW Andean flank
- **Helen Shaw:** Palaeoecology and community ecology, potential for close linkages: testing the ability to detect diversity and herbaceous pastoral species in pollen diagrams
- **Crystal McMichael:** The Legacy of the Rubber Boom on Amazonian Forests

Other talks with palaeo-relevant content:

- **Ambrose Baker:** Modification of pollen production in response to global change: a review

Posters:

- **Mizanur Rahman:** *Chukrasia tabularis* is more drought tolerant than *Toona ciliata* in a moist tropical forest in Bangladesh
- **Mahmuda Islam:** Long-term response of theoretical hydraulic conductivity of South Asian moist forest trees to changing climate
- **Tessa Driessen:** Anthropogenic versus climatic impacts on crater lake ecosystems in western Uganda
- **Althea Davies:** Grazing bioindicators: coprophilous fungal spores as a proxy for herbivory
- **Heather Pardoe:** The relationship between floristic and palynological biodiversity on glacier

Two speakers from the thematic session have shared their slides via Figshare for those who couldn't make it to the meeting or want a reminder of the innovative ways that palaeoecology is contributing to ecology:

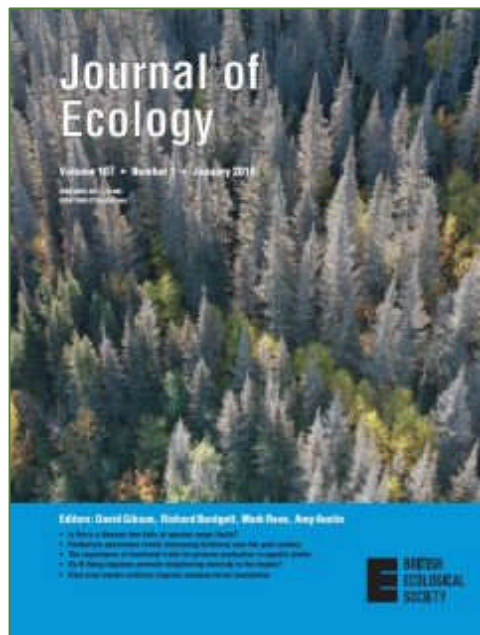
- **Jack Williams:**
https://figshare.com/articles/BES201812_Paleocology_Ecology_and_Ecoinformatics_in_a_Novel_World/7485473
- **Elizabeth Jeffers:**
https://figshare.com/articles/Plant_controls_on_Late_Quaternary_whole_ecosystem_structure_Final_for_upload_pdf/7485605/1



Opportunities within the BES

Publication

Palaeoecology in *Journal of Ecology* – by Crystal McMichael, c.n.h.mcmichael@uva.nl



The Palaeo-SIG meeting at the 2018 BES Annual Meeting included a discussion on how to better integrate the disciplines of palaeoecology and modern ecology. We got off to a great start with the sessions on “Advancing our understanding of long-term ecology” and “Palaeoecology” that were organized by Althea and Jane. But we (palaeoecologists) can also better integrate the disciplines with our publications.

Journal of Ecology has broadened its scope to include palaeoecology, and currently has two Associate Editors who specialize in palaeoecology (myself and Elizabeth Jeffers). We welcome palaeoecological work that relates to foundational ecological theory or provides knowledge that is directly relevant to modern ecology or conservation. The work needs to be framed in a broader ecological context than a pure palaeo-reconstruction, which would be more suitable for a specialist journal. Some examples of palaeoecological work that has been published in *Journal of Ecology* are:

- <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1365-2745.2004.00964.x>
- <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1365-2745.12865>
- <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1365-2745.12826>

Of course you can find many more examples online to get an idea of what we are looking for at *Journal of Ecology*. But don't hesitate to ask if you have further questions!

Funding

The BES funding schemes are now open, with an application deadline of Wednesday 20th March. They support Research Grants for small projects (up to £5000) and ECR research projects (max. £20000), as well as Outreach Grants (up to £2000) and provide support for Ecologists in Africa (max. £8000). Details can be found here: <https://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/funding/>. They also provide Training and Travel Grants of up to £1000 for PhD students and postgraduate research assistants - note that there is no deadline for these.



Plenary speakers

Each BES annual meeting has a series of engaging plenary speakers. We would like to put forward a palaeoecological speaker for future meetings. [Send us your nomination for a palaeoecology plenary speaker.](#) This need not be someone who is globally renowned, but their work needs to have wide appeal within the broad remit of ecology. *Deadline: February for BES Meetings Committee*

Call for Nominations

At each annual meeting, the BES awards prizes for research in ecology, from research publications to engagement. Prof Kathy Willis was awarded the Marsh Award for Ecology at the 2018 meeting. In particular, it would raise the profile of palaeoecology within the organisation if we can put forward nominations for ECR contributions to BES journals (see Crystal McMichael's advice on publishing in *Journal of Ecology*), as well as have strong contenders for best postgraduate talk and best student poster at the BES annual meeting. Prizes are listed here:

<https://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/membership-community/honours-awards-and-prizes/>.

Future PalaeoSIG Events

INQUA2019

The deadline for abstract submissions to INQUA has passed. Authors will be notified about their submissions at the end of February. Our PalaeoSIG session focuses on 'Connecting palaeoecology with present and future ecosystem dynamics', convened by Althea, Jane and Vivian Felde (Bergen). Whichever session you have submitted a talk or poster to, we hope to see many of you in Dublin between 25 and 31 July.

50 seminal papers in palaeoecology

Beginning early in 2019, we will be issuing a call for you to nominate 'must read' palaeoecology papers, with the goal of identifying 50 seminal papers representing key ideas and approaches in the discipline. This will be a crowd-sourced, online and international effort as we plan to work with the Paleoecology Section of the Ecological Society of America to achieve this. Details to follow.

The selected papers will form the basis for a **PalaeoSIG writing workshop** to be hosted by Eileen Tisdall at Stirling University, Scotland, over two days between 27 and 29th August (exact dates to be confirmed). This aims to provide training and practice in writing effectively about palaeoecological research for non-specialist audiences, and to produce accessible summaries of c.50 important articles. The summaries produced during the workshop will be disseminated via a PalaeoSIG blog (which we have yet to set up) to increase the accessibility of palaeoecology for a wide audience and for use as a teaching resource. This theme emerged during discussions at the PalaeoSIG launch event at Hull in August 2018.

Recent Publications

Jarman, R., Hazell, Z., Campbell, G., Webb, J.C. and Chambers, F.M. (2019) Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa* Mill.) in Britain: re-assessment of its status as a Roman archaeophyte. *Britannia*. ISSN 0068-113X (In press)
<http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/6189/> (Courtesy of Frank Chambers)

Want your work to feature in the next issue of this newsletter? Send in recently completed papers, PhD and dissertation titles to showcase the breadth of ecological palaeoecology. We also encourage students to submit a short abstract to accompany their thesis and dissertation titles.



Frontiers in Ecology & Evolution, sponsors of our thematic session at the BES annual meeting, are interested in publishing palaeoecological contributions. They have asked us to consider their Special Issues (called Research Topics) which are thematic

collections of open access, peer reviewed articles. So if members are interested in contributing to an issue, e.g. around the BES and INQUA theme of 'Advancing our understanding of long-term ecology', then let us know. Recent collections of potential interest include [Palaeoecology of Easter Island: natural and anthropogenic drivers of ecological change](#) and [Palynology and Vegetation History](#).

Job Opportunities

The Faculty of Science of the University of Amsterdam has announced the third round of MacGillavry Fellowships. These are tenure track positions (6 years) for talented female researchers. Applicants can apply in six different fields including "Biodiversity & Earth Sciences". See <https://ecologyofthepast.info/2018/12/20/job-macgillavry-fellowship/> - the deadline for applications is 4 February 2019

About PalaeoSIG

Management of the SIG is based on a voluntary 'steering group' (listed here: <https://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/membership-community/special-interest-groups/palaeoecology-group/>) which will be joined on a 'per event' basis by members involved in organising meetings to ensure that we follow BES procedures while giving all members (tenured and ECR) an opportunity to be involved in proposing, planning and running meetings and workshops. So if you have an idea, get in touch to discuss it as the BES provides funding to support SIG events and workshops.

Keep in Touch!

We recognise that not all members are based in the UK, so you are welcome to use the mailing list and newsletter to share information about relevant organisations which hold their own meetings and may be interested in collaborating with the BES to organise meetings. Will Gosling recommends the friendly and enthusiastic Dutch palynology society, which he is now a board member of: <http://www.palynologischekring.nl>

We have set up a 'Project' for the SIG on ResearchGate as a repository for these newsletters and to make them accessible to non-members. Follow the project to see updates.

<https://www.researchgate.net/project/Palaeoecology-British-Ecological-Society-Special-Interest-Group>