

The Discovering Oman Team

Winter 2017/18

BILL CORDNER

Sultan's School,
Muscat, Oman



Bill started his career in Geography interpreting Landsat imagery for mining exploration companies. Since moving into teaching he has worked in government and independent schools predominantly in Australia and New Zealand. A FRGS, Bill led a group of Australian students participating in the RGS 1988 Kimberley Expedition in the north of Western Australia. Bill spent two years at the International School Moshi, Tanzania and now works at The Sultan's School in Muscat, Oman. Early in his career, Bill completed the Outward Bound 26-day Standard Course and has now led eight student and adult expeditions to Tanzania, working to improve education and training facilities in the remote village of Matipwili, climb Mt Meru and visit the northern game parks. His work in Matipwili has been supported by a grant from the Australian Federal Government. He was awarded a Fellowship by the International Baccalaureate Organisation to join an Earthwatch Expedition in central Kenya, researching Grevy's zebra and water sources of the nomadic Samburu pastoralists. Despite moving into senior management in schools in recent years, Bill remains a passionate Geography educator.

ANNA HARRISON

Duchess High School,
Alnwick, Northumberland



Anna has been teaching for over 20 years in England, Scotland, New Zealand and South Korea, and is constantly inspired by young peoples' thirst for understanding, and has a love of that 'light bulb' moment when their thinking is challenged. Anna feels that Geography instils a love of nature, tolerance and an understanding of the connections between environments and people, and is proud to be part of that process.

She currently teaches at Duchess High School, Alnwick and lives in Northumberland, where she gets to enjoy the constantly changing landscape at the coast. Whenever she can, Anna takes the chance to explore, and has recently returned from a trip to Georgia and the breathtaking Caucasus mountains.

Membership of the Royal Geographical Society and their monthly magazines have kept Anna and her teaching resources up-to-date, and led her to this fantastic opportunity in Oman, where she can't wait to get started.

BECKY GRAY

Sultan's School,
Muscat, Oman



Becky has an MA in Geography Education from the Institute of Education in London and has taught in the UK, The Bahamas and Tanzania prior to beginning work at The Sultan's School in Oman. She is a member of the RGS and, as a member of the GA, she has had work published about her experiences working overseas as well as about her work with the East Africa Round Square cluster who tackled the challenging topic of solving the East African refugee crisis in Kenya. In 2015 she climbed Mount Kilimanjaro with 27 year 9 students to raise money for Pencils of Promise, a non-profit organisation who build schools and train teachers in some of the world's poorest countries. In 2018 Becky will be spending a month in Uganda leading teacher training on a Low Resource Teacher Training fellowship. She has visited nearly 60 countries, and along with exploring much more of Oman with her Dalmatian, Mozart, she plans to visit every country in the world inspired by her love of Geography and the great outdoors. Becky is extremely keen to encourage local students to learn more about their own environment and for students in the UK to have their horizons broadened by learning about this incredible country. The Sultan's School is in the process of becoming a Green Flag school and so Becky has a significant interest in the environmental aspects of Geography.

DEIRDRE KEHOE

Dunfermline High School,
Fife, Scotland



Deirdre is currently a teacher of Geography and Environmental Science in Dunfermline High School, Fife, and carried out her undergraduate degree at St Patrick's College of Education in Dublin and majored in Human Geography. She went on to train at Moray House School of Education, Edinburgh, and has been teaching for three years.

When asked what inspires her about the subject, she responded 'I feel that Geography is an inspiring subject as it encompasses so many different areas: not just 'looking at maps' as many people believe it to be. I developed my love for Geography at school, when comparing different countries across the world. This introduced me to the study of ethnography, which I believe to be one of the most important aspects of the subject. Geography gives students the opportunity to explore parts of the world that they would never have been familiar with before. I have found this to help develop positive social attitudes towards migration amongst the youth.

This project is very exciting and I hope to be able to learn more about Oman, which can then be brought back to the students in my school. It is also an invaluable opportunity to build up global links and gain transferrable fieldwork skills.'

HEATHER LANG

ABA Academy,
Muscat, Oman



Heather has been teaching for 17 years. She is currently teaching Individuals and Societies at ABA Academy, Muscat. Earning her Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award was a high point in her early life and following this she taught Adventure Training at a special needs school in UK, showing her passion for the outdoors. She has also led a World Challenge Trip to Brazil and numerous Week Without Walls trips to Switzerland. These were to conduct outdoor activities, research and volunteer work related to the curriculum.

During her long summers she is never far away from the classroom as she volunteers to teach for the charity Volunteer for the Visayans in the Philippines. Her numerous trips there have helped her to develop a passion for travel and cultural exploration.

JONATHAN MARSH

The British School Muscat,
Oman



Jonathan is a living geographer; enthusiastic, motivated and an inspirational person who is full of energy and has a real passion for his teaching. Throughout his geographical life, he has lived on, and carried out research on glaciers in Greenland with BES Expeditions, housed at The Royal Geographical Society, has researched development studies whilst volunteering in Africa, and has also trekked and lived in Asia. He has been teaching geography at the British School Muscat for 1 year, and like everyone who comes, has fallen in love with the country. 'The geography of Oman is exceptional and I cannot wait to explore it further. I feel that the experience of different cultures and environments is very important in teaching geography and having taught now for about 12 years in different places around the globe, I believe that I can offer pupils a varied, unique perspective that in combination with the latest IT wizardry, will bring their study of geography to life'.

KATIE MARTIN

Geography Subject Leader
Blackfield Primary School,
Hampshire



Katie Martin has been an enthusiastic primary teacher for seven years teaching in inner London and Hampshire. She also has a master's degree in Economic and Consumer Psychology from the University of Exeter. Currently, she is the Geography Subject Leader and a year 5 class teacher at Blackfield Primary School (Hampshire). Katie is passionate about teaching map skills and field work to children in a creative way. As a child, she grew up sailing on the River Medway and a range of reservoirs and this has inspired her interest into water management and how waterways are used. She is especially interested in desalination and how Oman uses this approach effectively. Katie is looking forward to going out to Oman to learn more and she will use this opportunity to share her experience with her school. In her spare time Katie competes as a rower and has won Henley Women's Regatta.

RACHEL HAY

George Heriot's School,
Edinburgh



Rachel Hay is an enthusiastic Geography teacher with 8 years' experience teaching Geography, Geology and Managing Environmental Resources. Between 2013 and 2015, she taught English in Trento (Italy), and worked for Digital Explorer on their 'Skype in the classroom' project, linking explorers and scientists with schools around the world. Following this, she took on the role of Education Officer for the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and, amongst other projects, organised the 'Scotland Rocks' conference in 2015, and the successful pilot of the 'Geography Ambassadors' scheme in Scotland. Rachel contributed material towards Alan Parkinson's teaching resource about earthquakes for the British Red Cross, based on her experiences during and after the earthquake in Nepal in 2015. Rachel now teaches Geography in George Heriot's School in Edinburgh. She loves the varied and dynamic nature of Geography and embraces every opportunity to bring the subject to life for her students through fieldwork.

RUTH HINE

The British School,
Muscat, Oman



Ruth Hine has worked in education for 24 years, and is currently a geography teacher at the British School Muscat. Previously she worked in a British comprehensive state school, as a year leader, and then the independent sector, as a head of department. In Muscat, when she's not competing in biathlons, Ruth teaches 11-18 year olds, and co-runs the Young Geographers club. Students enter the RGS YGOTY competition annually, with entries from Key Stage Five students for the first time in 2017. The Young Geographers initiative grew from working with primary school children, as well as senior school students, and collaborating with primary colleague, Tamsin Turner, enhanced by personal membership of the Geographical Association and Fellowship of the Royal Geographical Society. Working at an international British school has given Ruth the opportunity to travel extensively; Nepal was one of the most memorable journeys, which became more poignant after the 2015 earthquake, an event that saw her go on to raise a substantial amount of money for disaster relief and reconstruction projects.

TAMSIN MURCHIE

The British School,
Muscat, Oman



Following a degree in geography at the University of Sussex and a PGCE, Tamsin has led and worked to promote the teaching and learning of geography in primary schools in the UK and the Middle East for 27 years. For the past 15 years she has taught at the British School Muscat, where she is subject leader for Primary School humanities. Tamsin has an interest in the Geography of Happiness and the role a sense of place has on learning. The work she has completed on this has been published in the GA journal, Primary Geographer. Tamsin is also passionate about learning outside of the classroom and developing the use of big questions to promote enquiry based learning. In 2014, Tamsin established BSM Young Geographers, an initiative that has grown from 24 students to nearly 150 in Years 5 to 13. All members prepare an entry for the RGS Young Geographer of the Year Award – since the group started, a BSM Young Geographer in KS2 has received a highly-commended award in this prestigious competition. Tamsin is a member of the Geographical Association and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

TRACY VAN HARMELAN

ABA Academy,
Muscat, Oman



Tracy made the jump to being a geographer at a young age and has been enthused by it ever since; she enjoyed human and physical geography so much that she chose to do a Geography and Education B.Ed degree at Homerton College and Downing. Tracy is currently teaching Primary Grade 5 in Muscat; a geographers heaven full of Wadi's to explore and Jebels to hike. Previous to this, she left the UK and moved to the archipelago of the Philippines where she climbed and swam in the crater of Mt Pinatubo, explored islands and populations around Mindano and Luzon. During the holidays, Tracy enjoys exploring new lands and has continued to indulge her interest in human geography in the cities of the world, alongside the landscapes and terrain found across continents.