



VMSG Award Winner 2012 Dr Mike Branney

We are very pleased to announce that the 2012 VMSG Award has been bestowed upon Dr Mike Branney, Senior Lecturer, University of Leicester. Mike was nominated by Richy Brown and supported by Steve Self, Pete Kokelaar and Eoghan Holohan.



Mike's PhD, "Subaerial explosive volcanism, intrusion, sedimentation, and collapse in the Borrowdale Volcanic Group, SW Langdale, English Lake District" at Sheffield University, led to a complete rethink of this classic area of British Geology and has become a textbook study of how calderas evolve during successive large-volume eruptions. Following his PhD, Mike had a series of post-doctoral fellowships at Liverpool University and took up a lectureship in the department. Mike then moved to Honolulu for a research position at the University of Hawai'i before taking a lectureship at the University of Leicester.

Mike is renowned for his insightful, meticulous field studies that have led to major discoveries and re-interpretations of long and widely-held models. Perhaps his greatest contribution to the field of volcanology is his body of work that led to a paradigm shift in our understanding of pyroclastic density currents. His ideas stemmed from, as usual, rigorous, insightful field studies and flew in the face of considerable opposition. Piece-by-piece he and long-time collaborator Peter Kokelaar assembled the evidence from the field and made their case (culminating in the tour-de-force Geological Society of London Memoir, Branney, M.J. and Kokelaar, B.P. (2002). Pyroclastic density currents and the sedimentation of ignimbrites). It is a testament to Mike's visionary approach to geology and volcanology that so much of what he inferred from field studies is now, decades later, being observed in laboratory-scale experiments and is forming the basis for complex numerical investigations of density current phenomena.

Mike has led several trips for VMSG and IAVCEI to Gran Canaria, Tenerife, the Lake District, Snowdonia and Glen Coe and his enthusiasm and staying-power in the field is legendary and readily apparent to any who have attempted to follow him up a hillside.

The great impact of Mike's scientific contributions, his leadership, and his dedicated approach to fieldwork have inspired many students and co-workers and this is reflected in his award nomination:

'Mike remains an inspiration to doctoral students and colleagues worldwide and instils a rigour and discipline in his own students that serves them well in post-PhD life.'

'Mike is an intuitive, insightful scientist and his work is extremely high regarded. His academic contributions continue to keep the UK at the forefront of research in volcanology.'

by Charlotte Vye-Brown and Richy Brown

CALENDAR COMPETITION

Any member of the VMSG community is invited to submit one photo taken in the last 24 months of a volcanic/magmatic/petrology theme for entry into our **Volcanology and Magmatic Studies Group calendar competition** held in combination with the **VMSG 2013 meeting in Bristol**.

The calendar will be available for sale during VMSG 2013 with the top 12 photos. Final **judging and presentation of 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes** will be conducted during the meeting.

Entries are to be submitted electronically to VMSGCalendar2013@gmail.com and will close on **Friday 2nd November**.

Please include your full name, affiliation, a brief description of the image, confirm you own the copyright of the image, and give permission for it to be included in the calendar and displayed publicly during VMSG 2013.

IAVCEI EARLY-CAREER GROUP – NOW OPEN

vhub.org/groups/iavceiearlycareer

Are you an early-career researcher? IAVCEI would like to hear your thoughts. Join the discussion at VHub.

Student reports

Richard Wall, Aon Benfield UCL Hazard Centre, University College London

In June 2012, I was fortunate enough to gain a place on the International Volcanology Field School in Katmai, Alaska. This was organised by the University of Fairbanks, Alaska, with 20 other attendees from countries such as the US, Russia, Malaysia and the UK, specialising in geochemical, geological and geophysical aspects of volcanology.



The field school coincided with the 100 year anniversary of the 1912 eruption of Novarupta, the eruptive vent 6 km from Katmai caldera. This was the largest eruption of the 20th Century, creating the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes in the region surrounding the volcano. Excursions into the Valley itself and the nearby volcanoes of Katmai and Trident provided spectacular scenery as well as the chance to observe amazing field examples of recent eruptions, such as the ignimbrite flow from the 1912 eruption and recent lava flows from the 1953 eruption of Trident. This allowed me to gain a further understanding of volcanic

systems and emplacement of material from unique, direct physical evidence.

Supervision from experts in the field led to interesting lectures and discussions, which covered topics such as the crystallisation and fragmentation of magmas. Talks focussed on the 1912 eruption and the processes leading to such an explosive event, resulting in the formation of Katmai Caldera (see photo) and emplacement of the ignimbrite sheet. Lectures were also given by guest researchers attending the course which covered bubble growth, volcano-ice interaction and the chronology of the 2009 Redoubt eruption. During these lectures I was also given the opportunity to present my current PhD research to a lively audience and gain valuable feedback on my work, especially in its application to Alaskan volcanoes.

Attending the field school also provided me with the opportunity to visit the University of Fairbanks and the Alaskan Volcano Observatory to discuss my current research and future projects. My own research examines volcano-tectonic seismicity before volcanic eruptions and I was able to see how seismicity is used to monitor volcanoes in real-time, along with the difficulties associated with working in Alaska. It was exciting to see how my models could be applied in practise and how alert systems are implemented and communicated to the different parties, who are potentially affected by eruptive activity within this region.

I wish to thank VMSG for their support in attending this field school and allowing me this unique opportunity, which has been extremely helpful for my PhD research.

Editorial

For inclusion in the next newsletter, please forward any articles, comments or notices of events, workshops and conferences before 19th November '12.

Charlotte Vye-Brown (cvye@bgs.ac.uk)