

Arctic Office Bulletin

May 2020

Welcome to the May edition of the NERC Arctic Office Bulletin. An unusual Bulletin to go with the different times we're all living and working through. Whilst much is on hold or uncertain, other events go ahead and new opportunities still come through even if they are in the middle distance.

What the NERC Arctic Office seeks to provide: support to UK-based Arctic researchers working in the High North; advice to policy and decision-makers; representation nationally and internationally; and creating new international research cooperation, remains at the core of our activity.

Please visit www.arctic.ac.uk and follow us on Twitter via @Arctic_Office for all the latest news and information. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome. If you have received this Bulletin via a colleague, why not register at <https://www.arctic.ac.uk/subscribe-for-updates/> and receive it direct in future, along with other updates and important news items? We aim to keep all updates brief and focussed.

[UK-Russia Arctic Science Connections webinar](#)

You are warmly invited to join us on Wednesday 3 June, between 1330 and 1530 for a session focused on Arctic science connections between researchers in the United Kingdom and Russia. Over the past few years, SIN Russia and the NERC Arctic Office have been working with the UK Arctic science community to help foster and deepen UK-Russia Arctic science collaborations, with multiple workshops delivered, projects supported and the UK-Russia Arctic Bursaries Programme launched.

The session will be an important opportunity to hear directly from UK-based researchers who are establishing successful links with their Russian counterparts; to learn about recent practical collaborations and developing new opportunities for joint work; and to engage in discussion between researchers and policy/decision-makers about the future of strengthening UK-Russia Arctic connections.

The session is aimed at policy and decision makers from Parliament, Government Departments, research institutions, universities, Research Councils and beyond. All are welcome. Further details and registration link: <https://www.arctic.ac.uk/news/uk-russia-arctic-science-connections/>

[UK-Russia Researcher Links workshops – applications welcome for 2021-22](#)

The British Council has opened its Researcher Links Workshop grants for the 2021-22 season. There is a strong correlation with the work that the NERC Arctic Office and the Science and Innovation Network team in Moscow have been leading. The British Council grants will provide financial support to bring together a UK/Russia bilateral cohort of early career researchers to take part in workshops to meet the overarching objectives. Each workshop will be co-ordinated by two established researchers from each country.

Proposals in any natural or applied science discipline/multidisciplinary area will be accepted. The focus should be on establishing new research links or significantly developing existing links, with the potential for longer term sustainability. Contributing to the capacity building of early career researchers is also important. You can submit your application until 12 June 2020, 16:00 UK time. All the workshops and events should be completed between June 2021 to January 2022. For more

information, please follow this link: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/science/current-opportunities/russia-researcher-links-workshops-non-newton>

UK-Russia Arctic Bursaries Programme 2019

Ten teams from UK universities and research institutions successfully began their Bursaries with their partners across Russia at the start of 2020. Strong links were established, mutual visits exchanged and ideas for further work and joint projects developed. The restrictions on international and domestic travel mean that the completion of the Bursary work has in many cases been delayed, but all the teams are confident that the aims of the Bursaries can still be met through rescheduling and online connections. We are grateful to all the teams for their hard work in pursuing the completion of the Bursaries despite the difficult circumstances, and to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for their support of this new initiative. We'll be sharing results from the Bursaries as they come through and hearing from some of the Bursary lead at the UK-Russia Arctic Science Connections webinar on 3 June.

AXA Arctic Live 2020 – ideal for home schooling

We're proud to be a partner in AXA's Arctic Live 2020, delivered by Encounter Edu. From 4-15 May Arctic Live 2020 will be providing free live online lessons with polar scientists, to enable students young and old to learn about life and science in the frozen north. Broadcasting to homes and schools worldwide, the first week will focus on life and work in the Arctic, with the second exploring the issues facing this fragile ecosystem.

The team were due to be at the NERC Arctic Station in Ny-Alesund as in previous years, but despite events the team, including researchers from Exeter and PML, as well as the BAS Station Manager Nick Cox, will be delivering their full programme over the course of the two weeks. Taking part is a fantastic way to connect to real Arctic scientists, support the role of the Arctic Station and fill any gaps in your home schooling day. Further details and registration here: <https://encounteredu.com/live-lessons/axa-arctic-live-2020>

NERC Arctic Station

The NERC Arctic Station, operated by BAS, was due to open in April this year for the start of the season. For many reasons, including restrictions in Ny-Alesund and across Svalbard, as well as national regulations here in the UK and across universities, it was not possible to open the Station. Together with the Station Manager we are in direct contact with all the teams who are due to use the Station over the course of the season to see how best we can support their individual situation. As the position on the rest of the season becomes clearer, then we will be able to decide the next steps. In the meantime, if you are thinking about using the Station in the future, or have any questions about the Station's capabilities please refer to the detailed information and contacts here: <https://www.arctic.ac.uk/uk-arctic-research-station/> The Station Summaries Booklet for the 2019 season is available and is a good guide to how projects have been supported at the Station over the last year: <https://www.arctic.ac.uk/uk-arctic-research-station/stories-from-the-field/>

Arctic Science Summit Week & Arctic Observing Summit 2020

Due to take place in Akureyri, Iceland at the end of March, both the ASSW and the AOS were quickly and skilfully organised to be online-only by the local organisers, including the IASC Secretariat. The online-only version ran very successfully and was an early example of how many researchers, decision-makers and other Arctic stakeholders have been operating since mid-March.

The IASC Working Groups, Council and Executive Committee met over the first days of the ASSW, and all reports suggested that the online versions were successful in enabling good discussions and

decision-making. Links will be provided to the Minutes of the meetings once they are approved. There were significant discussions on the implementation of the recommendations of the Action Group on Indigenous Involvement, with agreement to early action on a range of measures, including appointing Indigenous Fellows. The creation of a 'Carbon Footprint' Action Group was strongly supported, to recommend practical action to reduce IASC's direct impact.

The response of the Arctic research community to the coronavirus pandemic and the implications for research, long-term monitoring and datasets were consistent themes. IASC continues to strive for better gender balance in its committees and Working Groups and the Council considered reports and recommended actions for improvement. The Council also considered the draft inaugural State of Arctic Science Report, which creates an overview of the strengths and gaps in knowledge about the science of the Arctic. Following further review and editing the Report should be available shortly.

The Arctic Observing Summit followed the ASSW and Business meetings. The draft Statement and Call to Action produced following the Summit can be found here:

<https://arcticobservingsummit.org/sites/default/files/AOS%202020%20Conference%20Statement.pdf>

Discussions at both the ASSW and the AOS will play an important role in the planning and agenda setting for the 3rd Arctic Science Ministerial meeting planned for 20-21 November in Tokyo. Further information on connecting up with this process will be provided shortly.

[Arctic Science Summit Week 2021 – call for sessions](#)

In 2021, the ASSW will take place in Lisbon from 20 to 26 March 2021 under the theme: "The Arctic: Regional changes, Global impacts". The three last days are reserved for the Open Science Conference (OSC). The event will bring together scientists, Indigenous Peoples, Arctic community members, and Arctic science stakeholders from all over the world to present and discuss the most recent advances on Arctic knowledge across disciplines, from the natural sciences to the humanities. The OSC will also be an opportunity to foster research synergies between both Polar Regions, with sessions that target both Poles welcomed.

The OSC will have plenary lectures and a large number of parallel science sessions, accepting both oral and e-poster presentations. IASC aims to bridge disciplinary and national gaps in Arctic science. The organisers hope that session conveners will embrace this international and interdisciplinary approach in their proposed sessions, with a diverse set of sessions submitted by diverse groups of conveners. The call for sessions is open until 22 May 2020. Further details here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf-DvyuwKXAAfEizM07r96-JcH7HsEC3T0KB17DqbLdfxXOVA/viewform>

[UK-Canada Arctic Programme Bursaries 2020](#)

The fourth season of the Arctic Bursary Programme, supported by BEIS, received a good number of strong applications. Given the travel and other restrictions, some of the applications will not be able to proceed this year and will be held over to any future programme for the 2021 season. Other applications are in the process of being reworked. We very much hope that despite the difficulties this season's Programme will go ahead, even if with slightly reduced numbers. We are grateful to all this season's applicants for their patience and for the ongoing work in rescheduling and rethinking their original proposals. Once funding is confirmed and plans in place we will share the details of all the successful projects through the NERC Arctic Office website.

IASC Terrestrial Working Group – new UK representative

Prof Philip Wookey (Stirling University) recently completed his two terms as one of the UK's two representatives on the International Arctic Science Committee's Terrestrial Working Group. Many thanks to Phil for his huge skill, hard work and enthusiasm in the Group, particularly in his most recent role as the Group's Chair. Nominations are now open for this role, which offers a fantastic opportunity to represent the UK's terrestrial community in international discussions, help shape priorities and links with other disciplinary groups. You should be able to attend the Arctic Science Summit Week (Lisbon 2021); contribute to inter-sessional discussions and respond to ad hoc requests; and have good links to the wider terrestrial research community. Applications from UK-based researchers which reflect the diversity of the UK's Arctic research community are particularly welcome. You do not need to have UK citizenship or residency to fulfil this role. Self-nominations are welcome. A short covering letter and CV should be sent to henry.burgess@bas.ac.uk by 30 June 2020. Further information on the Terrestrial Working Group is available here: <https://iasc.info/working-groups/terrestrial>.

Details of all the UK's IASC representatives are on the Arctic Office website here:

<https://www.arctic.ac.uk/research/international-engagement/arctic-organisations/>. Please do link with them directly wherever helpful.

MOSAiC

The team leading the RV *Polarstern* historic expedition have been working incredibly hard and diligently to ensure that the expedition continues as safely and efficiently as possible, despite the coronavirus situation. Although the associated aircraft campaign has been cancelled, the expedition itself continues. Alternative transfer arrangements are being made and the decision has been taken to combine the final three Legs into two longer stages. The remaining four UK-based teams funded by BEIS and NERC are expecting to join the final Leg in mid-July, following thorough quarantine and testing procedures. You can follow the progress of the MOSAiC expedition here: <https://mosaic-expedition.org/> which includes a link to the MOSAiC web app which provides a daily ship position and blog.

Arctic Office website Blog

Interested in writing a Blog? As well as sections on research, the NERC Arctic Station, and resources, the NERC Arctic Office website hosts a [Blog section](#). We very much welcome offers to contribute to this Blog with guest authors drawing on their research, visits or conferences or other interesting developments. Please get in contact if you have ideas – arctic@bas.ac.uk!

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