

Indian High Commissioner's visit

His Excellency Mr Ranjan Mathai, Indian High Commissioner, visited the department following an invitation extended by Dr Alan Smith. His Excellency was accompanied by Dr Shailesh Kumar Singh.

Alan introduced the High Commissioner and Dr Singh to staff and post-doctoral students who gave short presentations outlining their research links with India.

Professor Dan McKenzie detailed how the Department's links with India have existed since the early days in the study of geodesy in Cambridge, when Sir Gerald Lenox Conyngham, fresh from the Geological Survey of India, became a Fellow of Trinity College and a reader in geodesy teaching a small group of undergraduates and later officers sent to Cambridge from colonial survey departments.

Professor James Jackson talked about his recent visit to Kathmandu for an Earthquakes Without Frontiers Partnership meeting, which took place one week prior to the Gorkha Earthquake on 25 April. He briefly set out the objectives of the Partnership, with particular reference to the recent events in Nepal.

Professor Keith Priestley, Director of Research in Seismology, and Dr Alex Copley both talked about Indian Earthquakes: past present and future, detailing how seismology informs the understanding of the fundamental processes that have shaped India.

Dr Sambuddha Misra and Dr Sally Gibson gave a brief summary of the sequence of events at the Cretaceous-Tertiary boundary, which marks one of the Earth's mass extinctions, and potential links between the meteorite impact at the Chicxulub crater in the Gulf of Mexico (Yucatan Peninsula) and the formation of the Deccan Traps.

Professor Mike Bickle, Professor of Tectonics, Dr Ed Tipper, and Ms. Madeleine Bohlin detailed how their investigations into the understanding of river chemistry in the Ganga catchment inform the understanding of long-term climate change.

Professor David Hodell, Director of the Godwin Lab for Palaeoclimate Research, outlined his research into the Harappan, or Indus, civilisation of the ancient Indian subcontinent, linking the decline of their cities to a widespread weakening of the Indian summer monsoon causing long-term drought and introduced his collaborator, Dr Cameron Petrie from the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology. This was the PhD research of Yama Dixit, now a postdoc at IIT Kanpur, who was a Gates Fellow at St. John's College.

Dr Ken McNamara, Sedgwick Museum Director, hosted an informal lunch in the Whewell Gallery followed by a visit to exhibits of special interest on display within the Museum.



His Excellency Mr Ranjan Mathai and Dr Ken McNamara in the Sedgwick Museum

1