



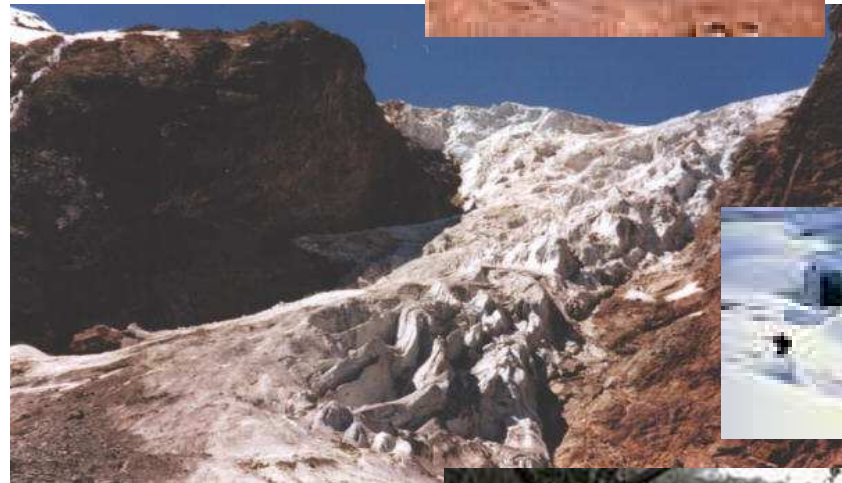
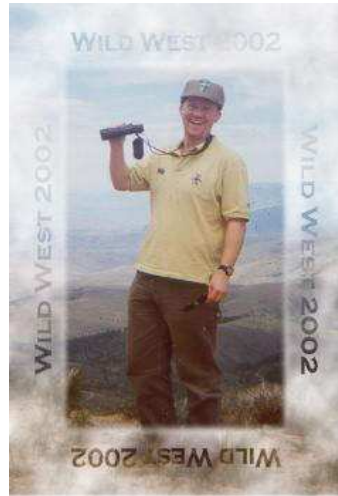
# From the very first day developing new senses of place through EBL

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- GEOGRAPHER, n. A chap who can tell you offhand the difference between the outside of the world and the inside (Ambrose Bierce, 1842-1914)







# The fieldtrip: geographical rites-of-passage?

- The fieldtrip as a social space has various inbuilt assumptions ...



# The fieldtrip as a masculine domain

- Maguire (1998): male students perpetuate a framework of dominance and competition





# The field as an able-bodied domain





# The fieldwork tradition...

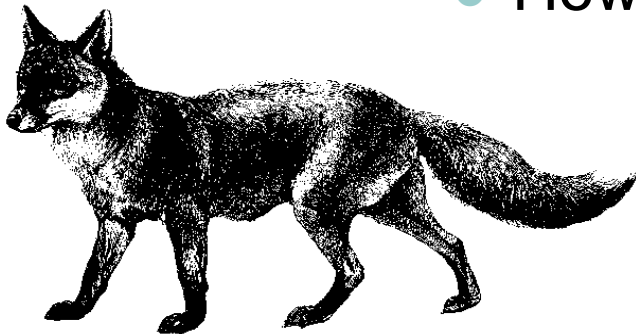
- Geography is historically linked with fieldwork
  - Man conquers the unknown...
- Recently come in for criticism as being
  - Exclusionary
  - Narrowly focused
  - Culturally insensitive





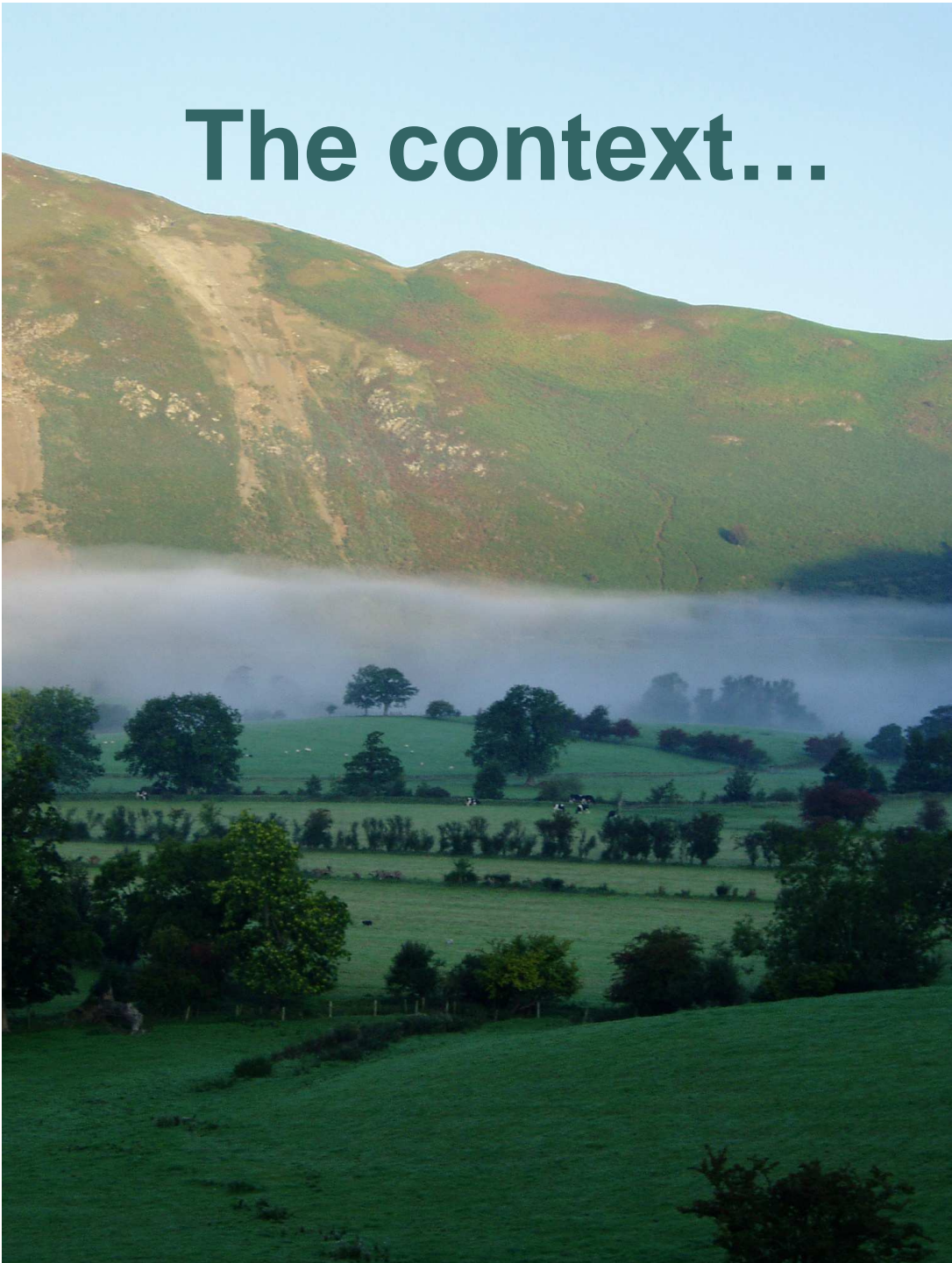
# Rethinking the fieldwork experience

- Challenging spaces
  - What don't we usually measure?
  - Who/what is usually hidden?
- Challenging students
  - How do they perceive space?
  - How are they used to learning?





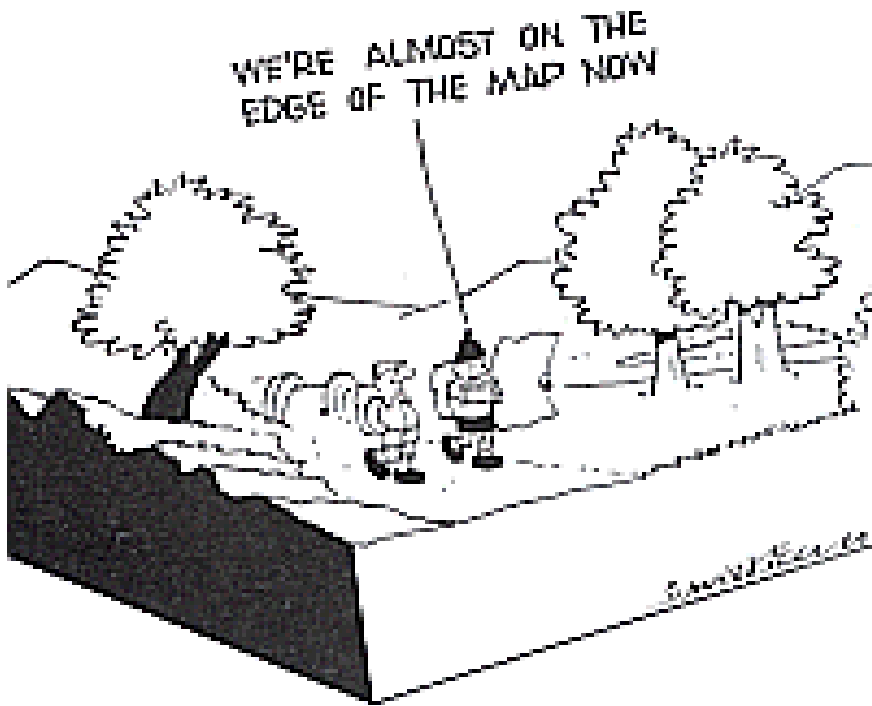
# The context...



- Newlands Valley, Keswick
  - Pre-registration residential fieldcourse
  - First experience of university learning
  - First time they have met each other



# Something new...



- To challenge students'
  - spatial awareness
  - creativity
- To encourage
  - creativity and artistic appreciation of place
  - an appreciation that students *create* knowledge of place as well as consume it



# Get your wellies on...







# Developing new senses of Keswick

## **Aims of the exercise are to:**

- introduce key cultural ideas in geography which will be developed throughout your degree
- develop skills in team work, negotiation, role play, creative representation and critical awareness
- help you get to know your fellow students



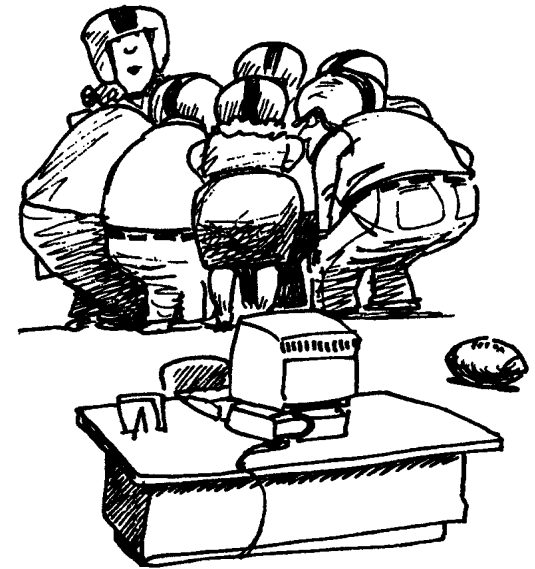
# Developing new senses of Keswick

## **By the end of the day you should have:**

- explored the implications of your 'role' for experiencing space
- reflected on your changing impressions of the day
- carried out a survey of parts of Keswick
- produced a visual representation of your findings
- negotiated your data with another team
- got to know a small group through intensive day-long team work

# Task

- In groups, take a role and relevant props
- Think about the Campus (not Keswick)
- Reflect on the sense of place related to role
- Think about:
  - Process of learning
  - Engaging with place and
  - 'Mapping' place

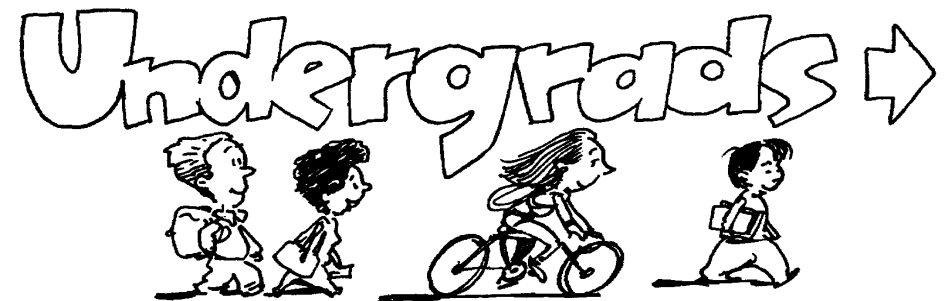




# You and this task...

## Think of yourself as a first year...

- Coming to this task 'fresh'
- Challenging ideas about 'geography'
- It's a practical exercise encouraging active learning
- Task is two-fold: getting to know one another and geography





# What *you* have to do...

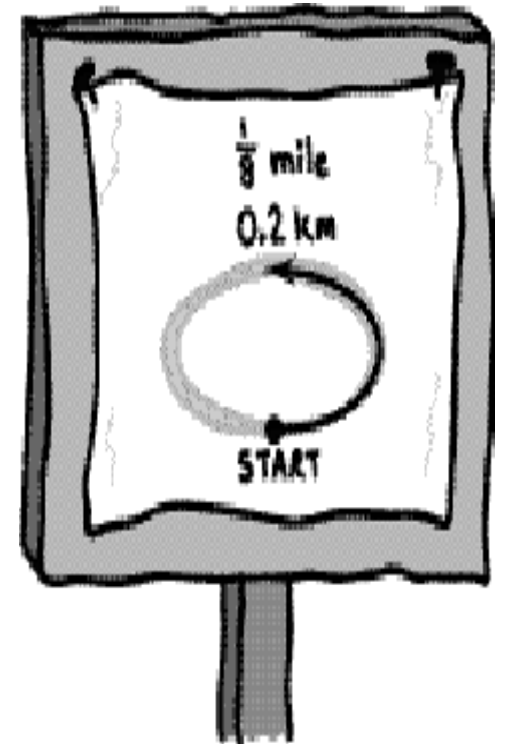
## Issues:

What issues do you think would be raised by:

- The role
- The social structure of the task

## Outcome:

List of questions that this exercise raises in your mind

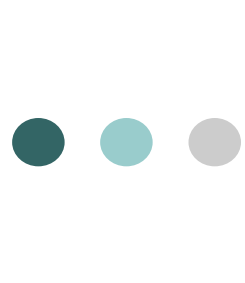


# ● ● ● | Reflections on a new project EBL

- three goals met:
  - got some of them to think differently,
  - collaborative working & social bonding,
  - and fun
- issues for discussion:
  - how get at 'process'?
  - what does being creative mean?
  - is EBL out in the 'real world' different?
  - getting EBL buy-in from staff?







## Issue: how to get at 'process'?

- EBL focus on 'process' of learning is confusing for (most?) students
  - particularly, remembering these are new students, coming from a school context dominated by 'results'
- 'there is no right answer' = 'this does not matter'?
- How to encourage continual reflection on the 'process' (more than a debriefing session at the end of the day)
- Advantage of 'EBL from the first day' is that students are in some sense a 'blank canvas'
- Need curricular follow up to reinforce 'process'



## Issue: creativity



- We wanted to show how geography could empower students to be creative
- Creativity is a QAA Geography benchmark
- Mapping element was too 'Blue Peter'-ish?
- May actually reinforcing negative stereotypes that geography is all about 'colouring-in'
- Need to break down the 'map' conventions in student's mind to encourage more creative work
- While some maps 'results' weren't great, but students did learn about learning through the 'process'
- Most students also found it fun



## Issue: EBL in the ‘real world’

- EBL on fieldwork has unique risks and opportunities
- Getting beyond the confines of a university building means a loss of control
  - uncertainty (dangerous) but exciting
  - randomness, weather, cock-ups with transport, etc
  - talk to real people
  - generates new ideas from chance encounters
  - immersive social context: 8 hour day not 1 hour session; begin to see staff as a learning resource not as instructors
- How to better use the fieldwork environment, especially the unique aspects of Keswick’s geography





# Issue: staff scepticism



- 9 staff involved. 6 had some sense of what EBL might be, 3 had done EBL-ish type teaching previously
- Tension between 'independent learning' and need for structured activities for uncertain, v. new students
- Amount of detail necessary in the initial set-up
- Varying level of guidance given by staff
- Not all staff willing (able) to be hands-off enough for EBL to succeed
- Is EBL more risky for staff?
- Some other staff (physical geographers) on the fieldtrip probably saw EBL just as 'teaching-lite'







## Real staff benefits

- Positive experience for those involved – a good start to the year!
- Experience gained for newly appointed members of staff
- Drew the core team together, which has helped to foster collegiality in a new research cluster





## Improvements for next time

- Overcome the 'second day' issue
- Logistics, times of different elements
- More 'efficient' use of staff
- Make more explicit the links of the Keswick EBL project into the work students do elsewhere in the first year curriculum
- Keep it 'fresh' for staff



# Conclusions

- A formal evaluation is being conducted, with rich data from students and staff, gathered at multiple points
- Beginning a paper on the applicability of EBL in fieldwork contexts for the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*
- Seeking additional funding to further develop to develop curricular links plus, explore integration with E-learning