

# SCISOC SPOTLIGHT

BY THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

## Dr. Alex Copley

DEPARTMENT OF EARTH  
SCIENCES



### RESEARCH FOCUS:

EARTHQUAKES, AND THE  
GEOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF  
THE CONTINENTS

I study what happens during **earthquakes**, and **what controls their locations and characteristics**. This work forms the backbone of a larger enterprise to understand what controls how the Earth's continents evolve through time, for example during periods of mountain-building.

## WHY RESEARCH?

I was attracted to this topic because the big unsolved questions all revolve around things we can see, touch, and visit (for example mountain ranges, basins, and the fault-lines that produce earthquakes). I also enjoy the mixture of observational and modeling work that the topic involves, and the chance to work with a wide range of datasets, including my own field observations, global geophysical monitoring networks, and satellite data. The societal relevance to understanding earthquakes, and the controls on the locations of the natural resources that will underpin the transition to green energy, are also strong motivators for me.



**"Be curious! Seek out the topics that are full of unexplained observations and general uncertainty."**

## ONE PIECE OF ADVICE...

Keep your knowledge broad, as many breakthroughs happen on the interface between disciplines.