

The Geological Society of London

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 5 June 2013**

The President confirmed that the Bye-laws in Section 9 relating to meetings had been observed. Under Paragraph 9.10, non-Fellows could be present but may not vote.

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Noted.

#### **2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2012**

These were agreed.

#### **3. APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS**

Two scrutineers were appointed for the ballots for Council and Officers, and Fellows were asked to vote for the new Council for 2013/14.

#### **4. BALLOT FOR COUNCIL**

The Ballot for Council was declared open.

#### **5. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2012**

##### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The President said that his theme was change – the “Changing landscape”. Geologists are used to changes in the landscape but the question for the Society was whether we are observers or active participants. He was pleased that the Society is actively part of the process.

The demographics and needs of the Fellowship are changing. Not only is the membership growing on an annual basis by around 3% but the gender balance is altering as more women enter the profession. The types of expertise shift with time as the nature of the subject responds to the changing demands placed upon it. For example, not so long ago the Coal Geology Specialist Group was one of the most active, but is now moribund.

For 350 years, academic publishing has operated on more or less the same financial model. Publishing is going through a radical change, in particular the move to Open Access where taxpayer-funded research must be freely available to the public who paid for it. The Society responded positively with a policy and is very well placed. Remote access is important as the world becomes increasingly digital.

Take up of Chartership is growing and candidates are presenting from sectors from which they have not traditionally come, for example the hydrocarbons industry.

A primary purpose of the Society is to promote our science for the public good and we continued to raise our profile by issuing position papers and responding to government consultations. We engaged with teachers and with students. The Careers days were very well attended. We also ran a four-day Geoscience Education Academy at Burlington House with sponsorship from BP. There were regular meetings with the British Geological Survey (BGS) and the Committee of Heads of University Geosciences Departments (CHUGD).

In November 2012 Council brought together Publishing and Information and Library Services under the leadership of Neal Marriott. New staff have joined; Fabienne Michaud as Library and Information Services Manager, Anne Davenport as Head of Sales and Marketing at the Publishing House in Bath, both reporting to Neal Marriott. Late last year Council decided to create a complementary new role of Director of Operations to oversee the operational side of the Society. Graeme Etheridge will work alongside Neal Marriott and Nic Bilham, Head of Strategy and External Relations, all reporting to the Executive Secretary, Edmund Nickless.

In conclusion, the President said the Society is not just observing changes but is in control of its own destiny.

## **SECRETARIES' REPORTS**

### *External Relations*

Professor Alan Lord, Secretary Foreign & External Affairs, reported on the following topics:

**Committee restructuring.** The amalgamation of publishing, the library and information services led to a review of the committee structure. There is a new Publications and Information Committee. A second "super" committee has been instituted – the Science and External Relations Committee – to which the Science and External Relations committees will report. An initial priority is to draft a science policy for Council approval. There have been minor changes to the membership of the Finance and Planning Committee.

**Policy for Science.** It is more beneficial to work together with a single voice and the Society worked closely with several organisations including BGS and CHUGD. During 2012 we provided input to consultations, alone or with partners, to:- *National Curriculum Review, HE in STEM subjects* (with CHUGD and BGS) and *Postgraduate Education* (with CHUGD, BGS, PESGB and BGA). A lot of work goes into bringing together these views and the Head of Strategy & External Relations was thanked. The main focus for the Geoscience Skills Forum was to develop the evidence base relating to skills. The Society commissioned an economic research consultancy to report on skills needs in four areas of geosciences-dependent UK industry (hydrocarbons, engineering geology, environmental geology and hydrogeology) identifying any current or likely future skills shortages.

**Science for Policy.** The Society provided impartial geological information, alone or with partners, to a range of publics, for example the general public and policy makers, to stress the vital economic and social role of geosciences. Consultations included:- *Marine Science, Shale Gas and the Energy Market* (with PESGB), *RS/RAE Shale Gas Inquiry* (with PESGB), *DECC consultation on*

*induced seismicity in Lancashire (re Shale Gas operations) and Welsh Government Green Paper on Environment and Natural Resource Management.* Engagement also continued with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority on the implementation of government policy for radioactive waste management. Briefings were provided on *Earthquake prediction, forecasting and mitigation*; there was a public information meeting and note on *Shale Gas – geological perspectives*. A statement was made on a planning application to construct a pipeline across the foreshore east of Siccar Point.

**Education and Outreach.** The very popular Shell sponsored public lectures continued. An online plate tectonics teaching module with sponsorship from Centrica was launched. Careers days were held at BGS and in Edinburgh. The Higher Education Network met in January 2012.

**Corporate Affiliates.** The Corporate Affiliates programme is fundamental to the Society's relationship with geoscience employers and users of geoscientific information. The scheme was improved and relaunched in 2012. Sixty-six companies are members and the Society is working to broaden the range with the City of London Geoscience Forum, a new initiative designed to link to the needs of financial institutions.

**International.** It was a busy year. The International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) met in Brisbane and the Society was instrumental in ensuring good governance by making sure there was a competitive election for the President of IUGS. The Society continued to play a leading role in promoting the concept of a Global Geoscience Initiative to address an overarching research challenge and there should be a further report on this at next year's meeting.

Professor Lord acknowledged the help of the staff, especially Nic Bilham, Sarah Day, Jo Mears, Judi Lakin and Florence Bullough.

#### *Science*

Professor Al Fraser, Secretary Science, said that the excellence of our science programme is at the heart of all the Society does and our communications with those outside that specialist community – with policy-makers, the media, those in education and the wider public. A science policy is being drafted and it is intended to have a very obvious link between that policy and topics for our meetings.

The Environment Network convened two important conferences that reflected the changing landscape of geoscience research and practice:- *Water Futures* and the second in the series of *Frontiers meetings* focused on *Nanogeoscience*, featuring a varied programme of talks on applications and environmental risks associated with nanoparticles. The *Frontiers* meetings bring together early-career researchers in emerging areas of geosciences and universities will be circulated asking for ideas for future meetings.

The Lyell Meeting on *Big Palaeontology* showcased large-scale projects which play an increasingly important role in palaeontological research and moved from looking at the early evolution of man in the UK through to images of fossils recreated digitally. It finished with a panel discussion. *Strata and Time* was the subject of the William Smith Meeting. The Neoproterozoic era was the starting

point for some superb presentations on glaciations, oxygenation and co-evolution of life and the planet at the Fermor Meeting.

The Flagship meetings are healthy and the Society needs to continue to bring through the five areas on which it wishes to focus: deep earth processes, biogeodiversity, geophysics, palaeontology and contaminated land.

### *Publications*

Dr Jonathan Turner, Secretary Publications, said that it was a pleasure to report another successful year of activity. The scholarly publishing environment continues to develop rapidly and there is a range of exciting new electronic media and the ability to obtain reading material on line, not just to a laptop but also to mobile devices.

2012 saw some exciting innovations come to fruition. *Online First* makes papers available online via the Lyell Collection as soon as they are ready for publication ahead of the full volume. This has been available for Special Publications since the beginning of 2012 and for journal titles early in 2013. With other earth science publishers, the Society is participating in an experiment to test the viability of eBooks and that will launch early in 2014. *Geofacets*, a web-based geographic content discovery tool introduced in conjunction with Elsevier in 2011, is thriving.

The recommendations of the 2012 report commissioned by the government on the subject of Open Access, that is the principle that published outputs from publicly-funded research should be made publicly available free of charge, were welcomed. Preparing for this change was a high priority in 2012 and a policy was agreed by Council.

Sales of books in hard copy were lower in 2012 than in recent years and in part this was due to a decline in the number of titles published which will be reversed in future. Subscription sales were strong, especially internationally, and overall the Publishing House made a surplus of £519k which will fund many of the Society's public benefit activities.

Two years ago Professor Styles chaired a review of library services and one conclusion was that although the Library is a world class resource for the Fellowship it is under-utilised. The library review also identified the map collection as being under-utilised and the Society is in the process of widening access by doing a pilot map scanning project starting with Malawi.

As already reported, the Library and Publishing House were brought together under Neal Marriott and Fabienne Michaud was appointed Library and Information Services Manager.

Dr Turner thanked Neal Marriott and colleagues at the Publishing House and in the Library, the editors and reviewers and the readers and contributors for excellent material.

### *Professional*

Mrs Tricia Henton, Secretary Professional Matters, said that almost all UK undergraduate geosciences programmes are now accredited by the Society, and increasingly this status is being sought for taught Masters programmes.

Graduates of accredited Master programmes are eligible to apply for Chartership a year earlier than those with non-accredited degrees.

The Society's imprimatur is also valued overseas. During 2012, undergraduate programmes in Petroleum Geology and Exploration Geophysics at the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, were accredited. The Society also has accredited degree programmes at the University of the West Indies, the University of Hong Kong, and King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia.

2012 saw the first accreditation of company training schemes – those of Arup, Gammon and CEDD in Hong Kong and Atkins in the UK.

Chartership has predominantly been of interest to those in the engineering, environment, hydrogeology and related sectors but there is now growing interest in the hydrocarbons sector.

Several of the Regional Groups successfully ran Early Career Geologist competitions and in 2012 the winners of these competitions went on to take part in a national final. The 2012 Early Career Geologists Award was presented to Davide Gamboa (Cardiff University/South Wales Regional Group) for his work on 3D-seismic approaches to reservoir compartmentalisation on continental margin settings. Paul Maliphant, Vice President, was thanked for his efforts.

There is work going on with the Regional Groups, a very important part of the Society, on mentoring. There is also a review of Regulations underway to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Mrs Henton thanked all the people who gave their time so enthusiastically on a voluntary basis, the staff in the Fellowship Office, the Chartership Officer, Bill Gaskarth, and the Executive Secretary.

## **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Dr Adam Law, Treasurer, reported on a good year with the achievement of a financial surplus of £252k. This was an exceptional performance relative to the predictions made at the beginning of the year.

The main driver of this financial success was the Publishing House where there was a surplus of almost £520k, significantly ahead of budget. This was despite all the uncertainty the world of publishing is facing.

Numerous other parts of the Society contributed to this pleasing outturn, with costs carefully controlled and most budgetary income figures met. Dr Law thanked those who volunteer for the Investment Committee and through their wise management the Society's portfolio exceeded its target.

Council reviewed the Society's reserves policy in November 2010 and significantly increased the target level at which it considered our free reserves should be maintained in order to guard against unforeseen financial circumstances. It was expected that it could take five to ten years to grow the

reserves to this level, but by the end of 2012 the free reserves level already fell within the revised target range (about £2.3m - £3.7m).

During 2012 the Society marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Fermor Fund by inviting bids for small research grants, travel awards and funds for workshops to assist research in the subject areas specified by Lady Fermor in establishing the Fund. Seven successful bids were funded from a disbursement of £25k from the Fund along with the Fermor Prize for the best relevant undergraduate project, awarded to Ross Anderson of Harvard University.

Dr Law thanked for the staff of the Society and Michael Kyriakides, Head of Finance, who was leaving after ten years service.

## 6. COMMENTS FROM FELLOWS

A Fellow raised a question about the ownership of copyright of the maps of Malawi. Neal Marriott said that most are still under copyright and the Malawi government was approached and gave permission to digitise. If we wish to use the material more widely their further permission will be required. Obtaining permission is potentially a major obstacle to the project and one that is taken very seriously.

Richard Howarth asked a question on behalf of John Cope and Bernard Leake who were not able to attend. In view of the £252k surplus it seems surprising that there are cuts to journal holdings. Bernard Leake and John Cope have expressed their concern in *Geoscientist*. Their view is that the Society should have a policy of long-term acquisition of journals well into the future and that the cuts will leave some aspects of geology virtually unrepresented. Richard Howarth, with John Cope and Bernard Leake, urged the Society to re-think the policy of journal cancellation.

Jonathan Turner encouraged Fellows to read the piece in May *Geoscientist*. He agreed with their statement that the Library is a superb resource, a major benefit and there is a need to maintain it. The Society has a choice as to how it distributes its limited resources. Neal Marriott and Fabienne Michaud will continue to monitor usage of journals. Does it make sense to spend several thousand pounds on a journal that is only getting one or two uses per year? It makes more sense to provide "pay per view" for those journals.

Neal Marriott said the context for the cuts was the Library Review which was instigated and approved by Council. The costs of the Library are increasing. In total the Society takes around 600 titles and the total spend in 2013 will be about £130k. Increasingly Fellows want to access material remotely and there are over 1400 Fellows registered for that service. Focus has been on those journals with low use.

Richard Fortey asked about new journals and the policy for taking on subscriptions. Neal Marriott said that Fabienne Michaud will be working on a collections development policy which will more clearly define the future.

Peter Fookes referred to the various presentations and said that he had worked in areas of risk. There is a risk evaluation unit at the University of Macquarie but he does not think there is similar in the UK. There was an article in *Geoscientist* about the Italian earthquake and the world needs leadership from our science about evaluating risk. This is a subject area where the Society could get involved.

Tricia Henton said that achieving Chartered status is a professional standard and a signal to the outside world of expertise. Within the University of Durham there is a department of hazard, risk and resilience.

## **7. ACCEPTANCE OF THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2012 AND APPROVAL OF THE BUDGET FOR 2013**

Sir Mark Moody-Stuart proposed acceptance of the accounts for 2012 and the budget for 2013. Professor Dan McKenzie seconded the motion, which was passed *nem con*.

## **8. FELLOWSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2014**

Following the principles agreed in previous years, Council reviewed the latest estimates of the total costs of Fellowship, and the most recent measures of inflation. These considerations inform rather than dictate the overall percentage increase in fees.

The annual increase in CPI at the end of February 2013 was 2.8%. It was recommended that the fees for 2014 be increased by an average of 1.8% overall on the basis that it is better to make small annual adjustments, given that the subscription income lags behind inflation, rather than risk the possibility of significant future subscription increases to meet the costs of providing Fellowship services.

It was proposed that there should be no increase to the Junior Candidate Fellow and Candidate Fellow fees recognising that they are the future of the Society and we must attract and retain them,

Chartership validation and annual registration fees no longer cover the full cost of providing those services and it was proposed to raise the validation fee incrementally over a three year period to £85 (2014), £95 (2015) and £100 (2016) and the annual registration fee to £35 (2014), £42 (2015) and £48 (2016).

The following subscriptions for 2014 were agreed *nem con*:

	2014 £
Junior Candidate Fellows	10.00
Candidate Fellows	15.00
One-off payment for undergraduate course	40.00
27 and under	69.00
28-33	128.00

34-59	194.50
34-59 (Overseas)	149.00
60-69	97.50
70+	67.00
Concessions	69.00
Full time postgraduate MSc	28.00
Full time postgraduate PhD	40.50
Joint Fellow supplement	57.00
CGeol supplement	35.00

Tax relief is available against these fees and information will be placed on the website.

## **9. DEATHS**

Fellows received a list read by the President of those Honorary Fellows and Fellows whose deaths had been reported since the last Annual General Meeting.

## **10. REPORT OF SCRUTINEERS ON THE BALLOT FOR COUNCIL**

The President called upon the Scrutineers to read their report on the ballot for Council. Twenty-five votes were cast with no abstentions or spoilt papers. The following Fellows were duly elected to Council:

Mrs Natalyn Ala, Mr Mike Armitage, Professor Rob Butler, Professor Neil Chapman, Dr Angela Coe, Mr Jim Coppard, Mr David Cragg, Mrs Jane Dottridge, Mr Chris Eccles, Dr Marie Edmonds, Professor Al Fraser, Mrs Tricia Henton, Mr David Jones, Dr Adam Law, Professor Richard Lisle, Professor Alan Lord, Professor David Manning, Dr Brian Marker OBE, Dr Gary Nichols, Mr David Shilston, Dr Lucy Slater, Dr Jonathan Turner and Mr Michael Young

The ballot for Officers then took place.

## **11. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS**

BDO Stoy Hayward was re-appointed as the Society's auditors for the coming year.

## **12. REPORT OF SCRUTINEERS ON THE BALLOT FOR OFFICERS**

The President called upon the Scrutineers to read their report on the ballot for Officers. Twenty-five votes were cast, with no abstentions or spoilt papers. The following were duly elected:

President	Mr David Shilston
Vice Presidents	Mr David Cragg
	Mr David Jones
Treasurer	Dr Adam Law

Secretary, Foreign & External Affairs  
Secretaries

Professor Alan Lord  
Professor Al Fraser  
Mrs Tricia Henton  
Dr Jonathan Turner

**13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**14. DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

A provisional date for the next Annual General Meeting of 4 June 2014 was agreed.

**15. VOTE OF THANKS**

David Shilston welcomed David Manning as President designate. He also welcomed the new members of Council and thanked the continuing members of Council.

He thanked the Officers for the enormous amount of work they do.

He thanked the Committees, Specialist Groups, Regional Groups and Joint Associations for their sterling work during the year. He also thanked the Corporate Affiliates, the sponsors of Society events and the organisations who allowed their staff to participate in the committees and activities of the Society.

He thanked the retiring members of Council for their diligence and hard work during their terms of office. Retiring members of Council were:

Miss Samme Brough  
Professor Jane Francis  
Dr Sally Gibson  
Dr Richard Hughes  
Mr Paul Maliphant  
Professor Susan Marriott  
Dr Colin Summerhayes  
Professor John Tellam

The President spoke of the donation to the Society of Dan McKenzie's papers together with those of Ted Irving and Fred Vine. They are of considerable value and he was most grateful for this very generous gift, the archiving of which will be supported by donations for which he was also very grateful.

The President thanked the Executive Secretary for his leadership of the staff and through him conveyed his thanks to all the staff.