

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 2 June 2010**

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 3 JUNE 2009**

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 2010/11.

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

The Ballot for Council was declared open.

#### **5. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2009**

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

The President said that the Society's strategy document called upon the Society to address itself to Parliament, government, media, and directly to the general public itself. As a registered charity it needed to bear in mind that it exists to serve the public good and must ensure that public benefit is both well served and amply demonstrated. Great strides were made in 2009 in promoting Earth science education, in responding to Government inquiries, bringing the geoscientific perspective to the attention of opinion formers on topics such as climate change, radioactive waste disposal, the looming energy and commodities gaps and skills shortages in key areas.

The Society had begun the process of mapping where it, as a distinctive and powerful voice for geosciences, fits into the future of those sciences, both nationally and internationally. It aims to be an authoritative and reliable commentator while recognising that it will always be adding its perspective to that of others in what is hoped to be a complementary way.

The President said that she had sensed a different atmosphere when visiting the Society with a palpable sense of purpose and a new vibrancy. As ever, there was a justifiable interest and pride in the Society's history but also an eagerness to embrace the future and to develop new ways of engaging new audiences in the increasingly relevant story that Earth scientists have to tell. In the section of the Annual Report which focused on Professional matters there was reference to remodelling and that keyword could apply to the entire Society which had been revitalised over the last decade.

This was Professor Frostick's last Annual General Meeting as President and she thanked those on Council, especially the Officers, and the Executive Secretary and staff who had helped her during her presidency. She also expressed her pride in serving as President.

## SECRETARIES' REPORTS

### *External Relations*

Professor Edward Derbyshire, Secretary Foreign & External Affairs reported that the External Relations Committee had focused in 2009 on those outward-facing matters that were its particular responsibility, taken a strategic overview of relationships with other bodies and given a lead to other committees in developing and managing those relationships.

There had been significant staffing changes: Ted Nield had reduced his hours and now worked mainly as Editor of *Geoscientist*; Sarah Day (Earth Science Communicator) conducted media relations alongside other writing and outreach duties; Nic Bilham returned full-time as Head of Strategy and External Relations (particularly policy development and government relations); and Judi Lakin returned from maternity leave to join Joanna Mears in working on educational matters.

The *Friends of the Geological Society* scheme was launched in 2009. This was an outgrowth of the Shell London Lecture Series, one of the most successful outcomes of the Bicentenary. The lectures have gone from strength to strength and there were regularly two "performances" of each. Some regular attendees, who did not qualify for Fellowship, expressed the wish to maintain a continuing association with the Society so the *Friends* scheme was introduced. Shell has generously agreed to continue its sponsorship until the end of 2011.

The Education Committee started work on developing a *Lifelong Learning Plan* aimed at interested laypersons and a series of podcasts were also introduced including reports on the Shell London Lectures and other material. The *Ask a geologist* facility was launched and proved very popular with many answers to questions now published on the website.

A particular highlight of the 2009 media activities was the impressive range of print, online and radio coverage obtained for a paper in the *Journal of the Geological Society* on the oldest known fossilised spider's web. The Society also engaged with broader audiences through a wide range of events including *Big Bang*, aimed at encouraging school pupils to think about careers in science and engineering, and the *British Science Festival*.

The Society continued active involvement in the *Managing Radioactive Waste Safely* programme, working with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management. There was also a debate, led by the President-designate, Dr Bryan Lovell, on the challenge to the oil industry posed by climate change and the industry's role in addressing it (particularly through Carbon Capture and Storage) and this was attended by a varied group including Government officials, senior oil industry figures, representatives of "green" NGOs and other scientific societies, social scientists and interested laypersons. Through

these activities and others the Society brought Earth sciences nearer the fore of the UK public policy agenda.

2009 was the last of the United Nations' International Year of Planet Earth triennium. This major initiative was particularly successful in outreach and discussions started about what lasting legacy might emerge from it. One of these was the first *Young Earth Scientists Congress* held in Beijing, which the Society supported. This was very successful and there will be a second congress in 2012 at the 34<sup>th</sup> IGC in Brisbane.

Involvement in the UNESCO-IUGS *International Geoscience Programme* (IGCP) was completed during the year and the Society continued to engage with the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS).

Professor Derbyshire thanked the Society's staff but in particular Edmund Nickless, Nic Bilham, Ted Nield and Sarah Day for their support during 2009 and his term of office.

#### *Science*

Professor Philip Allen, Secretary Science, said that the aim of the Science Committee was to help the Society be relevant, trusted, cutting-edge, visible and influential particularly through its programme of scientific meetings.

The Science Committee comprised a wide-ranging membership in an attempt to ensure there was more innovative thinking in developing inter- and multidisciplinary meetings and this approach had begun to work and would continue. A strong programme of meetings had been organised during the year and future planning includes a Frontiers Meeting (working title) to attract people working in emerging areas of geoscience. It was also proposed to collaborate with the Geological Society of America in presenting a jointly hosted session at the 2011 EGU conference in Vienna.

In addition to supporting the well attended London Lectures, Shell continued their generous sponsorship of the regional university lectures, which had been a noted success

Controversy was always central to the Society's early meetings and in 2009 it was boosted at the 7<sup>th</sup> *Petroleum Geology* Conference attended by over 700 people in March-April. This was a highly successful meeting and covered topical subjects such as "peak oil", the future of national oil companies, and whether exploration in the North Sea was over. These debates which each culminated in a show of hands were so popular that the Petroleum Group has extended the concept into a regular feature of its meeting calendar encouraging fresh thinking and innovation.

Professor Allen thanked the members of the Science Committee. He also thanked speakers and conveners and the Conference Office team.

#### *Professional*

Professor David Manning, Secretary Professional Matters, said that the purpose of the Society's Professional activities was to ensure that Chartered Fellows remain at the forefront of good professional practice from the beginning of their careers to retirement. Central to the concept of professionalism were education, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the validation of individuals as Chartered Geologist or Chartered Scientist. One of the major changes in this area of work during 2009 was remodelling the system for processing applications for Chartered status. The new process had been very successful and there had been an increase in applications. The most visible changes were logistical with interviews being

held at regional venues on advertised dates. Professor Manning expressed his thanks to the voluntary Chartership scrutineers who, after an active recruitment campaign, number 250.

Chartership was most popular among Engineering Geologists, Geotechnical Engineers, Contaminated Land Specialists and Hydrogeologists and in 2010 the Society plans to promote more actively the benefits of Chartership to other discipline groups.

In 2009 the Society supported one of eight bursaries at Portsmouth University to assist the training of Engineering Geologists. This was the first time that the Society had been involved in a programme of study and the Secretary, Professional Matters commended this development to the Fellowship.

Another successful collaborative venture was the *Anglo American Environmental Geochemistry Poster Competition* which was aimed at students and was won by Theresa Mercer of Hull University. The meeting, celebrating the collaboration between Imperial College and Anglo American, brought together a wide ranging, influential audience and symbolised the Society's desire to raise the profile of geoscientific issues in the broadest possible arena.

Professor Manning thanked all the people who gave their time so enthusiastically on a voluntary basis and also the staff in the Fellowship office.

#### *Publications*

Dr Jonathan Turner, Secretary Publications, reported that 2009 had been very successful: the Publishing House had produced a surplus of £300k; the *Journal of the Geological Society* achieved its highest ever impact factor of just under 2.8; and the Lyell Collection continued to grow with some 20 new book titles (and one DVD) added in 2009. The year ended with a total of 79 subscriptions to the Lyell Collection including four sales of global licence deals to corporations. New developments included the launch, on HighWire's new hosting platform, of the *Proceedings of the Yorkshire Geological Society*, the *Scottish Journal of Geology* and the *Petroleum Geology Conference* book series.

Subscriptions to *GeoScienceWorld* increased to 327.

Special Publications continued to attract favourable reviews and were praised for their scientific content and high production values. As reported last year the impact of electronic publishing is unpredictable and although there is a healthy number of titles in hand for 2010 the number of new proposals being accepted had been in decline for around two years. The Publishing House continued to pursue several new initiatives to reverse this trend and improve its work practices. The new *Allen Track* online submission system meant greater convenience and transparency for authors and benefited editors with enhanced project planning and ultimately delivered a faster and more efficient service.

Dr Turner thanked Neal Marriott and colleagues at the Publishing House.

## **REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

The Treasurer thanked the Management Team for their careful monitoring of spending and income during the year which had not only ensured the Society's financial stability during 2009 but had provided an overall performance well ahead of budget with a deficit of about £18k against a budgeted deficit of £298k.

This was due to contributions and savings from across the Society. Fellowship numbers held up. The Society's Corporate Affiliates membership remained stable during 2009 despite economic recession with a strong bias of members in the oil

and gas industries. Efforts will continue to be made to attract membership from different sectors.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Petroleum Geology Conference produced a profit share of £71k.

Investment income was better than expected at about £170k although short of the ongoing target of £200k per annum. The Society was advised by UBS, the Society's investment bankers, but the portfolio was also monitored by the Investment Committee and the members were thanked.

The Publishing House had an excellent year and achieved a surplus of £289k which was just over double the budgeted surplus. This was a significant achievement given the uncertainties of the publishing world.

As planned, reserves were used to achieve progress of the Society's business plan. Despite this the reserves stood at £1.33m, £169k up on 2008 and somewhat above the upper limit of free reserve sufficiency declared in the Society's Reserves Policy. This was in significant part due to the way some of the cash investments were handled and it is intended to expend those "excess" reserves during 2010 to continue to deliver the business plan.

## 6. COMMENTS FROM FELLOWS

Cynthia Burek said that she was sad to hear that Keele University had decided to terminate their PGCE science/geology Teacher Training course. She understood that this had been brought to the attention of the Society but a decision had been taken to do nothing. Whilst she appreciated that the Society cannot interfere in the decisions of institutions she suggested that the Society advised Keele of their disappointment in this decision in the context of safeguarding the future of teaching Earth sciences.

The President responded that she believed that the most recent intake of students was only three. She also said that the Society cannot interfere in the internal matters of a university. Alan Lord commented that the Society had only been advised of the matter two days before the senate at Keele made the decision.

It was agreed that the Education Committee should be asked to look into the matter.

Mr I Hodgson commented on the shortage of engineering geologists, for example geotechnical engineers, and said that insufficient professionals were being trained in certain fields. The Engineering Group had been liaising with various bodies on this matter. He also said that school children should be made aware of geology at a younger age than "A" level otherwise numbers will continue to dwindle.

The President said that the External Relations Committee will continue to look at this issue.

Dr R Fortey congratulated the Publishing House for their great results in difficult circumstances but queried the situation with ISI citations for Special Publications.

The Secretary, Publications replied that he was limited on what he could announce but from the end of 2010 Special Publications would be in Thomson's Web of Science citation database. This progress had been made thanks to Angharad Hills at the Publishing House.

Professor R Selley asked the Secretary, Professional Matters how many candidates achieved chartership at their first application. Professor Manning said that he would prefer to express it in terms of those ultimately accepted which was in

excess of 95%, some of which were re-applications. He also said that a lot of effort was made to help people who were not accepted at their first application.

Professor J Dewey asked about the requirement on those holding the titles of Chartered Geologist and European Geologist to undertake Continuing Professional Development. The Secretary, Professional Matters responded that unlike Chartered Geologist for which it was voluntary for European Geologists it was mandatory and holders could be struck off for non compliance.

#### 7. ACCEPTANCE OF THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2009 AND APPROVAL OF THE BUDGET FOR 2010

Professor R Stabbins proposed acceptance of the accounts for 2009 and the budget for 2010. Professor J Dewey and Dr C Summerhayes seconded the motion, which was passed *nem con.*

#### 8. FELLOWSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2011

Fellowship fees for 2010 were left unchanged from 2009 apart from the charge of a supplement for hard copy delivery of journals on request. Council recommended that Fellowship fees for 2011 should be set at a level around 3% higher, on average, than those for 2010 with the impact on younger Fellows minimised as far as possible. The rate for Candidate Fellows, those under 21 and the one-off payment for undergraduate courses will remain the same as 2010. Council is keen to encourage more undergraduates and those studying geology at school to join the Society, and in 2010 introduced a new grade of Junior Candidate Fellow and there were currently 36 members in this category. Fellows were asked to encourage young people to join the Society.

The Society looked to achieve greatest economy in terms of back office processes and Fellows were asked to assist in this by paying subscriptions by direct debit.

The following increases in subscriptions for 2011 were agreed *nem con.*:

|  | <b>2011</b> |
|--|-------------|
| Junior Candidate Fellows                   | 10.00       |
| Candidate Fellows                          | 15.00       |
| One-off payment for undergraduate course   | 40.00       |
| 21 and under                               | 31.00       |
| 22-27                                      | 64.00       |
| 28-33                                      | 117.00      |
| 34-59                                      | 178.00      |
| 34-59 (Overseas)                           | 137.00      |
| 60-69                                      | 90.00       |
| 70+  | 62.00       |
| Concessions                                | 90.00       |
| Full time postgraduate MSc                 | 36.00       |
| Full time postgraduate PhD                 | 50.00       |
| Supplement (to payer) for Joint Fellowship | 52.00       |
| CGeol supplement payers                    | 27.00       |
| CSci supplement payers                     | 22.00       |

Professor H Downes commented that there is a full-time postgraduate rate but no rate for part-time postgraduates. She said that fewer people are getting the opportunity to do a full-time course and that there are fewer bursaries available to

people doing part-time. Would Council consider a reduced rate for part-time post graduates?

The President said that she would ask her successor to take this forward with Council.

Mr I Hodgson said that those in the 60 – 69 age range would include those at the top of their earnings and those who have retired. The Executive Secretary replied that the current structure had been in place for the last 12 years and it is a system that can be operated without knowing an individual's earnings. The President said that there had been discussion at Council about age-related subscription fees.

Miss R Allington said that another organisation with which she is involved bases fees on salary within broad salary ranges. She also suggested a category of "family" membership which could then include Junior Candidate Fellows.

Sir M Moody Stuart suggested that if the Society wished to take earnings into account then those who can afford a higher fee could offer to make up the difference between the full fee and a reduced fee as allowed on the subscription call.

## **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:

Professor P A Allen, Miss S Brough, Mr M Brown, Professor R Butler, Mr M Daly, Professor A J Fleet, Dr S A Gibson, Dr R Herrington, Dr R A Hughes, Dr A Law, Professor A R Lord, Dr J P B Lovell, Professor J Ludden, Mr P Maliphant, Professor D A C Manning, Professor S Marriott, Professor S Monro, Dr C P Summerhayes, Professor J H Tellam, Dr G W Tuckwell, Dr J P Turner, Professor D J Vaughan, Mr N R G Walton

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-seven votes were cast, with no abstentions or spoilt papers. The following were duly elected:

President  
Vice Presidents

Treasurer

Dr J P B Lovell  
Professor S Marriott  
Dr C P Summerhayes  
Dr G W Tuckwell  
Professor A J Fleet

Secretary, Foreign & External Affairs  
Secretaries

Professor A R Lord  
Professor P A Allen  
Professor D A C Manning  
Dr J P 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 8 June was agreed.

**15. VOTE OF THANKS**

Professor Frostick welcomed Dr Lovell as the President and wished him much success. She also welcomed the new members of Council.

She thanked the Committees, Specialist Groups, Regional Groups and Joint Associations for their sterling work during the year. She also thanked the Corporate Affiliates, particularly Shell for their continuing sponsorship of the Shell London lectures and now the regional lectures, and sponsors of Society events and the organisations who allowed their staff to participate in the committees and activities of the Society.

She thanked the retiring members of Council and all the retiring officers and other Council members for their diligence and hard work during their terms of office.

Retiring members of Council were:

Dr I D Bartholomew  
Professor E Derbyshire  
Professor C M R Fowler  
Professor J D Marshall

The President also said that while it may be thought invidious to single out individuals for special mention no-one could begrudge a few words about Edward Derbyshire, who had been Secretary for Foreign and External Affairs since 2007, but had served as a member of the External Relations Committee for the best part of a decade, during which time he had overseen the Society's international activities. As a former Chair of IGCP, Professor Derbyshire's understanding of IUGS and especially UNESCO had proved invaluable to the Committee and the Society. Prior to becoming the Committee's Chair, Professor Derbyshire was the Science Director for the United Nations International Year of Planet Earth, and was involved with that initiative since its inception in 2001. He worked closely with Ed de Mulder, to help ensure that the IYPE triennium project successfully negotiated the labyrinthine processes of the United Nations, through acceptance in 2005 and inauguration in 2007. In so doing he had done the Earth sciences globally an enormous service.

She also thanked the Society's staff but in particular Edmund Nickless for his steadfast support and enormous knowledge of the Society, Nic Bilham and Stephanie Culver.