

REPORT OF THE ENGINEERING GROUP CHAIR TO THE AGM, 19 SEPT 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Tonight is about half way through my two year term as chair of the Engineering Group. My aims are to build on those of Ivan Hodgson and to improve communication between the Group and engineering geologists in different sectors and are:

- *To support an engineering geology community in the UK.*
- *Raising the profile of engineering geology.*
- *Make the Group the focus for information, advice and initiatives in engineering geology.*

1.2 In this report on the 2010/2011 year's activities I will attempt to demonstrate the ways in which I believe we have continued to progress in these areas.

2. THE COMMITTEE

2.1. I am very fortunate to have a hard working and enthusiastic committee. Helen Scholes, returning to the Engineering Group after a few years away, has provided guidance and great experience of the Geological Society as a former council member and her knowledge has been extremely valuable. Ursula Lawrence took over the reins as Treasurer and is everything you need in this post, providing timely financial information and plans, enabling the Group to function within its means. She is also the Group's representative on the London Forum. David Waring has, as ever, been a tireless, efficient and conscientious secretary whether he is in the UK, elsewhere in Europe or in Africa. His sustained support throughout the year has been very important so others can carry out their duties. This was his last year as secretary and I would like to thank him for his efficiency, enthusiasm and friendship. I must remind him that he did volunteer when the previous secretary was posted to New York. Alex Boorer, another volunteer, will be the new secretary.

2.2 My thanks are due to all the committee members for their hard work this year. Richard Mellor has done a fine job on publicity ensuring that you are kept up to date through Geoscientist, via the website or by Jiscmail. This is Richard's last year in the post and he will be missed. Matt Eynon, was co-opted earlier this year to take over as Publicity Chair. Alex Kidd took over as technical meetings chair and after some difficult times, not of his making, has provided an interesting and varied meetings programme as you will see shortly - even in semi retirement. Paul Emerson has ably assisted Alex. Chris Martin has been an important figure in the Engineering Group for many years most recently organising several Glossop Meetings and previously as treasurer. Last year's meeting was his last and anyone who was there would agree it was a tour de force. Chris will still be in touch with the committee as secretary of the Relict Glacial and Periglacial Working Party. I have been amazed at the thoroughness and professionalism of Chris and he will be greatly missed. Sue Greene has not only produced the Group's Newsletter earlier this year but also, within a month or so, a baby. Mother and child are thriving. We look forward to the next edition of the Newsletter later in the year. A call will go out for contributions. David Giles has taken on even more work for the Engineering Group again arranged the annual field trip, which are always enjoyable and informative, maintaining the Training Guide, chairing the Geohazards Working Party and as a member of the Relict Glacial and Periglacial Working Party.

2.3 We again lost a number of members during the year. Malcolm Whitworth, who chaired the 2010 Forum committee, resigned due to work commitments as did Hannah Cutthrew. Because of the shortage of committee numbers and ever increasing opportunities, we have co-opted five new members during the year. Matt Eynon you have already heard about. We have been very fortunate to co-opt Margaret McBride, former chair of the South Wales Regional Group, has taken a new role of Regional Groups Representative. Charlie Knox was co-opted to represent the Group on the new Environmental Network and those working in environmental geology. She has provided a number of ideas for the Network. Tom Casey has taken over the organisation of the Glossop meeting from Chris Martin, and young John Perry was co-opted to help with convening meetings. All five we hope will now stand for election.

2.4 Tracey Radford is carrying out the third review of the strategy review, the aim of which is to assess the Committee's performance against its aims and the members' requirements and, where appropriate, to set new goals.

2.5 Tracey Radford as chair, Helen Scholes, Margaret McBride and Matt Eynon are working on plans for the 50th anniversary of The Group. It has been decided that, as The Group was formed towards the end of 1963 but had its first meeting in 1964, we should have a celebratory year, starting at the Forum and Glossop meeting in 2013 and finishing at the Glossop meeting in 2014. We hope to get many specialist groups, regional groups and other organisations involved in our celebration.

2.6 Our outreach initiatives are in the hands of Lee Jones for schools and Alex Kidd for universities.

2.7 Our thanks are also due to those who represent us on various external bodies: Ian Jefferson (IAEG), Paul Maliphant (Geological Society Council), Adrian Collings (Hazards Forum), John Harris (Site Investigation Steering Group), David Norbury on a British Standards committee B526/3 and Darren Page on the Library Committee and the editorial board of Ground Engineering, Andrew Hart on the UK Location Data User Group, Paul Emerson on the Land Drilling Sector Accreditation Scheme and Rodney Chartres and Bill Rankin on the Advisory Group of the BGS Independent Knowledge Exchange.

2.8 I would like to congratulate David Shilston on becoming the President Designate of the Geological Society, Paul Maliphant as vice president and member of the Professional Committee and David Craggs elected to council. I would also like to thank Helen Natrass for running for council election and commiserations on not being elected.

2.9. I would also like to thank all those companies and organisations who support the committee members. Without this support we would not have the dynamic hard working committee we have.

3. LINKS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

3.1 The Engineering Group is the UK branch of the IAEG. Dr Ian Jefferson is now one of the European Vice President and Dr Helen Reeves is now the UK representative. We wish them luck in their new posts. Prof Martin Culshaw ran for Secretary General of IAEG but was not successful.

3.2 The Group represents the Geological Society on the Ground Forum and as of this year also on the UK Register of Ground Engineering Professionals.

3.3 The Group maintains contacts with a number of other organisations including the British Geotechnical Association, the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IoM³), the British Tunnelling Society (BTS), the UK Chapter of the International Geosynthetics Society (IGS), CIRIA and with other Specialist and increasingly with Regional Groups of the Geological Society.

4. THE GLOSSOP LECTURE AND AWARD

4.1 In 2009 the Glossop Meeting moved to the Royal Geographical Society, a very comfortable and large venue. As the Meeting is so popular this venue will become its home for the foreseeable future, costs permitting. This is the premier annual engineering geology event in the UK. There were about 400 attending on December 8th to listen and watch the 2010 Glossop Award presentation by Dougal Mason (Opus International Consultants Ltd.) on 'Engineering geology for Project Wind, New Zealand' Zealand' and Prof Rory Mortimore's entertaining and highly informative Glossop lecture *Making sense of chalk: A total rock approach in Engineering Geology*. This talk exemplified what engineering geology is about. Rory has completed writing the lecture and it will be published in QJEGH within the next year or so. This talk exemplified what engineering geology is about. Rory has completed writing up the lecture and it will be published in QJEGH within the next year or so. As he was compiling the Glossop Lecture he found a great deal more work that he intends to publish with others adding to those papers recently published in the Proceedings of the Geological Association.

4.2 The event was honoured by the presence of Rudolf Glossop's daughter Mrs Emma Slack. We very much appreciate the continued support of the Glossop family.

4.3 The Glossop Lecture is kindly sponsored by Arup, Atkins, Bachy Soletanche, Mott MacDonald and Whittles Publishing.

5. MEETINGS

5.1 The technical meetings were all of excellent quality, informative and often thought provoking. As someone who knows how much work goes into the meetings by the presenters and conveners it is gratifying that attendances have increased in the last year or so. I would like to thank all those who presented and organised these successful meetings. If you wish to know more please see the website.

5.2 We started in July last year with our annual field weekend which was the engineering geology of the North East of England centred on Durham. Our first meeting in Burlington House was in September on *Engineering Geology in the Middle East*. In October the half day meeting at Burlington House was on *Ground Models - How are they constructed? What can they tell you?* On the 23rd November the evening meeting on *Changes to the Contaminated Land Regime* which provided a history of contaminated land policy and practice from 1895-2010 and an outline of DEFRA thinking on Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act and how draft changes to guidance might affect engineering and environmental geologists. In December we had the Glossop meeting and our annual joint meeting with the International Geosynthetics Society. The talk by Prof Neil Dixon was on *Obtaining strength parameters for design – geosynthetic interaction*, the presentation is on the website. We started 2011 with the half-day joint meeting with the Institution of Highways and Transportation titled *Future Proofing Transportation Infrastructure* which had particular reference to climate change and predicted more extreme weather that may (will) cause more damage and disruption to transport networks. In February our annual joint meeting with the BGA, this year at the ICE, was titled *Ground Engineering Design and Construction on Off-shore Wind Farms*. In April the evening meeting was on *Gas Storage in Underground Caverns Engineering Geological Implications*. Our evening meeting in May with the Offshore Engineering Society was on *Shallow gas in the tophole section* and described how shallow gas in marine soils is a hazard to offshore drilling operations. The final meeting was the field annual field meeting which convened on Friday 1 July and consider various aspects of the engineering geology of South Wales including coal mining, slope instability and fault reactivation. I congratulate Peter Brabham, Laurance Donnelly, Matthew Eynon and David Giles for an excellent weekend with high quality notes and good weather!

5.3 This is a varied and another impressive programme of meetings which were generally well attended. I would like to thank the meetings chair Alex Kidd and all the conveners. Thanks too to Richard Mellor for publicising the events and to all our excellent speakers and all who supported these meetings. A number of meetings did not come to fruition and they will follow in the next year or so.

5.4 Most of these meetings were held in London, next year we plan to have more meetings outside London primarily co-hosted by Regional Groups.

6. UK REGISTER OF GROUND ENGINEERING PROFESSIONALS (RoGEP)

6.1 The Register is a Ground Forum initiative set up by the BGA and underwritten by the IoM³, ICE and the Geological Society, was launched in early June 2011. The Engineering Group represents the Society on the Register Panel in the persons of Jim Griffiths and Ivan Hodgson. Its launch produced lively discussion of the pros and cons of the register via the Engineering Group's JiscMail. If you are interested in the register please see the website <http://www.ukrogep.org.uk>.

7. INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS

7.1 Many of the increasing number of UK engineering geologists working overseas use the resources available on the Geological Society website. This includes chartership and the training guide. The Engineering Group hopes to improve the communication with those working overseas by having an ex-officio committee member as 'foreign secretary'. David Waring, the retiring secretary, will take on this post.

8. PUBLICATIONS AND WORKING PARTIES

8.1 The Hot Deserts Working Party has completed its work and the book will be published in early 2012 with an Engineering Group meeting later in the year. I would like to thank Mike Walker, Graham West, John Charman and the team for all their hard work and for identifying sponsors for the colour for the book. I am sure it will be an excellent and colourful book that will be a primary source of information for engineering geologists from the UK and elsewhere working in this climatic zone.

8.2 The engineering geology of relict glacial and periglacial conditions steering committee has set out the Terms of Reference, the outline of the Working Party and Table of Contents. Potential Working Party officers have been identified. The publication proposal has been drafted and the work program planned. The technical program of this year's Forum, with a working title of "Engineering Geology and the Quaternary" is being convened by members of the working party. I would like to thank John Charman, Chris Martin, David Giles, Jim Griffiths, Kevin Privett and Mike Winter for their work on the steering committee.

8.3 The Working Party on Geohazards continues under David Giles. This year has seen good progress on populating the website with information on a range of geohazards. A publication has now been proposed to the Publication House.

8.4 The Use of Baseline Conditions in Engineering Geology mini Working Party under Darren Page was the subject of one of the technical meetings in 2010 will produce a paper for the QJEGH.

8.5 Richard Fox continues to chair the Applied Petrography Group which meets regularly and has its own website (<http://www.appliedpetrographygroup.com>). The Group was asked by British Standards to comment on the test methods and 'classification protocol' relevant to aggregates and the regulation of dangerous substances.

8.6 Over the last year The Quarterly Journal of Engineering Geology and Hydrogeology has increased its international reputation and continues to attract a large number of papers of a high standard from the UK and overseas. Our congratulations to Mike Winter and the editorial board. If you wish to get involved as an external editor please contact Helen Floyd-Walker (helen.floyd-walker@geolsoc.org.uk).

10. SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

10.1 Concern has been expressed by a number of organisations, including the Ground Forum, at the potential future risks associated with the withdrawal of funding by both ESPRC and NERC for vocational MSc courses. Although many of the courses are currently full, the likely increase in fees and greater student debt in the future may impact on the university courses, future students and the industry. The Group supports the Ground Forum in its efforts to keep our skills on the Government approved shortage occupational list, but it is also important that we encourage young people towards science subjects and, for our industry, specifically earth sciences. We will work with the Ground Forum and the Construction Industry Council to try to alleviate shortages in the future.

10.2 Engineering Group's outreach to schools will be co-ordinated with the Geological Society with advice from those engineering geologists who go out to schools.

10.3 Alex Kidd continued the work on how the Group can work with universities who offer geology or engineering geology, to encourage students to consider careers in our disciplines. This initiative is in line with others by the BGA IoM³ and the ICE. Alex is also active on the Ground Forum sub-committee that is looking to foster links between industry and universities, to mutual benefit. Although progress has been made, the Engineering Group needs a university 'insider' to aid this process and hope to have a university based representative on the committee.

11. SOCIETY MATTERS

11.1 The Engineering Group is taking an active role within the Geological Society by having a Regional Groups and Environment Network representatives. We have also responded to the Societies consultation process either as the Engineering Group and or via Jiscmail allowing others to provide their expertise.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 This has been another mixed year for the Engineering Group partly due to the current economic conditions. Many of our best young, and some not so young, committee members have moved overseas. However, this gives others opportunities. On the whole our meetings have been well attended and the highlight of the year was the Glossop meeting. We intend that the Engineering Group be a hub for engineering geologists in the UK and others working overseas.

12.2 The Group increases the role it plays as part in UK engineering geology. We represent our engineering geologists and the Society on a number of committees, we contribute to public consultations of important draft documents and we now have a mechanism to improve communication throughout the UK.

12.3 I would like to thank the Executive Secretary, the Conference Office and all the staff at Burlington House for their support over the last year.

12.4 I would urge you to play your part, come to our meetings, bring your ideas to the committee, join the committee and help us to serve you. If you wish to get involved please contact us, this is done easily through the website.

David Entwisle