



Supporting the
transformation of
the Geological
Society's historic
Lecture Theatre

A Space for Discovery

The room at the heart of geoscience



The
Geological
Society



Image © The London Archives (City of London)

Preserving
a remarkable
scientific heritage



Creating a space
for future discovery

A room where the history of geology happened



Image © The London Archives (City of London)

A message from our President

"I am delighted to invite you to be part of an exciting new chapter for the Geological Society. As President, I have the privilege of seeing how the Lecture Theatre continues to bring our community together through scientific exchange, learning and collaboration. For more than two centuries, the Society has been strengthened by the commitment and generosity of those who believe in our mission. This refurbishment will build on that foundation, creating a welcoming and inspiring space for the future of geoscience."

Jessica T. Smith
President, The Geological Society



Founded in 1807 by thirteen pioneering geologists, the Geological Society is the world's oldest geological society and the UK's professional body and learned society for geoscience.

Since moving to Burlington House in 1874, the Society has provided a home for generations of Fellows and the wider geoscience community united by a shared ambition: advancing understanding of the Earth and planetary sciences.

At the centre of this story is the Lecture Theatre.

Originally known as the Meeting Room, this space has accompanied the Society through its changing homes across London before becoming established at Burlington House. For more than two centuries it has been a place where geological ideas have been presented, debated and transformed into new understanding.

Within this remarkable room:

- **Mary Anning's fossil discoveries** helped revolutionise understanding of prehistoric life and extinction.
- **William Buckland** formally described *Megalosaurus* in 1824, the first dinosaur to be scientifically named.
- Early papers describing the **Cambrian, Silurian, Devonian and Permian systems** were presented and discussed.
- **Charles Darwin** presented his first scientific paper to the Society in 1837 following the voyage of HMS Beagle.
- The first presentation of the **Piltdown Man discovery** took place here in 1912, followed decades later by the announcement of its exposure as a fraud.
- Women attended an Ordinary General Meeting for the first time in 1901, with the first women Fellows elected in 1919.
- In 1973, Apollo 17 astronaut and geologist **Harrison Schmitt** delivered the inaugural lecture in the newly refurbished Lecture Theatre — the only geologist to have walked on the Moon.

Few scientific spaces have such a direct connection to the development of an entire discipline.

Today, this remarkable room stands ready for its next chapter.



Image © The London Archives (City of London)

“Being a member of the Geological Society has given me access to a lot of resources that have helped me in both my education and career.”

Dan Austin FGS



A living institution at the heart of geoscience

For more than 200 years, the Geological Society has advanced understanding of the Earth and planetary sciences and their vital contribution to society.

Today, our global community of more than 12,000 geoscientists, educators, students and enthusiasts works together to address some of the defining challenges of our time — from climate change and natural hazards to sustainable resources and the energy transition.

The Lecture Theatre remains central to this mission.

A space in constant use

The Lecture Theatre is one of the Society’s most important and heavily used spaces.

Through both in-person and digital participation, thousands of people engage with the Society’s work every year.

Supporting research, education and professional development

The Lecture Theatre provides a platform for researchers to share discoveries, students to meet inspiring role models and professionals to maintain the skills and knowledge needed throughout their careers.

It supports the Society’s charitable purpose: educating, informing and connecting people through geoscience.



Revealing the past. Preparing for the future



Image © The London Archives (City of London)



The Lecture Theatre has served the Society for more than 50 years in its current form, but the time has come to invest in its future.

After decades of uncertainty, the Society secured a **999-year lease for Burlington House in 2024**, creating the opportunity to invest confidently in its historic home and the spaces that support its charitable mission.

The refurbishment represents a rare opportunity: to restore elements of the theatre's historic character while creating a modern, accessible and sustainable environment for scientific exchange.



The project will:

Restore historic character

Research suggests that significant architectural features from the original Victorian Meeting Room may remain hidden beneath the current 1970s interior. The refurbishment will seek to reveal and celebrate these features wherever possible.

Improve accessibility

The redesigned theatre will create a more inclusive environment for Fellows, speakers, students and visitors, ensuring that everyone can participate fully in Society activities.

Support sustainability

Upgraded building systems will improve energy efficiency, reduce environmental impact and support the Society's wider commitment to sustainability.

Enhance learning and engagement

Modern audiovisual technology will enable high-quality hybrid events, recorded lectures and wider digital access.

Strengthen global connections

The renewed Lecture Theatre will provide a world-class environment for geoscientific exchange, connecting audiences in London and around the world.

For over 200 years this room has helped shape understanding of our planet. Together, we can ensure it continues to inspire discovery for generations to come.



Image © The London Archives (City of London)

An opportunity to shape the next century

We are seeking to raise over £1 million to refurbish and secure the future of the Society's historic Lecture Theatre.

The Founding Circle

For those wishing to support the project at a significant level, the Founding Circle offers the opportunity to become part of this important chapter in the Geological Society's history.

Founding Circle Members will be recognised through a dedicated Founding Circle display within the refurbished Lecture Theatre, which will remain in place for a minimum of 15 years. Members will receive regular updates throughout the refurbishment, sharing the project's progress as it unfolds, and will be invited to celebrate its completion at a special reopening event.

Join a community helping to preserve the Society's remarkable heritage and strengthen the future of geoscience.

Flexible giving options are available, including instalment payments and regular gifts. See website for more details or contact the Development Team.

Platinum Founding Circle – £10,000+

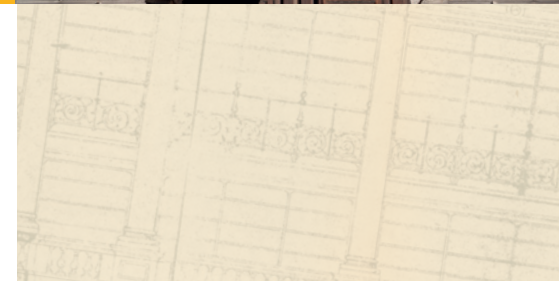
Recognition as a Platinum Founding Circle Member

Gold Founding Circle – £5,000

Recognition as a Gold Founding Circle Member

Silver Founding Circle – £3,000

Recognition as a Silver Founding Circle Member



“Burlington House and its Lecture Theatre have been at the heart of geoscience for generations. This investment will preserve an important part of our scientific heritage while improving accessibility, sustainability and digital participation, enabling the Society to inspire

people far beyond London.”



Dr Iain Bartholomew – Fellow, donor and Campaign Ambassador



Dedicate a seat in the renewed Lecture Theatre



Image © The London Archives (City of London)
'Meeting Room' in parliamentary style, probably from 1972. Note the ceilings and windows that lie underneath the 1970s re-development.



A personal legacy in a historic scientific space

As part of the refurbishment, supporters can become part of the Lecture Theatre's story through our seat dedication programme. Future generations of Fellows, students, researchers and visitors will gather in these seats to learn, debate and discover.

Dedications may contain up to 80 characters. You may choose to dedicate a seat:

- In your own name or that of your family
- In honour of a mentor, colleague or friend
- In memory of a loved one
- To celebrate a career, achievement or milestone
- On behalf of an organisation, group, team or project

Dedication Levels

Standard Seat	£500
Priority Selection Seat	£1,500
Premium Recognition Seat	£2,500

A flexible and heritage-led approach

Each dedicated seat will feature an elegant, engraved plaque designed to complement the restored character of the theatre.

As conservation and design work progresses, final seating arrangements will continue to develop. Donors will receive allocation priority according to gift level and pledge date, with final placements confirmed following detailed design.

Take your place in geological history and help create a lasting legacy for future generations.

Artist's impression for illustrative purposes only.
Final design and finishes subject to development.



Become part of a lasting legacy

Corporate participation

We welcome the involvement of companies and partner organisations. By supporting the redevelopment of the Geological Society's Lecture Theatre, your organisation will help create a world-class venue for scientific exchange, education, professional development, and public engagement.

Partnership opportunities can be tailored to your organisation and may include recognition within the project, support for accessibility and sustainability improvements, sponsorship of seating, or leadership support as a Founding Circle Member. Please contact us to discuss available opportunities.

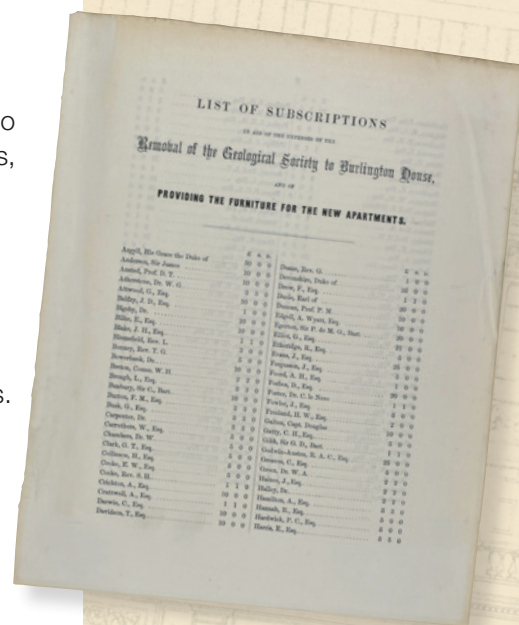
Individual giving – two centuries of generosity

For over 200 years, the Geological Society has been strengthened by the generosity of Fellows and supporters who have chosen to invest in its future. From helping fund the Society's move to Somerset House in 1828 to supporting the previous redevelopment of the Lecture Theatre in the 1970s, each generation has helped preserve and develop the Society for those that follow.

We hope you will consider becoming part of that continuing tradition.

Every gift, whatever its size, will help create a home for geoscience that is more accessible, sustainable and digitally connected, while revealing and preserving the historic character of Burlington House for future generations.

Unless you choose to remain anonymous, all campaign donors will be acknowledged in a commemorative Book of Benefactors, the Society's Annual Review and on our website, continuing the Society's long tradition of recognising the generosity of its supporters.



William Buckland (1784-1856)

Robert Ferguson, MP (d.1840)

John Frederick William Herschel
(1792-1871), mathematician
and astronomer

Sir Isaac Leon Goldsmid
(1778-1859), financier

Charles Lyell (1797-1875)

William Hyde Wollaston
(1766-1828), chemist,
physicist, and physiologist.
Discovered Palladium and
founded the Wollaston Medal

For more than 200 years, the Society has recorded and celebrated the generosity of its supporters. These archive images show donations towards the Society's move to Somerset House (1828) and Burlington House (1874).

The next chapter starts here

Together, we can ensure the Lecture Theatre remains a place where future generations learn, collaborate and discover.

Your support will:

Preserve internationally significant scientific heritage

Transform the experience through accessibility and sustainability

Connect scientists and audiences around the world through hybrid technology

Inspire the next generation of geoscientists

A lasting record

All donors will be recorded in a commemorative **Book of Benefactors**, preserved within the Society's collections as a permanent record of those whose generosity helped secure the Lecture Theatre's future.

Anonymous donations of any size are also welcome and will be respected in accordance with donors' wishes.

Make a gift for the future

To discuss supporting the project:

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We would be delighted to discuss other ways of supporting the campaign, including donations by bank transfer, gifts of shares and legacy giving. Please contact the Development Team for further information.



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The
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A Space for Discovery. A Place for Future Generations.

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