



Geoscientists in the news and on the move in the UK, Europe and worldwide



Celebrating fifty years of the Tectonic Studies Group

Sue and Jack Treagus reminisce on the birth of TSG

From our combined memories, we think the idea for the Tectonic Studies Group (TSG) was born from a meeting between Robin Nicholson (d.2015) and John Ramsay in 1968. Robin subsequently wrote to every geology department in Britain with a structural geologist, while John took the idea to the Geological Society of London. The inaugural TSG meeting, hosted by John, took place at Imperial College London in December 1970.

The theme of the meeting was 'The Study of Folds'. Speakers, who included research students, as well as university lecturers and professors, were allotted 45 minutes each. Among them was Sue Treagus (née Beech) giving her first conference talk. At this meeting, John Ramsay was appointed chairperson and Derek Powell the secretary, and it was agreed that TSG would meet annually. The meeting ended with a party at John Ramsay's house in Notting Hill. One of us remembers dancing.

The following year, Robin Nicholson and Jack Treagus organised the first open programme meeting of TSG, which was held in Manchester, again shortly before Christmas. Thereafter, annual meetings were held at different university locations throughout Britain. During its first decade, TSG facilitated the exchange of many ideas and spawned collaborations such as the partnerships between the universities of Liverpool and Leeds, as well as friendships that persist to this day.

Despite shortening talks as demand grew, with just 15 minutes allocated to speakers at the 1978 Liverpool meeting, two days became insufficient to accommodate the growing TSG membership, which included many from mainland Europe. In 1984, the annual December meeting was expanded to three days of talks, with additional workshops and fieldtrips, and this format has continued ever since. In addition to annual meetings, TSG hosted or sponsored many thematic conferences, at the Geological Society, at university venues, and

sometimes in collaboration in overseas locations.

As numbers grew and subject matters broadened, the demand for programme space became competitive, with research students given precedence for talks, and some having to accept poster space in lieu of a talk. The 1987 meeting, back in Manchester again, marked a peak in TSG attendance, with a turnout of 350 people, 200 of whom enrolled for the conference dinner. These high numbers reflected the expanding and collaborative nature of structural and tectonics research in academia and the petroleum industry during the 1980s. By the end of the decade, numbers at the annual meetings began to decrease, perhaps the result of the freezing of academic appointments at UK universities, as well as rationalisation of geology departments and some reining back of oil-industry-funded research.

By 1990, there was vigorous debate about how TSG might attract greater numbers, with suggestions to use keynote speakers. This move was opposed by many, who wished to maintain the tradition that our annual meetings provide opportunities for students, academics and industry professionals regardless of rank. Quoting John Ramsay: "TSG has always tried to encourage and to give the floor to young researchers to put forward their views and findings, and not to give preference to more experienced 'oldies'". This tradition continues, supported by TSG medals and prizes awarded to postgraduates.

TSG continues today and welcomes new members. For more information, see: <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/tsg>

Susan H. Treagus & Jack E. Treagus were formerly in the Department of Earth Sciences, University of Manchester

The full version of this personal history of TSG is published online. Editor.



The Society notes with sadness the passing of:

Allen, John R. L.
Bennison, George
Billing, Ian *
Copponex, Jean-Pierre *
De Wit, Maarten*
Dickins, Dennis*
Douglas, Tom*
Fookes, Peter
Greenleaves, Keith*
Hawkins, Kevin*
Jackson, David Ian *
Max, Michael David
McKean, James
Mudge, David Charles
Naldrett, Anthony James
Parkes, Matthew
Rostron, Brian*
Ralph, William Thomas*
Spink, Andrew
Symes, Douglas Kean *
Thomas, Michael

Weeks, Alan*
Woodland, Bertram George *
Worthington, Paul F

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