



Operations Geology in 2020 and Beyond: Traditional and Modern Approaches

4-5 November 2020 Virtual Conference

I am writing this summary of the Energy Groups' first Virtual Conference as adrenaline levels start to return to normal.

The biennial Operations Geology conference has been an established part of the Energy Group's (formerly the Petroleum Group) event calendar since 2012. The present group of convenors had been working together since early 2019 and had focused their attention on delivering a 2-day conference at Burlington House in early November 2020, with all the networking opportunities to compliment a well-thought-out technical programme. The theme of the conference was *Operations Geology in 2020 and Beyond: Traditional and Modern Approaches*. However, in the spring of 2020 it became apparent the convening group would have to reconsider their proposal as the impact of the pandemic (Covid-19) on society and subsequent lockdown meant a face to face event of the scale being planned was not permissible. This projected us into unknown territory and the world of virtual conferences (and Zoom).

As a virtual conference became a reality, we had to consider the duration of sessions given there is a limit to how much 'Zoom time' one can take in a day, and how to manage poster presentations. We want to avoid Zoom fatigue. Further coupled with a pandemic there was a very sluggish oil price and it was recognised that for many individuals in the industry job concerns about job retention were never far away.

Initially Abstracts dribbled in, followed by a predictable late rush as the deadline approached. There was sufficient material for two half day sessions with a series of technical talks interspersed with tech bytes (5-minute poster presentations). This was preferable to a day full of Zoom talks which would compromise the appeal and enjoyment of the event. There were in excess of 100 registered delegates over the two morning sessions, many from overseas, including presenters. It was great to see that level of support through registrations and also from company sponsorship by HRH Geology, Genel Energy and Ichaca.

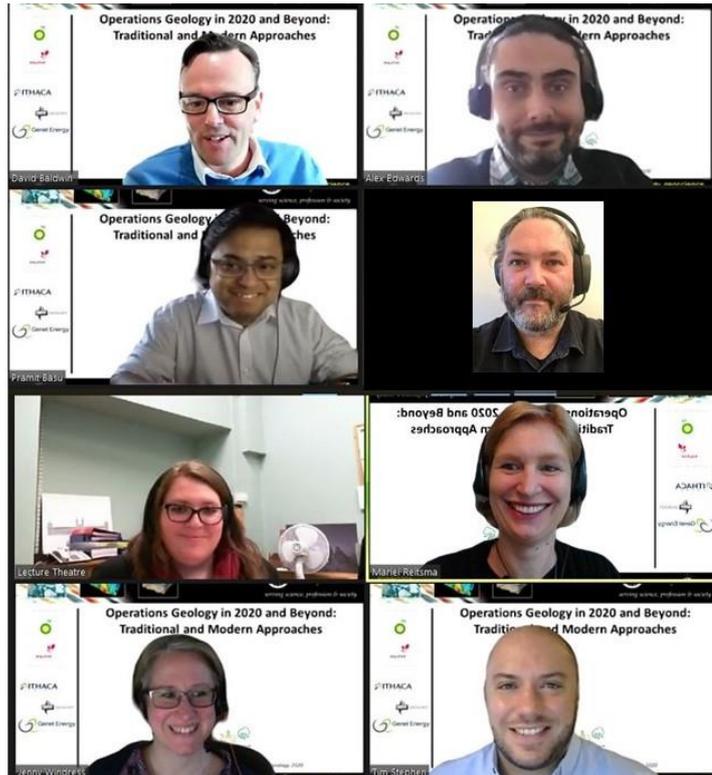
There were four themed sessions Digital Applications in Operations Geology - Advances in wellsite technology - New Workflows for Well Planning & QA/QC - Operation Geoscience Case Studies. A detailed Abstract book is accessible via the Geological Society website. There were many highlights and a diverse range of presentations by individual from major energy companies to independent wellsite consultants. The conference started with a particularly interesting and thought provoking key note from IBM on future collaborative ways of working, followed by presentations detailing applications of applying machine learning to elements of the Operations Geologists' workflow. Importantly these were examples not concepts. The second session (3 presentations and 3 tech bytes) provided an opportunity to hear about advances in rig site technology and innovative ways of integrating workflows across disciplines.



OGC 2020 Convenors

Prior to the conference, in mid-October 2020, a survey was distributed to past and present delegates, and further shared on social media. The aim was to understand the make-up of the Operations Geology community and tease out detail on their employment, experience and professional interests. This provided a timely update to the comprehensive survey conducted and shared at previous conferences in providing a state of the discipline. The second day opened with a presentation detailing the survey results and provided some intriguing comparisons with the 2016 survey, which is accessible on LinkedIn [here](#). This was followed by the final sessions which focused on workflows and four technical case studies.

The convening team focused and provided a conference of which they can be proud. In fact, it had the feel and structure of previous conferences. The planning was very detailed, and collaboration with the presenters ensured the conference ran smoothly. The live delivery of presentations provided a human touch rather than a series of pre-recorded contributions. Given that there was no previous experience to fall back on in terms of delivering a virtual conference this event certainly exceeded expectations – in no small part due to the organisation and enabling input from Sarah Woodcock of the GSL.



Nick Pierpoint November 2020