



The
Geological
Society

Annual Review

2023



Chief Executive's introduction



2023 was a year of new ideas and hope for the future.

The patter of small feet could be heard through our London HQ as the Society played host to future scientists and engineers at family days and schools events with games, talks, puppet shows, film screenings, exhibitions and interactive educational activity. Our new volunteer Earth Science Ambassadors brought geoscience to schools, helping to inspire more than 400 inner-city pupils during 2023, with plans to expand this initiative over the coming

years. Thousands accessed our educational resources online and hundreds of physical materials were distributed. 730 university students joined our careers fair in person and online, and others joined student networking events.

The idea to develop an apprenticeship in geoscience, equivalent to the undergraduate degree level, arose from a collaboration between Universities Geoscience UK and the Geological Society. The new scheme was approved in 2023 and will offer an alternate pathway to earning a degree while gaining practical work experience.

The Society's brand new journal, *Geoenergy*, has exceeded expectations. As you will see in the Year in Review, below (page 10), the Society has taken a proactive approach to Open Access publishing and you will read about the new open science book series in collaboration with the American Geophysical Union (AGU), which will address challenges in climate change and sustainable development.

As the Geological Society's President, Ruth Allington, reports on page 3, we were delighted to see membership numbers grow for the first time since 2018, with a surge of new members as well as improved retention of existing members.

Ruth also discusses our scientific programme, the important work of *Geoscientist* magazine and our publishing, library, conferences, training and policy work, and celebrates the long-term arrangement agreed for our premises at Burlington House in London.

The Society produces a great deal of important scientific and charitable output, and our Year in Numbers infographic on page 11 quantifies some of this. This requires financial sustainability. We are moved by the financial, volunteer, and in-kind support the Society has received over the past year, some of which is set out in this report. As the Geological Society's Treasurer, Keith Myers, reports on page 4, we are also pleased that this generosity, combined with growth in our publishing, conferences, training and membership revenues, has produced the Society's highest income on record and a healthy surplus that puts us in a good position to continue to innovate and grow.

Simon Thompson,
Chief Executive

“ The Society's highest income on record and a healthy surplus that puts us in a good position to continue to innovate and grow.



President's report

My term as President is nearing its conclusion and Prof Jon Gluyas will be inaugurated in June. The time has passed all too quickly, but as I reflect on 2023 I am pleased to be able to say that much has been achieved.

Membership numbers are rising again, growing convincingly by 207 during the past year. This is due to promotion and stewardship by the membership and marketing teams, a packed year of publishing, conferences, training and scientific content, and a focus on scientific themes that are relevant to contemporary geoscientists and engineers.

Our new journal, *Geoenergy*, launched in partnership with the European Association of Geoscientists and Engineers, has exceeded expectations. A publishing partnership was agreed with the American Geophysical Union to launch a new Open Science book series, *Geohorizons*. We also partnered with Research4Life to provide institutions in lower income countries with online access to our peer-reviewed academic and professional content.

Eighteen new books were published, and submissions to our publications have increased across the board.

Geoscientist magazine continues to be one of the most popular benefits of membership. Coverage included a new seabed mapping initiative, important new sedimentology research, work to understand and reduce volcanic risk, and a themed issue on geothermal energy.

The library team have supported members in person and online, with people travelling from far and wide to attend library induction days, exhibitions, and talks. Members also downloaded more than 64,000 full text papers and publications provided by the library.

2023 saw a strong programme of conferences, scientific meetings, webinars and other events. The Energy Geoscience Conference in Aberdeen sold out, attracting 600 delegates and hosting 160 talks. We held the first flagship *GeoFutures* conference, focusing on Digital Geoscience. A highlight of the public lecture series was a presentation by Jodi Webb, a Forensic Examiner for the FBI in Quantico. It was good to note that so many audience members were A-Level and undergraduate students.

This brings me to one of the themes of the year. It is essential that we attract young people into geoscience to meet the needs of a changing world. Our outreach to young people has ranged from support for primary and secondary schools, to family fun days and film screenings at our London premises. A team of trained volunteer Earth Science Ambassadors is now delivering workshops to primary schools. Resources are provided to schools throughout the UK and made available in additional languages for a global audience, Korean and Slovak being the most recent international additions. Our *Geoscience for the Future* poster is available to download freely in 27 languages.



Thousands of people visited our premises in 2023 with a range of activities, exhibitions and talks for people of all ages. The Schools Geology Challenge invited students to showcase their interest in geology, learn more about the way geoscience impacts our lives, and put their teamwork and presentation skills to the test. *Careers Day 2023* was a big success, with 230 students attending in-person from across the UK with many more online for themed panel discussions, careers talks, CV workshops and more.

Our policy work aims to communicate geoscience information where it relates to public policy. During 2023 we worked with the Government Office for Science Foresight Project on Future of the Subsurface, in collaboration with sister Societies and the Science Council.

All of this requires technical infrastructure and a secure home. I am pleased that after several years of planning, work began on a new website and online platform for members to access services and interact with the Society, to be phased in starting in Autumn 2024.

I am also delighted that 2023 saw the end of at least two decades of uncertainty over our long term tenure of Burlington House, with agreement in principle to purchase a 999 year lease from our landlord (contracts to be finalised during 2024). Security of tenure will enable us move forward and focus on our charitable and strategic goals, investing in growth, and conducting activities across the whole of the UK and beyond.

Ruth Allington,
President

“ Thousands of people visited our premises in 2023 with a range of activities, exhibitions and talks for people of all ages.”

Treasurer's report

I am pleased to report that 2023 was a record year for the Society's income at £5.97m (2022: £5.12m), an increase of 17%. Total expenditure including depreciation increased by 11% to £5.73m (2022: £5.15m), broadly in line with budget. The Society's investment portfolio ended the year at £7.15m (2022: £6.81m). Including investment gains, the Society reported a surplus in 2023 of £0.65m (2022: £0.90m loss).

Membership grew for the first time since 2018 with 11,874 renewed and subscribed for 2023 (2022: 11,577). Membership income grew to £2.0m (2022: £1.9m). In addition to new members joining, the renewal rate was 91.6% which was an increase of around 0.7% points from the previous year. Full recognition of cash held in regional and specialist group bank accounts resulted in a one off income of £0.12m.

The Publishing House outperformed budget expectation growing income by 9% to £2.72m (2022: £2.48m). Lyell Collection subscription income was £1.73m (2022: £1.54m) and continues to be a key source of income for the Society. Books revenue totalled £0.34m (2022: £0.22m) with the 2022 figure being suppressed by outage of the online bookshop. The impact of open access publishing on income continues to be a concern in the medium to long term.

Income from Events and Conferences grew to £0.38m (2022: £0.23m) with the Energy Group contributing £0.16m (2022: 0.09m). The relatively new CPD training programme delivered £0.16m in income (2022: £0.12m) and is expected to be a continuing area of growth. A large number of events hosted at Burlington House led to the Society's trading company Geological Trading Limited, Gift Aiding £0.11m to the parent charity in the year (2022: £0.06m).

Development income increased with donations of circa £0.15m received in the year. Of this £90k was received from Edna Fookes for the creation of the Peter Fookes Meeting for Engineering Geology.

The Society has been awarded a three year grant of £135k from the Department for Business and Trade as part of its Recognition Arrangements Grant Programme. The restricted funding is to be used between 2023 and 2025 to explore opportunities for Chartership development internationally.

A new investment management firm, Quilter Cheviot, started managing the Society's investment portfolio in mid-2023. The investment portfolio grew in the year by £0.34m ending the year with £7.15m (2022: £6.81m). Investment income increased with a total income in the year of £0.19m (2022: £0.13m). A new treasury policy allowed the Society to take advantage of higher bank interest rates which generated an unbudgeted £0.02m in interest income in 2023.

Work on the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system has begun with Wattle appointed as the lead contractor. The project is on schedule and on budget with the new CRM being rolled out in a series of stages from September 2024. The new CRM should deliver significant efficiency improvements going forward.

Later in 2023, a tender process was undertaken to find a supplier to build and host a new website for the Society with much improved design, functionality and user experience. Wattle was selected as lead contractor for this project also, and the new website will be rolled out in stages from September 2024.

The purchase of a 999 year lease for our London premises was negotiated in conjunction with the other Courtyard Societies with our UK Government landlord. A Heads of Agreement was signed in February 2024 after the closure of the 2023 accounts. Under the agreement the Society's share of the lease purchase will be £5.5 million payable over 10 years with an interest rate of 5.8% per annum charged by the UK Government on the outstanding balance. The Council plans to pay 50% of the purchase price in 2024 from reserves and the remainder over the following 9 years from cash flow and reserves.



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Prudent financial management over the years means that the Society has sufficient reserves to complete the purchase of the Burlington House lease and maintain a safety net to support its charitable activities. The standard measure used by charities to gauge financial flexibility is ‘free reserves’, defined as the proportion of its unrestricted funds that a charity is free to spend on its charitable activities. At the end of 2023, the Society’s statutory free reserves were £4.59m (2022: £4.35m) with an additional £1.68m previously set aside in a designated fund for costs associated with a Burlington House move. The increase in free reserves is due to the surplus generated in 2023.

The Society takes a risked approach to setting a free reserves target to ensure it has provision for unforeseen losses in income or unforeseen expenditure. It does this by reviewing the risk associated with its sources of income and its committed costs. At the end of 2023 the free reserves target was set at £2.35m (2022: £2.37m). This means that it has £3.92m of reserves to spend on any of its charitable activities including a Burlington House transaction. The Society plans to fund

£2.75m of BH lease purchase from its free reserves in 2024 and the remainder through cash generated from operations. This will enable to the Society to comfortably fund its planned expenditure and maintain sufficient free reserves going forward.

For 2024 Council has agreed a budget income of £5.6m income and operating expenditure of £5.6m plus capital expenditure of £0.7m (excluding the BH lease purchase). Note that the budget may be reviewed in the light of the better than expected 2023 outcome. Given this budget and the £2.75m initial payment towards the BH lease purchase, end 2024 free reserves would be £2.8m, still above the free reserves target of £2.35m.

Keith Myers,
Treasurer

Supporting geosciences at home and away

We look back at the Society's main activities and achievements in 2023

2023 at the Society saw a return to almost pre-pandemic levels of engagement, with more than 300 events across the year reaching thousands of geoscientists, school children, policy makers, and the public alike. We had activity across all five of our science themes for the first time, contributed to government consultations on net zero and the subsurface, supported fellows with research funding, and reopened the doors of our London premises, Burlington House, for our annual Careers Day and Schools Geology Challenge again.



more than
300 events
across the year



“ Activity across all five of our science themes for the first time

“ The event was a huge success, bringing together more than 600 geoscientists across three days

Strategic Science Themes

In Spring 2023 the Society held the first event in a new conference partnership with the Geoscience Energy Society of Great Britain (GESGB), ‘Energy Geoscience Conference (EGC)’, in Aberdeen, Scotland. The event was a huge success, bringing together more than 600 geoscientists across three days with a focus on scientific and technical presentations, workshops, field trips, and debates around the challenges of net zero. Our work under the Society’s Energy Transition theme continued with webinars and public lectures throughout the year focused on carbon capture and storage along with mining critical materials, attracting hundreds of fellows and non-fellows alike.

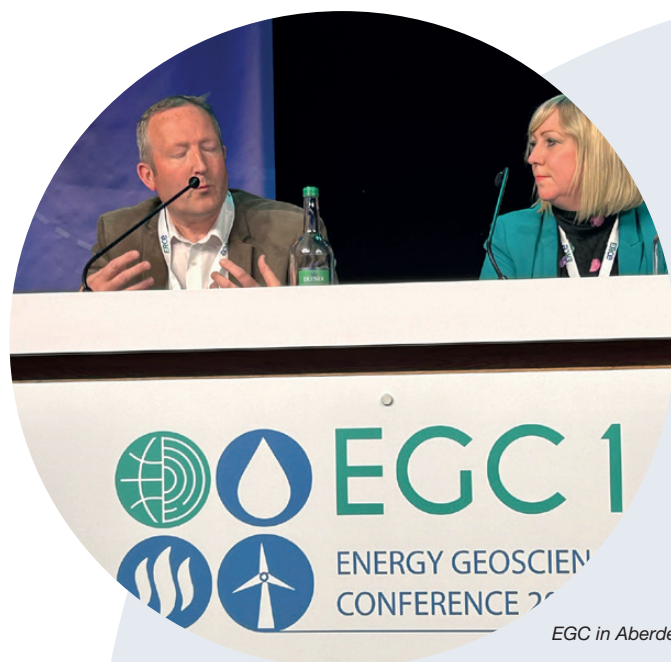
The hybrid ‘Sea Levels’ conference launched our 2023 activity under our Climate and Ecology science theme, followed quickly by the now annual ‘Life & Planet’ meeting hosted by our Earth System Science Group, with researchers coming together to span the Geo- and Life Sciences. Our ever-popular series of public lectures also featured talks across our themes, with a particular focus on Geohazards, Engineering Geology, and Planetary Science, along with a novel, interactive lecture on ‘how to cartoon geology’ in partnership with Errant Science, all of which continue to be available to watch via our YouTube channel.

Our new conference series, GeoFutures, launched in 2023 to focus on geological solutions to the 21st century global challenges we all face. Digital Geoscience: Unleashing the power of data and technology in



EGC in Aberdeen, May 2023

Earth Sciences brought more than 300 people together to discuss recent advances in machine learning and AI, with partners in both industry and the Government Office for Science, and with a special thematic issue of our ES3 journal to follow. There are ten new thematic collections and books of note with respect to our Science Themes within the Lyell Collection, including new Special Publications on ‘Enabling Secure Subsurface Storage in Future Energy Systems’ and ‘The 2020-21 Eruption of La Soufrière Volcano, St Vincent’. Other article highlights included a newsworthy discovery, ‘A new giant theropod dinosaur track from the Middle Jurassic of the Cleveland Basin, Yorkshire, UK’, and ‘Indigenous knowledge of palaeontology in Africa’.



EGC in Aberdeen, May 2023



A new giant theropod dinosaur track from the Middle Jurassic of the Cleveland Basin, Yorkshire, UK
Illustration © James McKay

Supporting Professional Development

2023 saw the Society increase its membership number for the first time in six years, growing by more than 200 members. We also approved 141 Chartered (CGeol) and European Geologists (EuroGeol) across the year. Our Training Courses continued to be well received with almost 800 delegates throughout the year on courses from Geohazards or Groundwater Controls to Legacy Coal Mining, Carbon Capture and Storage, and Geoethics. Many of our popular courses will be repeated year on year to keep up with demand, with fantastic feedback from delegates and their employers alike.

The Society also launched our first ever dedicated Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Strategy in 2023, which will be followed by the formation of a new EDIA sub-committee chaired by our Vice-President for EDIA. This strategy underpins the work that we do across the Society, in both our scientific and professional endeavours alongside our charitable aims and ambitions.

“ 2023 saw the Society **increase** its membership number for the first in six years, **growing by more than 200 members.** ”



Education & Outreach

Our careers fair returned to in-person for 2023, with a one-day event in Burlington House that attracted more than 730 students thanks to hybrid options and an overflow room from our Lecture Theatre. The programme was designed to complement the Society's Science Themes, and offered a mixture of talks, discussion panels with early-career geoscientists across the different fields, and CV and interview skills workshops along with a mini-exhibition in our Upper Library from valued sponsors. The hybrid careers fair will move outside of London for 2024.

The final of the 2023 Schools Geology Challenge took place in March, with participants engaging in a problem-solving activity to assess the hazards posed to the fictional town of New Barnes by the volcanic activity of Mt Akingbade. Finalists were invited to create a management plan for these hazards, using a \$1 billion fund created by the city council of New Barnes. Sir William Borlase's Grammar School were proclaimed the winners for 2023 and awarded the coveted Schools Geology Challenge trophy, along with £200 for their school and a year's Student Membership for each member of the team. The Sixth Form College Farnborough and Runshaw College were both runners-up.

In 2023, we were invited to showcase the relevance and significance of geoscience at various popular family festivals including Glastonbury, Oxford STEMfest, Let's Talk Science Dublin, the Royal Institution's Family Fun Days, and Green Man in Wales. As a repeat guest at Glastonbury's Science Futures field, we shared a new initiative, 'We Will Rock You!', with hundreds of young people joining us in uncovering the secrets of Earth's minerals and materials used in glitter, makeup, and body art. Through these collaborations, we reached thousands of families, demonstrating the vital role of geoscience in our everyday lives.



Careers Fair 2023



Our Earth Science Ambassadors project, kindly supported by Bluewater for a second year, trains university geoscience students to mentor school pupils, igniting interest in geoscience careers. The programme continued to go from strength to strength in 2023, with multiple training sessions throughout the year leading to an additional 25 fully trained ambassadors delivering 12 workshops to almost 400 children in and around London. During Earth Science Week in October, we hosted a range of exciting activities, including our WallE screening for children, accompanied by a family fun day supported by the UK Space Agency and AstrobiologyOU, and our 30th anniversary screening of Jurassic Park. The movie screenings combined with exhibitions and talks throughout the whole week drew hundreds of people to Burlington House.



Glastonbury Festival 2023



Earth Science Week at Burlington House

Open Science & Data Help Desk

AGU ADVANCING EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE



Library & Publishing

We continued to broaden Open Access offerings through the expansion of our Transformative Read and Publish Agreements to North America and Asia. 13% of all published articles in 2023 benefited from friction-free open access publishing under these agreements. In our ongoing commitment to open research and its pivotal role in shaping a sustainable society, we are proud to announce significant publishing collaborations and achievements in 2023. We launched GeoHorizons with the American Geophysical Union (AGU), an open science book series addressing pressing challenges in climate change and sustainable development. We also commissioned and accelerated peer reviews for papers on the 2023 Turkey earthquake, ensuring rapid dissemination of critical information. Partnering with Research4Life, we provided online access to our content for institutions in lower-income countries, fostering global geoscience education. These initiatives underscore our dedication to advancing geoscience research and its global impact through open collaboration and accessibility.

The Society's Library and Archives at Burlington House continues to support our fellowship, and has seen increased activity throughout 2023, including new events focusing on inductions, private viewings, research projects, and affiliated events with partners such as the the History of Geology Group. Our Written in History fundraising campaign, which aims to raise funds to conserve the last remaining Letters of the Assistant Secretary (1834-1880) from our archives, raised £35,630 in 2023, and will continue into 2024 so that we might reach our £40,000 target.

“ More than 1,000 people came to have a look around Burlington House.

“ we are proud to announce significant publishing collaborations and achievements in 2023.

The Society participated in the national Open House festival again in 2023, opening our doors to the public in September as part of the fortnight-long architecture and history festival. More than 1,000 people came to have a look around Burlington House, with talks and tours throughout the day focusing on the William Smith map and our archive collections, and family-friendly activities in the Upper Library highlighting the minerals within a smart phone.



2023 - Our year in numbers

16
Regional
Groups

14
Professional
and Scientific
Interest Groups

16
Associated
societies globally

11,874
members

140
Accredited first-degree
programmes

730
students joined
our careers fair

1,810
direct interactions
with young people

2,788
Chartered
Fellows

810,444
articles in the Lyell
Collection downloaded

14
research grants
awarded, at a
total value of
£24,000

4,400,000
people engaged
with our social
media posts

18
new book titles
and 1 reprint
published

1,000
visitors to our
Open House Day

55,158
Geoscientist
views online

64,057
full text downloads
from our Library
collection



Thank you to our donors

We acknowledge and thank our fellows, friends and supporters whose generosity has helped to shape our charitable activities. In addition to those companies and organisations listed below, we recognise the immense support of so many of you who have chosen to give individual gifts towards our education, outreach, conservation and other activities.

Anglo American
AtkinsRéalis
Axis
BGS - British Geological Survey
Bluewater
BP
C&C Reservoirs
Capricorn Energy
CC Ground Investigations
CEMEX
Central Asia Metals
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)
CGG
CNOOC
Concept Engineering Consultants
Cornish Lithium
Dana Petroleum
Dye & Durham
Earth & Environmental Sciences, University of St. Andrews
EBN
Eni UK
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ExxonMobil
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His Majesty's Government: Department for Business and Trade
Ikon Science
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Imperial College London, Department of Earth Science and Engineering
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University of Aberdeen
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University of Leeds
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Wood Mackenzie



The
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Contact Us

If you would like to contact the Society please use our online enquiries form at [geolsoc.org.uk/contact](https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/contact) which will direct your enquiry to the relevant department. Alternatively you can call us on **+44 (0)20 7434 9944** between 9.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

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Gifts in Wills

Legacy gifts are transformational in making the Society's strategic priorities a reality. We are immensely grateful to our members and friends who have named the Geological Society as a beneficiary in their will, and we honour those whose legacies have been realised.

If you would like to discuss leaving a gift to the Society in your will, please contact:

development@geolsoc.org.uk