



British Geophysical Association
Executive Committee Meeting

**Geological Society of
London**

9th February 2012

Minutes

Apologies and introductions

Apologies were received from absent members. Members introduced themselves for the benefit of Mr Denton as a new member.

Present:

Prof. Mike Kendall (MK) – President and Chair
 Prof. Christine Peirce (CP) – Secretary
 Prof. Peter Clarke (PC) – Treasurer
 Dr Mimi Hill (MH) – Newsletter Officer
 Mr Paul Denton (PD) – Schools Liaison and Outreach Officer
 Dr Ian Stimpson (IS) – Member without portfolio
 Prof. John Brodholt (JB) – Outreach Representative – Co-opted member

Absent with apologies:

Prof Gillian Foulger (GF) – Website Officer
 Prof. Andreas Rietbrock (AR) – Meetings Officer
 Dr George Tuckwell (GT) – Industry Representative – Co-opted member
 Dr Lyndsay Fletcher (LF) – Parent Society Representative – Royal Astronomical Society

1 Minutes of the BGA Committee Meeting 22nd September 2012

The minutes of this meeting were agreed as a true record.

**Document 090212_BGA/01
Filed with minutes.**

2 Matters arising from the minutes

**Document 090212_BGA/02
Filed with minutes.**

The Chair summarised the matters arising from the minutes as follows:

Item 2.4) International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG) subscription

No progress has been made on resolving the subscription to IUGG. It was noted that AR is now the UK representative for International Association of Seismology and Physics of the Earth's Interior (IASPEI). It was also noted that Alan Roger (BAS), the UK International Association of Geomagnetism and Aeronomy (IAGA) representative, is in-line for replacement and that the Chair should contact the Royal Astronomical Society, into whose remit this falls, to suggest possible candidates. It was noted that the Chair should suggest to the RAS that David Collins (Manchester – current Chair of the UK IUGG panel) should be consulted as part of this nomination process. Chair offered to consult David Elliott from the RAS to clarify the nomination process and encourage them to liaise with David Collins to confirm the IAGA representation and nomination process.

ACTION

Chair to contact RAS for clarification of IAGA representative nomination in addition to subscription to IUGG.

Item 6) Updating the Khan report

The Chair has approached Prof Khan to see if he is willing to undertake an update of the “Geophysics in the UK” report. Prof Khan has indicated that he is willing to undertake this on behalf of the BGA and an update on progress will be provided for the next meeting of the committee.

ACTION

Chair to contact Prof Khan prior to the next meeting to receive an update.

Item 8) Website updating

The Chair reported an error in the minutes, Jenny Craddick should read Jenny Caddick. The Chair also reported that there had been no real progress made on updating the BGA website, although he offered to approach Miss Caddick again to see if she is still interested in undertaking this role with oversight provided by the Website Officer (GF).

ACTION

Chair to contact Miss Caddick to ask if she has any interest in progressing website update.

Website Officer to progress website update for annual documents, committee membership, constitution, reports from meetings, upcoming meetings etc.

3 Chair's Report

- i) BGA Profile – The Chair reported that the increase in the meeting financial support initiated at the end of the last financial year is starting to have a very positive affect in terms of raising the profile of the BGA.
- ii) STEM funding – The Chair commented that the teaching of geophysics is not in the same HE/University/STEM funding category as physics, chemistry etc., but is currently aligned with geography since the assignment is done using the UCAS codes, with geology, earth science, geophysics and geography programmes all sharing the same F6XX code. Consequently earth sciences (including geophysics) courses attract less funding currently even though they are quite expensive to teach due to the nature and cost of the fieldwork as required by accreditation and subject benchmarks. How the costs of running field courses will be accommodated under the new £9000 fees structure remains unclear, although many universities have decided that students should not pay any more for field courses in addition to the standard fee.
- iii) Student numbers – Overall there are 345 students in the UK studying geophysics in some form, including 55 following Taught Masters and 5 following Research Masters courses, with numbers were provided by Robert Massey from the RAS, which were sent to him by the HE Skills and Policy Advisor at HEFCE. However, it should be noted that it is hard to extract the numbers of geophysics students from the whole of earth sciences as HEFCE do not look at the level of individual courses, but instead amalgamate to general subject area – e.g. Earth, Marine, Environmental (defined as “other” under STEM), and Engineering. Members were asked to make enquiries at their host institutions as to how Earth Sciences teaching would be funded under the new fees model, within their institution.
- iv) Geophysicist(s) on RAS Council – the Chair reported that Prof Richard Holme (Liverpool) had been recruited to the RAS Council to replace a retiring member and the Prof Barry Parsons (Oxford) would replace the Chair as Vice-President Geophysics on his retirement this year. The Chair also noted that Dr Sheila Peacock (Blacknest) and Prof Stuart Crampin (Edinburgh) had agreed to stand for election.
- v) Geophysicist(s) on Geological Society Council – the Chair reported that no-one as yet had been identified as willing to stand for election to the Council of the Geological Society. Members were encouraged to seek interested parties
- vi) Awards I – Dr Matt King (Newcastle) was awarded the Bullerwell Lectureship for 2012, and his presentation at EGU in April was advertised at the Fall meeting of AGU in December.

ACTION

Meetings Secretary to publicise Bullerwell lecture via BGA email list and by posters and flyers at all other preceding BGA-sponsored meetings.

- vii) Awards II – Dr Juliet Biggs (Bristol) has been awarded the Winton Capital award of the RAS.
- viii) Awards III – Dr James Verdon (Bristol) has been awarded the RAS award for best PhD thesis.
- ix) Awards IV – Professor Roger Searle has been elected Fellow of the American Geophysical Union.
- x) Awards V – Few solid Earth geophysicists get nominated to the RAS for their annual awards. The Chair asked for suggestions as to how to encourage BGA members to nominate members of their community.

ACTION

Chair to email the BGA community to encourage members to submit nominations for RAS awards.

4 Treasurer's Report**i) Annual budgets and recurrent expenditure**

The Treasurer reported that there was a £2K surplus against budget at the end of FY2011, largely due to committee expense claims being less than predicted, and the Postgraduate Meeting attracting significant external sponsorship. The end of year balance was of the order of £10K of which £5K has been moved to the reserve account to bring its balance up to £8K, pending roll-out of the BGA schools outreach programme.

The budgets for FY2012 have been presented to, and have been approved by both parent societies, with £10469 and £2500 from the Gray-Milne fund being devoted to the schools outreach programme. To date £1400 has been spent so far this financial year supporting the IUGG, Ethiopia and Magnetic Relaxation

meetings.

**Document 090212_BGA/03
Filed with minutes.**

ii) Strategic spending and funding review

There were no matters to report.

iii) Gray-Milne Fund

The Trustees of the Gray-Milne Fund were in favour of the planned drawn-down of the fund to support the schools outreach programme and are awaiting concrete proposals for how the money might be spent prior to giving final approval. All funding requests should first be presented to the BGA Executive.

iv) Other

It was proposed that instead of hosting and funding a reception associated with the Bullerwell lecture given at EGU that, instead, a reception is hosted at the Postgraduate meeting after the same lecture when it given then.

ACTION

Meetings Secretary to communicate with the organising committee of the Postgraduate Meeting, to be held in Leeds in September.

5 Committee Membership and terms of office

The constitution requires that there to be:

- 8 members who are fellows of one of the parent societies
- 4 (up to) co-opted members who need not be fellows
- 2 representatives, one each from the parent societies.

The current committee membership is as follows:

Fellow members:

- Prof. Mike Kendall – President – term: Feb 2012-Feb 2015
- Prof. Christine Peirce – Secretary – term: Feb 2010-Feb 2013
- Prof. Peter Clarke – Treasurer – term: Feb 2012-Feb 2015
- Dr Mimi Hill – Newsletter Officer – term: Feb 2012-Feb 2015
- Prof Gillian Foulger – Web Officer – term: Feb 2011-Feb 2014
- Prof. Andreas Rietbrock – Meetings Officer – term: Feb 2012-Feb 2015
- Dr Ian Stimpson – Member without Portfolio – term: Feb 2012-Feb 2015
- Mr Paul Denton – Schools Liaison and Outreach Officer – term: Feb 2012-Feb 2015

Co-opted members:

- Prof. John Brodholt – Outreach Representative – term: Feb 2011-Feb 2014
- Dr George Tuckwell – Industry Representative – term: Feb 2011-Feb 2014

Parent society members:

- Dr Lyndsay Fletcher – Royal Astronomical Society – term: Feb 2011-Feb 2014

Consequently there is a vacancy for a parent society representative from the Geological Society and up to 2 co-opted members. It was suggested that one of the Co-opted members could be a Postgraduate or early-career Postdoctoral researcher and as such become the Postgraduate Representative.

The Chair reported that Professor David Waltham (Royal Holloway) has offered his services as a Co-opted member, and the Executive Committee ratified this proposal, pending election at the annual AGM.

The Executive Committee passed on their congratulations and best wishes to MH pending the birth of her child in March and IS agreed to act as Newsletter Officer during her maternity leave.

ACTION

Chair to approach likely Postdoctoral or Postgraduate candidates for the role, e.g. a winner of one of the RAS or Geological Society awards either this or last year, or a member of the organising committee from last year's Postgraduate Meeting.

Chair to approach the Chair of the Geological Society Executive committee for the nomination of a representative.

6 Constitution

A proposal for revisions to the wording of the BGA constitution were presented and agreed subject to some minor modifications in exact wording. The revised document will be presented at the AGM as part of the notice period pending final approval at the 2013 AGM.

**Document 090212_BGA/04
Filed with minutes.**

7 PESGB / BGA School Seismology grant and BGA outreach programme

PD presented a summary of the activities of the Schools Seismology Project since 2005, and highlighted the need to now engage with schools with seismometers installed to embed activities into the taught curriculum. PD presented a proposal to close “Phase 1” (the equipment installation) and start a “Phase 2” with a scoping document outlining the aims and objectives and assembling a stakeholder’s (including schools’ representatives, BGA members, etc) group to develop a 5-year roll-out plan to encourage and support subsequent use of the already installed equipment. As part of Phase 2, a meeting of stakeholders was proposed, for example hosted by the BGS, to highlight existing and on-going activities and encourage the development of a community and a community-wide support structure and set of support materials.

PD suggested that the name of Phase 2 be the “Schools Geophysics Project”.

PD also briefed the Executive Committee on a Pan-European Collaboration already active and funded by a FW7 award for an “integrated seismology network” which, for the UK, the BGS is the holder and leader. A 5-day workshop for teachers has already been held in Naples for teachers, which attracted 48 participants from six countries. A similar meeting of 2-days duration was proposed as part of the BGA programme.

The Chair agreed to write to the Director of the BGS to ask for free use of BGA facilities in Keyworth to host this meeting and to engage with the Institute of Physics (IOP) to interact with their Physics Teachers programme. It was suggested that a member of the IOP might be co-opted to the Stakeholders’ planning group.

ACTION

Schools Liaison and Outreach Officer and Outreach Representative to progress Phase 2, including contacting the IOP, and report to the next Executive Committee meeting, liaising with the Treasurer for funding requirements.

Chair to write to Director of the BGS.

8 Nominations for the Bullerwell Lecturer 2013 – deadline 31st September 2012

The Executive Committee discussed how members of the community might be encouraged to nominate early-mid career colleagues for the 2013 Bullerwell Lectureship. It was noted that there was no mention of the Bullerwell Lectureship on the BGA web site and that publicity relating to its existence was quite limited. It was suggested that Dr Sue Bowler be contacted to get a description cum advertisement into the next edition of A&G and that the Chair write to Heads of Departments asking for nominations of suitably qualified members of their staff.

ACTION

Chair to write to Heads of Departments for nominations.

Web Officer to place a description and nomination form for the Bullerwell Lecturer onto the web site.

Chair to use the BGA email list to remind the community that the nomination process for 2013 is now open.

9 Report from the Ground Forum (MSc funding)

IS explained that the Ground Forum is a group of organisations with interests in ground engineering. IS attends these meetings and is the only representative from a higher education institution. IS explained that there is a disparity of views between HEIs and industry in respect to MSc studentships and who should fund them, and that industry are unwilling or unable to provide any resources to maintain MSc training capability in light of the NERC’s withdrawal of funding for all MSc programmes that it has supported in the past. The next meeting is scheduled for two week’s time and IS will be attending and will report back to the next BGA Executive Committee meeting.

ACTION

IS to continue to attend Ground Forum meetings and report to the BGA Executive Committee.

10 Upcoming meetings

Noted for the record:

- a) Deep-Water Continental Margins – 1st-2nd October 2012, Geological Society
- b) BGA Postgraduate Meeting – 6th-7th September 2012, University of Leeds
- c) In review by the Geological Society for 2012 onwards
 - i) The Tonga-Kermadec Arc an archetypical oceanic subduction system
- d) Others requesting sponsorship
 - i) Milne – Isle of Wight

ACTION

Schools Liaison and Outreach Officer agreed to approach the Milne Group to investigate options and opportunity for activities that the BGA might support.

- e) NAG 2013 – 14th-15th February Geological Society – the Secretary reported that she had to make a pre-emptive booking to secure dates at the Geological Society due to other bookings being made for the period during which the NAG meeting is normally held. So far a theme for this meeting is yet undecided. MK volunteered to organise the NAG 2013 meeting along the lines of “geophysics of energy and waste of the future”, although an exact title and theme will be confirmed in the near future.

ACTION

Chair to submit proposal and funding request for NAG 2013 meeting for approval at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

11 Reports from completed meetings

- a) 2011 William Smith Meeting – 4th-5th October 2011, Geological Society “*Remote sensing of volcanoes and volcanic processes: integrating observations and modelling*”
- b) Magnetic Relaxation 2012 – 4th-5th January 2012, University of Liverpool
- c) Afar-Ethiopia meeting – 11th-13th January 21012, Addis Ababa

Reports from the above three meetings were presented in the latest edition of the Newsletter – see minute item 13.

**Tabled document
Filed with minutes.**

12 Briefing document for organisers of BGA supported meetings

The Secretary noted that the organisation process for the recent NAG meeting had highlighted the need for a briefing document for BGA-supported meeting organisers. It was suggested that the out-going Secretary be approached to draft such a document which would then be posted on the BGA web site.

ACTION

**Secretary to approach Dr Sheila Peacock to draft a meeting organisation guidance document.
Web Officer to post the resulting guidance document on the BGA web site.**

13 BGA Newsletter

The Newsletter Officer presented the latest draft of the mid-year edition of the newsletter and noted that it would be circulated via the BGA email list after the meeting. MH agreed to brief IS who will be acting as Newsletter Officer during MH's maternity leave.

**Tabled document
Filed with minutes.**

ACTION

Web Officer to post this and previous newsletters on the BGA web site.

14 BGA on the internet and web service provision

The Treasurer reported that the BGA's internet service provision had been renewed with the current provider. It was also noted that the presence of the BGA on the parent societies' web sites was also limited with, in particular, the BGA page being located many levels down from the RAS home page and that there is no obvious link to it. In addition, it was suggested that a generic email address be created for communicating with the Executive Committee, facilitated via the BGA's JISC email portal – e.g. for circulation of documents. PC agreed to investigate and facilitate.

ACTION

Treasurer to establish committee email address via JISC mail and circulate to committee members.

15 BGA brochure and mission statement

The Chair reported that, to date, no real progress had been made on the RAS “geophysics” brochure, although the RAS had procured the services of Dr Sue Bowler to create it. The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer will be meeting with Dr Bowler after the AGM to progress this. See Addendum report below.

16 BGA image competition

The Secretary noted that, so far, no images had been received and that further advertising is warranted since the competition closure deadline is the end of August, to facilitate judging at the next Executive meeting to be held during the Postgraduate Meeting in Leeds.

ACTION

Chair to re-advertise competition via the BGA email list and circulate Heads of Department.

17 BGA prize for best undergraduate in geophysics

The Chair reported that he is yet to progress this by contacting Heads of UK Earth Sciences departments to seek expressions of interest in participating in the “best geophysics undergraduate” BGA prize scheme, seeking outlines from each interested department as to what they would like to offer such a prize for.

ACTION

Chair to advertise prize scheme to Heads of Department, seeking expressions of interest for the current examinations cycle.

18 Nominations for a geophysicist on:

a) RAS and Geological Society Councils

See Chair’s report

b) NERC SISB

It was noted that Professor Jane Francis was understood to be standing for membership of SISB.

c) Other

None

19 Any other business

There was only one item:

a) Geological Society Annual Report

The Secretary brought the request for the BGA’s contribution to the Geological Society Annual Report to the attention of the committee, emphasising the deadline of the 24th February. The Chair agreed to draft the report and submit it to the deadline.

ACTION

Chair to draft BGA annual report to the Geological Society and submit it for the 24th February deadline.

20 Date of next meeting

Committee meeting – c. 15:00 TBC on the 5th September at the University of Leeds, prior to the Postgraduate Meeting.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 19:30.

Addendum

“Geophysics in the UK” brochure

The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer met with Dr Sue Bowler after the AGM to discuss the content and structure of the booklet. Dr Bowler outlined that the booklet would be 20 pages in length, would have minimal words, and have an emphasis on research forefronts. A number of topics were discussed in terms of scientific content, together with who might be approached for a career profile within a “what a geophysics-based degree can do for you” section.

Topics discussed included geophysical applications in the: cryosphere; atmosphere; oceanography; extra-terrestrial surveying; search for other habitable planets; magnetic field; sub-seabed imaging; risks and hazards; natural resources; future energy and waste; earth observation; earth process modelling, including high performance computing clusters; and the influence of the deep earth on its habitable surface.

MK agreed to contact the new Chief Executive of NERC for an expression of interest in being involved.

Dr Bowler suggested that she draft an outline plan for the brochure and forward that to the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer for outline approval, prior to progressing the first draft of the booklet.

ACTION

Chair agreed to contact the new Chief Executive of NERC for an expression of interest in the RAS geophysics brochure.