



**British
Geophysical
Association**

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British Geophysical Association

Annual General Meeting

Friday 13th February 2004, 12.50 pm
Geological Society, Burlington House, London.

Present: Peter Maguire, president of BGA, in the chair, and 7 members

Apologies: Philippa Berry (BGA Secretary), Wyn Williams, Tony Morris, Jane Stimpson, Russ Evans (hence advertised item on Geophysical Journal International was not taken)

1. Chair's opening remarks

Peter Maguire welcomed members and described briefly to them the main work of the BGA in running three major meetings per year and supporting geophysics as a science and geophysics education. He expressed the BGA's ambition to advertise itself more and increase its role and activity, in particular in school education, for which a Schools Representative had been added to the Committee. Jane Stimpson (not able to be present), Tine Thomas and John McCloskey were presented as new Committee members. Tony Morris is taking over as Treasurer from Jon Bull, who was thanked for his services.

2. Secretary's Report

Peter Maguire delivered this in the absence (through illness) of Philippa Berry. The 2003 meetings were the Planetary Geophysics RAS meeting in February, the Bullerwell Lecture given by Mike Kendall in Nice in April and the Postgraduate Students' Meeting in September in Leeds. The BGA is concerned about the small numbers of undergraduate students enrolled on three- and four-year courses in geophysics – as low as at any time since the early 1990s when the number reached about 70 – which is attributed to the lack of appropriate maths skills among A-level students. It is intended that an advertisement and introduction to geophysics are to be placed in next year's UCAS handbook.

3. Treasurer's report

The Treasurer reported that funds were healthy. The BGA now controls the Gray–Milne Fund, about 80k pounds, which makes about 2000 pounds of interest per year and reports separately to the Charities Commission. The 2005 New Advances in Geophysics meeting will be sponsored by the Gray–Milne Fund and the Royal Astronomical Society. Members asked whether BGA funds should be spent more generously. Because there is a reluctance among members to run meetings, the funds are being directed to promoting geophysics education, support of the NAG meeting and promoting the postgraduate meeting (this year there will be an outside speaker).

Members suggested funding one or two postgraduate students to attend international meetings, but there is a problem with spending too generously, the Association's funds having to be requested from the Parent Societies. The Committee will consider this proposal and if possible introduce a scheme commensurate with the monies available. A possibility would be providing some "matching" funding to students who obtain partial funding for conference attendance.

4. Changes to the Constitution

These were accepted as set out in the accompanying papers.

5. Future directions

The two–day New Advances in Geophysics meeting is funded by about 2k pounds from the RAS, 2k from the Gray–Milne Fund, and support in kind for the room hire from the GeolSoc., and members are encouraged to propose to organise this for 2006 and subsequent years.

This year's Bullerwell Lecture is being given by Cindy Ebinger, on "Continental Breakup – Implications for Planetary Tectonics" at the EGU annual meeting in Nice, France. The Postgraduate Students' meeting is to be held in Liverpool in September 2004.

It is intended that BGA will sponsor an advertisement and supply an introduction to the geophysics section of the UCAS handbook for 2004–5. Further discussions will take place with the publishers to ascertain how this will be done. BGA also aims to increase industrial involvement in promoting geophysics and BGA.

A link with Republic of Ireland geophysicists through the body that represents researchers at the main centres is proposed; this will require the co–operation of our parent societies, who will be approached on this matter.

6. AOB

(i) The sub–panels for the Research Assessment Exercise are to be formed during 2004 and BGA will make representations to secure the presence of geophysicists on the Earth Sciences panel. It is necessary for BGA members to be consulted and suggest appropriate people now, rather than wait until the panel is formed as occurred in the 1996 RAE.

(ii) Many A level students do not understand what geophysics is – it is necessary to bring geophysics into the A level physics syllabus. The new Schools representative on

the BGA Committee should be able to provide information on this; also it is possible for university geophysicists to influence school teachers who attend *in-service* courses in their departments (this happens at Liverpool).

The meeting closed at 1.30 pm.