

British Geophysical Association Committee Meeting
Friday 1st May, 11.00 am, Royal Astronomical Society, Burlington House, London

Present: Mike Kendall (chair), Andreas Rietbrock, Mimi Hill, Peter Clarke, Ian Stimpson, Adrian Muxworthy, Tony Morris, Sheila Peacock.

Apologies: Ian Crawford (RAS)

1. Co-option

Adrian Muxworthy was co-opted on to the Committee for a further year, his term having expired at the February 2009 AGM. Jon Busby's term also expired then and he has stepped down from the Committee. It was an oversight that these were not minuted at the AGM.

2. Financial report

Tony Morris reported that the RAS had only recently recognised the BGA as a RAS Committee as a mechanism to allow it to pay Committee members' expenses to attend Committee meetings. No Committee meetings had taken place for over two years before this one because of the parent societies' previous position that they would not pay expenses. Finding a way round this had occupied some meetings with the parent societies' officers. The BGA's current balance is £4,957,71, including £2500 for 2008 and £2500 for 2009 received recently from the Gray-Milne fund. Tony explained that the Gray-Milne fund is independent of both parent societies and exists to promote UK geophysics. Its trustees are former BGA Committee members, Jon Bull, Roger Musson, Roger Scrutton and Peter Maguire. (Background: the Charity Commission registration number is 271493 and formal name "British Association Seismological Trust" and statement of activities "SUPPORTS ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY THE BRITISH GEOPHYSICAL ASSOCIATION IN THE PROMOTION OF GEOPHYSICS IN THE UK.") The complexity of appointing new trustees had led to the trustees not being changed when the present trustees came off the Committee. Tony reported that the Gray-Milne fund capital probably grew in the last few years because the amount disbursed was modest, and that money will probably be available in 2010 at a similar level to 2009 despite the financial downturn. Mike said he would ask Jon Bull for further information when meeting him later this month (**ACTION-MIKE**). Tony distributed the budget request for 2007-9. He will update it with a projection for 2010 based on decisions on activities and expenditure made at this meeting and submit it to the parent societies (**ACTION – TONY**). The prudent reserve for the BGA account should be about its present level, £4-5k, so that unbudgeted expenses can be met conveniently. The sources of income are the parent societies' grant, the Gray-Milne fund and profits on scientific meetings. SP will chase the final accounts of the NAG meeting (**ACTION – SP**). The 2008 Postgraduate Meeting made a small loss because of the small numbers attending not using all the block-booked accommodation.

3. Website and Jiscmail reports

Adrian Muxworthy reported that he had maintained the website, including transferring the domain address from Edinburgh to a redirection service and being involved in dealing with a hacking problem. He and SP had added items to it. The annual fee of £94 had been paid to Nominet for the domain name www.geophysics.org.uk and a small fee (<£2) by Adrian to the redirection service that links that domain name to the actual BGA home page, which is a dynamic page within the RAS website. The interface for updating the website is easy in principle but rather quirky. Being restricted to the RAS house style is limiting, and the Google find-ability of the site could probably be improved, but it was agreed that neither that nor changing the design is worthwhile unless the content is useful to the community. Committee members will look at the site and email suggestions to Adrian/the Committee (**ACTION – ALL**). SP reported that the Jiscmail list at present has just over 300 members and is used for BGA announcements and other items of interest to the community, mostly conference, job opportunity and award nomination announcements. Membership of the list is not coincident with membership of BGA; in fact we do not have a definitive list of BGA members. We will ask the parent societies' executives for lists of BGA

members affiliated to their society; also we will post a note on the list reminding members what it is for, particularly its connection to the BGA (of which even some Committee members had been unaware) (**ACTION - SP**). The list owners will give Mike a list of the current membership (**ACTION - SP**). Peter Clarke offered to take over as list owner from Jon Busby – SP will set this up (Russ Evans and SP continue) (**ACTION – SP**).

4. **PESGB grant**

SP reported that the PESGB had provided £20,000 to support the Schools Seismology Project (directed by Paul Denton, BGS). The money was to be given to universities running training courses for school teachers, to allow purchase of seismometers to give out to course participants. The BGA awards the grants and the RAS acts as banker for the fund. The fund was rapidly oversubscribed this year and SP on behalf of the BGA awarded grants of £2000 each to the first 10 applicants. The PESGB intends to provide further funding in 2010, which we again intend to award “first come, first served”, except that if the funding is limited, preference will be given to new applicants. A link to the Schools Seismology Project will be put on to the BGA web page (**ACTION – ADRIAN**). The project and the grants gained some publicity (a “Guardian” journalist approached Ian Stimpson, and the Earth Science Teachers' Association ran an article in its magazine, as well as the initial press occasion in Edinburgh in early April); we should ensure that the BGA is mentioned in the context of any such publicity. The acknowledgement of the funding that is required to be printed in the course materials includes the BGA.

5. **Education Review**

The Review of Geophysics Education in the UK was carried out by Aftab Khan in 2006 and Roger Scrutton, the previous BGA President, had been working on implementing its recommendations until his resignation last September. He had made contact with the Institute of Physics (IoP) on establishing a Schools Liaison Officer for geophysics, possibly based at Imperial College and definitely working with the IoP's highly successful programme of training and support for teachers in physics. Mike agreed to contact the IoP to try to find out with whom Roger had been dealing and see whether the scheme planned could be taken up where it had been left off (**ACTION - MIKE**). If not, then we should consider how to proceed. In particular the successful Schools Seismology Project had appeared since the publication of the report, and new plans should perhaps include working with it – although not exclusively, since there are many branches of geophysics besides seismology! Mike will email the Jiscmail list to request information on individual institutions' projects to be sent to the BGA (to him and SP as secretary) and find out more about what the IoP and others are doing (**ACTION – MIKE, IAN S**).

6. **Postgraduate Meeting and other scientific meetings**

SP reported that the Postgraduate Meeting will take place at Imperial College on 10-11 September 2009 and two Committee members should attend to form an adjudication panel, and all Committee members are encouraged to attend. Members to check their diaries (**ACTION – ALL**). Mike offered Bristol for the 2010 Postgraduate Meeting; we hope Oxford will be able to receive the 2011 one in its new building. The guest speakers are to be encouraged to devote a little time in their talks to outlining their careers (**ACTION – SP**). The RAS “G” meeting slots (monthly on Fridays during the academic session) were advertised some time ago and there were no BGA takers; SP will find out if there are still any vacant slots (**ACTION – SP**). Expenses for two speakers and free use of the RAS lecture theatre are available for “G” meetings. The BGA has also provided small sums to other meetings: £300/year to the annual Geomagnetism meeting (35-40 attenders). These small contributions are essential to raising the profile of the BGA. Unfortunately we did not do enough to raise our profile at the recent New Frontiers in Seismology meeting in Edinburgh. A followup meeting is planned for next year, to which we might contribute.

7. **NAG meeting and 2010 Bullerwell Lecture**

There was a strong feeling in the Committee that the subject of the NAG meeting should not be tied to the Bullerwell Lecture and that a wider audience for the Bullerwell be sought than the attenders of the NAG meeting. Moving the Bullerwell back to the EGU was considered; Andreas offered to ask an acquaintance on the EGU organising committee whether, if the lecture were held at the EGU,

more could be done to prevent its being poorly attended. The German geophysical society's annual prestigious lecture is held, successfully, at the EGU. (**ACTION – ANDREAS**). Another possibility is to put the Bullerwell into a RAS Ordinary Meeting, like the Jeffreys and Darwin lectures, but we were not sure that the audience would change much from the amateur astronomers who normally attend Ordinary Meetings. We agreed to seek nominations of a Bullerwell Lecturer via the Jiscmail list and the Geo-Tectonics and Geodesy and CHUGD lists (**ACTION – PETER** for Geodesy list, **ANDREAS** for CHUGD list, **SP** for others) and the nomination forms used previously. The criteria are that the candidate should be at a UK institution when nominated and be in “early to mid career”. If the Bullerwell is moved to the EGU then we would look to “contribute” to the expenses rather than covering them completely. As for the NAG meeting, possible subjects were suggested: “Plate Boundaries”, “Waste and CO2 Disposal” (a subject that might yield commercial sponsorship) and “Hazards”. We decided initially to approach convenors for a “Plate Boundaries” subject: Tim Wright, Tim Henstock, Lisa McNeill, Christine Peirce and Frederik Tilmann. (**ACTION – ANDREAS**)

8. Committee Tasks

Secretary – **SP** will do this until 2011 AGM; Education Secretary – **Ian Stimpson and Mike** will find out what is going on with respect to following up the Education Review; Meetings Secretary – **Andreas Rietbrock**; Treasurer – **Tony Morris** (until 2011 AGM); Webmaster – **Adrian Muxworthy** (until 2010 AGM); Jiscmail list owners – **Peter Clarke, SP and Russ Evans**. Committee members will take on other short-term roles as necessary. There is a need for industry and schools reps: if George Tuckwell is able to join as GeolSoc/EIGG ex-officio rep then he can also serve as an industry rep for shallow geophysics, but we should also have reps from the oil industry and/or the PESGB. Mike will approach Phil Christie (EAGE) to see if he can suggest anyone (the names of Sue Raikes and Helmut Jakobowicz were also mentioned) (**ACTION – MIKE**) and SP will approach Paul Burnham from PESGB for suggested names (**ACTION – SP**).

9. General discussion

The need for the BGA as an advocate for “solid-Earth” geophysics has not diminished, particularly with difficult political/funding times ahead. Ensuring that people think of the BGA as a conduit for their geophysical activities rather than inventing new institutions is important. Getting the BGA name on to things by means of e.g. small contributions to conferences and initiatives is necessary. The design of the BGA logo could be improved – Committee members will consider (and ask colleagues to consider) new designs (**ACTION – ALL**). There is a need for more BGA-topic articles in “Astronomy and Geophysics” (A&G). SP to chase J. Wookey for article from February NAG meeting and from last year's NAG meeting (**ACTION – SP**). Andreas plans an article for A&G; there should be a report from the Frontiers of Seismology meeting – could someone chase Andrew Curtis (**ACTION - ??**). Sue Bowler (A&G editor; Leeds) asked Mike for a geophysicist for the profile section of A&G – David Gubbins and Dan McKenzie should be suggested to her (**ACTION – MIKE**). It was also considered to suggest that the theme leaders at NERC be asked to write articles on how they see geophysics fitting into their themes (**ACTION – MIKE**). Committee members should be commissioning articles or writing them (**ACTION – ALL**).

10. Next meeting – lunchtime, Friday 11th September 2009 (during Postgraduate Meeting).