

For many a geology highlight of the Christmas 2020 festive period was the first of the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures: *Planet Earth a user guide, Engine Earth* by Professor Chris Jackson. The talk focused on how the plant's rocks and fossils represent climate change and how the earth's tectonic system has controlled carbon dioxide levels, but anthropogenic influences are driving these towards tipping points. A parallel highlight for the Geologists' Association was the rich wealth of published geological information that appeared for us all to mull over during the ongoing "Lockdown" over the Christmas holiday period.

To this end, our thanks to Dr Liam Gallagher for the excellent edition of the *Magazine of the Geologists' Association* (Vol. 19 No.4). The wealth of content is a credit to the diversity of interests of our membership and those of Rockwatch. Thanks to everyone who contributed! This was accompanied by Issue 54 of *Earth Heritage*, which was packed with well-

presented reports of geoconservation projects and of how groups have adapted to pandemic restrictions and kept in touch virtually. Our thanks to Dr Sue Marriott, guest managing editor, the editorial team, all of the authors and Barbara Silva for her production of this engaging magazine. For those that still had time, Janet Wright and Alison Barraclough ensured a bumper content from *Geology from Your Sofa* (Number 18), including links to talks, courses, virtual field trips, museum activities and fun, soon followed up by numbers 19, 20 and 21 as the winter fortnights slipped by. All well received and much appreciated. Members were also treated to a diverse range of articles in Volume 131, Issue 6 of the *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*. Prof. Malcolm Hart again worked tirelessly, in challenging circumstances, to ensure that this volume was published before the end of the year. As we move into 2021 it is hoped that Elsevier's new typesetters will enable us to return to the publications standards that everyone had come to expect of this journal. As well as thanking Malcolm for his huge efforts we would also like to thank all of the editors and authors that contributed to making this a success. If for any reason you have not yet immersed yourself in this issue, please do, articles range from citizen science to archaeology, new dating of cave mammal bone assemblages, palaeontology, sedimentology and mantle plumes and hot-spots. Dr Jon Noad, presenting from Canada, got the GA 2021 calendar off to fantastic start on 8th January with his

thoughtful, fun, informative and well-illustrated talk titled *Almost like being there: new approaches to deciphering animal behaviour from trace fossils*. This was one of those talks that comes to an end and leaves you wondering where the time has gone. Two Saturday evening workshops followed: *Art and Geology II*, an interdisciplinary fossil drawing workshop led by Emma Theresa Jude on 9th January and *Photography Workshop* led by Dr Paul Markwick on Saturday, 23rd January. Both events were arranged by Graham Hickman and were well attended with good and effective participant engagement in the virtual format. On 5th February we enjoyed Dr. Lucía Pérez-Díaz's clearly presented overview of Tectonic plates, mantle plumes, and the importance of keeping good time, which attracted a record number of attendees (>270). The virtual attendance, with which we have all become increasingly

familiar to, has been more successful than anyone would have anticipated prior to the pandemic. This will be considered in future decision making around lecture formats. Further to these deliveries, we have found that there has been increased uptake of the offer for post-lecture "socialising" in breakout rooms. Sarah Stafford arranges the breakout rooms to replicate as closely as possible the social aspects of the Burlington House meetings, with one room being named "The Bar" and the other given the name of a Burlington House meeting room. If you have not experimented with the breakout rooms, please do not be shy! Come and share some of your thoughts and experiences in a friendly environment with or without your glass.

Council has focused on the usual course of business, which has been effectively delivered through virtual meetings and workshops supported by email correspondence. Professor Tony Doré has successfully led an exercise to prioritise GA risks to business in the risk register. This is a governance activity that was initiated by Adrian Champion as guided by the Charities Commission. Currently Tony is working with Janet Wright to ensure that the mitigation measures are defined and implemented. The Festival of Geology group reported back on lessons learnt from the virtual event in November 2020 with suggestions on how improvements could be made for future events. Susan Brown reported that there were 1081 visitors to the website and of these, 1019 were first time users.

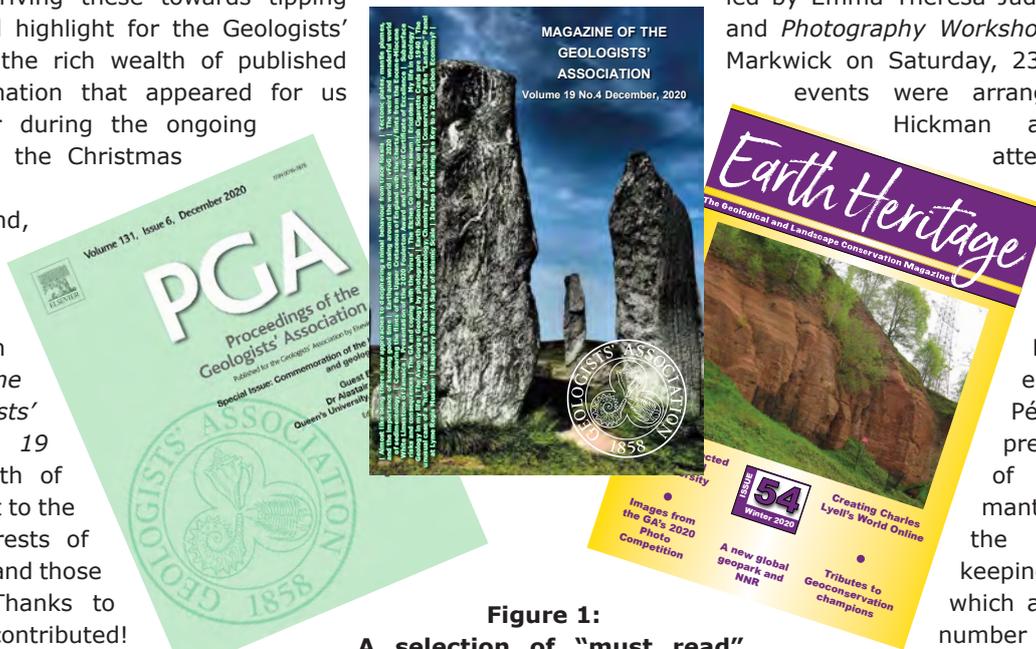


Figure 1:
A selection of "must read"
geological content!

Visitors were from the UK and 34 other countries. In the order of 10% of the visitors arrived via social media channels, so our thanks to John Cooper, Tom Phillips, David Pedreros Bastidas and Amy Edgington for contributing to this. During January there was considerable activity pertaining to the nominations for Council and the Awards. These are significant pieces of work for Council. Perhaps surprisingly in the current situation there are some new initiatives being formulated. One such initiative, led by Lucia relates to GA merchandising, more of this to come in the near future. Looking forward, Nick Pierpoint has worked hard to collate reporting on how the Geologists' Association has responded to the pandemic. Undoubtedly, this will be a valuable document for the archives. Decisions have yet to be made, in the context of Government Covid Guidance, regarding the Geologists' Association Annual Conference in Edinburgh and this year's Festival of Geology. This year's GA Student Symposium (GASS) will be a virtual event taking place over two half days.

The afternoon of Thursday 20 May and the morning of Friday 21 May 2021 are the dates for your calendar! Towards the end of January Dr Michael Daly, the current President of the Geological Society of London (GSL), informed the GSL membership about the situation regarding the Burlington House Apartments. The letter sets out the situation regarding rising rents and a 3-5 year timescale for action. In the short term, the GSL proposes to work with other Courtyard societies to launch a final campaign for Government support to remain at Burlington house and to consider options for alternative premises and re-location. Dr Richard Hughes, the Executive Secretary of the GSL kindly attended our Council meeting on 5 February and took questions on this situation. The GA has responded by offering support for the lobbying exercise. In parallel we will arrange a working group to consider options for the GA should the need arise for us to move. We will keep the membership informed as the situation evolves.

We welcome the following new members to the Geologists' Association:

Elected November 2020 – February 2021

Richard Arthur	Ross Baker	Holly Chubb	Giles Clifton
Roger Cornish	Stephen Crittenden	Simon Cuthbert	Adam Dargan
Jonathan Davey	Lia D'Heldt	Miriam Fox	Geoff Gilbert Mary Gill
Chris Grew	Simon Guscott	Laura Hemmingham	Thomas Horseman
Matthew Johnson	Hugh Johnson	Elena Jones	David Lewis Peter Lincoln
John Madigan	Adrian Marsh	Robert Maurer	Miles Mayall
Patrick Moore	Matthew Newell	Judy Oppe	Martha Papadopoulou
Andy Pedrick	Daniel Reid	Hilary Robinson	Wayne Sayer Isam Shendi
Howard Siddle	John Stanbridge	Mike Streetly	Simon Webster
Sharon Wheeler	Gerry Withers		

Deaths

During the past three months we have been made aware of the death of the following members:

Dr Ieuan David

Professor Graham Evans

Mr John Stanley

Please notify the office if you become aware of the death of a GA member. We are always open to receipt of short obituaries and/or a photograph - so if you would like to write one please get in touch.



Geologists' Association

...for all geologists and earth scientists, both professional and amateur.

It is the time of year when we write about the AGM in May. You may remember that last year the AGM was an early casualty of the Covid pandemic and we were forced to conduct the AGM via written communications. This year we will hold it via live Zoom. The Annual Report will be sent out in advance as usual but you will be asked to vote live via election buttons on the Zoom screen on 7 May, starting at 6pm. The Agenda can be found on p.17. The GA Prizes will be announced but we will be unable to hand over Medals and cheques on the day. As last year we plan to distribute those in person over the summer months. Our President, Vanessa Banks will deliver her address following the AGM, also via Zoom but unfortunately we will not be able to hold our annual dinner again this year.

The full colour Annual Report will be circulated electronically to all those for whom we have emails. You will be sent the new password for the Members Page on the website in the letter accompanying the Annual Report. It will change on Friday 7 May 2021, AGM day. A paper copy will be sent through the post where we have no email address. If, in the past, you have received notifications from the office via post but you now have an email address, do please notify the office in advance as it saves the GA money. Alternatively should you wish specifically for a black and white paper copy of the Annual Report when you normally receive notifications by email, please let Sarah know and she can send it via post. There are some members (and some groups) who have clicked the button on our Mailchimps to members to opt out of receiving information from us. Particularly now, when face to face communication is still so limited, we do urge you to reconsider and if you would like to receive our fortnightly notifications from Geology from your Sofa and other events, get in touch with Sarah and she will re-instate you. Others have not completed the Data Protection Form giving us permission to circulate you with this sort of communication. This is available to download from the website: www.geologistsassociation.org.uk/about. The GA will never pass your details to a third party.

In my December report from Council I reported on the Groups' meeting in November and the request to ensure that Earth Science, and particularly specimens, remained on view in any upgrades of geological exhibits. Our geoconservation post-holder, Colin Prosser, has agreed to take this up so if you know of any instances where specimens are no longer on view do please get in touch with him with the details at conservation@geologistsassociation.org.uk. We are also keen to learn of any particular links that our groups have with museums.

One of the outcomes of our Workshop in January 2019, with the aim of retaining and increasing GA membership, was

the necessity for a Marketing post-holder. This was agreed at our December meeting. One of our Council members, David Ward, has made a number of suggestions and we hope he will formally take up this post after our May AGM. We also agreed to form an Education sub-committee, as a sub-group of the External Relations Committee. This will allow invited guests and organisations to participate without the need to be involved with the other matters relating to External Relations. We welcomed the Scottish Geological Trust as a new Affiliated Society.

Tony Doré, our Governance post-holder has been working hard to update our risk register in light of the new risks to the GA identified since it was last looked at in February 2019. His updated details of the 10 top risks will be uploaded on the About the GA page shortly.

The annual GA Student Symposium will be held virtually in 2021, scheduled for Thursday afternoon 20th May and Friday morning 21st May. The theme of the symposium is *Geoscience in wider society: What difference does your research make*. This

will be a great opportunity to watch a series of presentations from our future geoscience pioneers which will cover an eclectic range of subject matter. The presenters are also potential speakers to your local groups or societies. The modest registration fees are £5/£10 half/full day and the event will be conducted over two half-days with the aim of preventing Zoom fatigue. A set fee of £30 per Local /Affiliated Group/Society for unlimited access for their members should persuade folk that getting together for the day is well worth it! The closing date for abstracts is 26th March 2021 and by mid April we hope to have a programme which will help us further promote the event. As always support from the GA membership will be most welcome and appreciated. Abstracts can be submitted now via the GA website or direct to GASS@geologistsassociation.org.uk.

The most up-to-date information on GA events is listed in the Circular and other pages in this issue of the GA Magazine, as well as on the website. During January our UK Field Trip Organiser, Graham Hickman organised two excellent Zoom Workshops. The first was given by Emma Jude, a follow up from her very successful workshop on *Geology and Art* last summer, and the second was a photographic Workshop given by Paul Markwick. Both were fully booked and very well received. As a result he may add more workshops. Please regularly visit the GA website for further updates in this fast-moving scenario. There you will also find links to other geological events via Geology from your Sofa. Our February meeting attracted a record number of Zoom attendees and it is good to see that our talks are so popular. Hope to be able to see many of you either via Zoom or even in the flesh at one of our meetings in the not-too-distant future.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL GEOLOGISTS

