



BRITISH HYDROLOGICAL SOCIETY

27th Annual General Meeting

28th September 2009, Oriel College, Oxford

President's Report

It has been a great privilege and honour to have served as BHS President for the past two years, and I thank the membership for giving me the opportunity to undertake this task. BHS was formed in 1983 following discussions and plans made during the International Association of Hydrological Sciences international symposium held at Exeter University in July 1982, and I was particularly pleased to be President during the society's 25th anniversary of its foundation in 2008 during the 10th National Symposium, which I helped to arrange as being once again, in Exeter.

It is interesting to look back on the founding of BHS. Before the IAHS symposium at Exeter in 1982, hydrologists really had only one forum for meeting, and sharing ideas; the Hydrological Groups of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), and indeed the ICE Welsh, and particularly the Scottish Hydrological Groups still providing an excellent series of meetings for hydrologists. However, pre-Exeter 1982 the feeling was that Hydrological Group meetings were too strongly focused on 'engineering hydrology', that is application of hydrological sciences in support of civil engineering, for example; flood estimation, water resource assessments, drought monitoring and reservoir safety etc. Discussions at Exeter pointed out that although hydrology was a relatively young and emerging science, it encompassed many other issues and specialities then just 'engineering hydrology', and perhaps the narrow focus of ICE Hydrological Groups was not fully meeting the aspirations and needs of emerging topics such as water quality, hydro-ecology, and was hindering effective interactions with meteorologists, geomorphologists, hydrogeologists, water chemists, ecologists and others. Consequently BHS was formed to offer a much 'broader church' to the many aspects of hydrology that were felt to be important to hydrologists in Britain.

I hope you would agree that the society has managed to dramatically broaden the field of hydrology from which our meetings are drawn, and I certainly feel that the programme of meetings now provided by the national and regional committees (within which I include the Welsh and Scottish Hydrological Groups) is very wide ranging. We hope that if anyone has an idea that they would like to have discussed, that they can approach the society with a suggested topic with the expectation that such a meeting will be welcomed and help provide in organising any such initiatives.

The society is certainly flourishing, with a stable membership of over 1,000 and adequate financial reserves, despite our very modest current subscription of only £25

for full members, and lower rates for students etc. The registration costs for meetings are also modest when compared to say CIWEM or ICE, where a one day meeting costs hundreds of pounds (plus VAT!) compared to say the £40 to £50 of most of our national meetings, and where many regional meetings are free. Long may this continue.

So what do I think I have managed to achieve during my presidency? Well probably less than I should have, although it's amazing how quickly two years passes. When I took up my post I had two main aspirations, to achieve the availability of a scientific journal for the society, and to help members understand how to achieve chartered status. Well the first ambition was easily achieved, in part because much of the groundwork had been completed by my predecessors. However, I did help to negotiate a merger between BHS and the Nordic Hydrology Association, who published 'Nordic Hydrology' through IWAP. We are now 'co-owners' of the new 'Hydrology Research' journal, with BHS having nominated one of the two co-editors, Ian Littlewood, who has worked very hard to get the new journal up and running, and the society owes him, and his co-editor, Prof Dan Rosjberg from Denmark, a strong vote of thanks.

The second issue of professional development and possible chartered status for hydrologists has run and run ever since the society was formed, indeed one of the key drivers of forming BHS was a hope that we might one day be able to offer the title of 'Chartered Hydrologist' (CHyd). However, this aspiration was finally dashed when it became clear that the Privy Council, who award and manage all Chartered titles, would not support the CHyd idea as they felt that the public were becoming confused by the plethora of existing Cxx titles. The Privy Council insist that Chartered status should only be conferred when there is a 'public need' and where there is no suitable existing chartered title available. The suggestion was that hydrology was adequately covered by a range of existing chartered status titles such as Ceng, CSci, CEnv, CMet and Chartered Member of CIWEM (who have not yet got permission from the Privy Council for the post-nominal 'CWEM' or similar). I am delighted to say that with the help of an excellent external working group and strong inputs from our immediate Past President, Rod Hawnt and Neil McIntyre, we were able to finally launch a draft guidance document at the Exeter Symposium last year which is available on the website (<http://www.hydrology.org.uk/BHS-PDT-Guide-v1.1Sept08.pdf>). Although this draft is still not perfect, it does I think set out possible routes to chartered status for hydrologists, and helps to set out examples of types of hydrological experience that can be used to demonstrate achievement of the various awarding bodies' development objectives. I did promise to update these, and will do so over the next few weeks hopefully.

Oh, and one other thing; I managed to get agreement on the new circular logo, which to me better reflects the idea of the hydrological cycle. Debate had gone on for some years on this matter and I am pleased to say that we finally achieved agreement on the new version of a logo during my presidency.

It is said that behind every great man is a great women. Now I'm not actually claiming that I am indeed that great man, but I must recognise the support of not one, but three 'great women' who have actually done much of the work of the society over the past two years. The first of these was Hayley Fowler, who was the hard working Hon Secretary during my first year of office, and who was very ably replaced by our

current Hon Sec, Claire Walsh. In reality, the post of Hon Sec to the society is the most important, and demanding of any, and I must express my personal thanks, as well as the thanks of the society to both Hayley and Claire, and particularly to Claire who is leading planning of next year's International Symposium in Newcastle. And then of course there is the 'third woman', our only paid 'employee' as Technical Secretary, Celia Kirby, who also acts as editor of Circulation. Celia has more experience of BHS than anyone else, having served on the committee in one capacity or another for over 26 years now – many thanks, Celia (and maybe its time for a gold clock?!)

Finally, I must thank two other vital members of the BHS core group; the Hon Treasurer, Peter Ede, and our ICE support provided by Tim Fuller. Peter has in fact served two terms as Hon Treasurer, being the third successive person from Mott Macdonald to have done so. Peter has done the job admirably whilst also providing a great deal of valued advice and comment on all aspects of various decisions the committee has had to make, and so thank you, Peter. Tim has served as Secretary to the society for some years now and is an invaluable asset to us, providing as he does excellent secretarial services such as minutes of our quarterly meetings, and also dealing wonderfully with collecting registrations for meetings and a whole host of other activities. One last thought is that I must thank CEH for supporting my presidency financially through paying my travel expenses for the past three years (yes, they even supported me during my time as President Elect!). This generous support has saved the society a great deal of money, and so we must thank Alan Jenkins of CEH for this support.

I am delighted to be handing over the presidency to Andrew Black, who like all previous Presidents, has 'served his time' previously on the committee, so is hardly new to the job. I am very confident that Andrew will be a very effective 14th president (having acted as President number 13 it's a good job I'm not superstitious!). Thank you again members, for honouring me with the presidency – I shall now hopefully retire from the committee for the last time (having retired from various previous posts on three separate occasions already!)

Frank Farquharson

Honorary Secretary's Report 2008-2009

I would like to start by acknowledging the support the Society gets from the Institution of Civil Engineers and particularly from our Secretary, Tim Fuller, who has been a great help to myself and the Society again this year. I would also like to thank Ian Littlewood as BHS Editor of Hydrology Research for his promotion of, and hard work on, the journal on behalf of the Society.

This year has seen a wide range of National and Regional BHS meetings. The AGM in September 2008 was held during the successful 10th National Symposium at Exeter University. Since, there have been eight further national meetings, including this one in Oxford today.

The first national meeting on "Recent developments on water resources" was jointly organised by the Scottish Hydrological Group and held in Edinburgh on 29th October 2008. At the University of Bristol, the south-west group organised a meeting on the

26th November 2008 on ‘Rainfall forecasting: short and long-term. The final meeting of 2008 was held on 17th December 2008 at Birmingham University, organised by the Midlands Group on “Hyporheic hydrology: emerging ideas and management implications.” On the 8th January 2009, “Hydromorphology and the Water Framework Directive” took place at Liverpool University, organised by the Pennines Group. This was jointly organised by the British Society for Geomorphology. On 6th May 2009, a hugely successful and popular meeting was held at the ICE on “Flood estimation in the UK”; this meeting was fully subscribed indicating the importance of this topic to our membership. The first biannual joint BHS-CIWEM meeting took place on 8th June at the ICE. The topic for this meeting was “Research for water resources planning – current issues, future needs”. These joint meetings will take place every two years i.e. in non BHS symposia years. The final national meeting of the year was organised by the Pennine’s Group at Newcastle University. The topic for this meeting was “Peat hydrology – the current and future role of peat”.

In addition to the national meetings, the 2009 Peter Wolf Young Hydrologists Symposium was held in June at Liverpool University. The symposium attracted 40 young hydrologists and consisted of a day of talks and posters followed by a tour of hydrologically interesting sites around the city of Liverpool. The prizes for best talks were awarded to Patrick Byrne (Loughborough University) and Thomas Beskeen (Mott MacDonald) and best poster awards went to Andrea Tuhackova (SEPA) and Mari Jones (Newcastle University). Thanks to Neil MacDonald for organising this. In 2010 the Symposium will be integrated in the International Symposium.

Successful meeting programmes were held in the Regions again this year, attracting large audiences. A wide variety of topics were covered by the locally very active groups in the Pennines, South West, Midlands and South East Regions and by the Scottish Hydrological Group of the ICE. Day, afternoon and evening meetings and field visits were held at a variety of venues.

On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank all of those involved in organising, speaking at, chairing and administrating meetings and also those who produce write-ups for Circulation. It’s only through their efforts that the Society is able to continue to offer its large and varied programme of meetings each year. The meetings programme for 2009-10 is becoming populated with planned national meetings on lakes and reservoirs, urban drainage and flooding, climate change and the International Symposium in July 2010. I would like to encourage members to offer suggested topics for meetings. We wish to offer a programme of meetings that satisfies and benefits our whole membership.

We have continued our policy this year which allows people registering for events as non-members to join the Society for the remainder of the year on the strength of the higher charged rate and this has made a difference to membership numbers. As a result we continue to have over 1000 members of the Society.

The Society has responded to a few requests for consultation during the year and I’d like to thank those who have put views forward. I would also like to thank Celia Kirby, our Technical Secretary who has led our responses. I would also like to thank Andrew Black and the team at Dundee University for continuing to look after the Society’s publications and promoting their sales and Joe Pearce for continuing to manage the Society’s mailbase.

For this year's undergraduate dissertation prize we had 14 entries from various Universities, which were judged by Chris Bradley, Neil MacDonald, Claire Samuel and I. The entries were of a high standard. We awarded first prize to Christopher Fitzsimmons from University of Cambridge and the runner's up prizes to Jeffrey Wilkinson from University College London and Kate Reilly from Edinburgh University.

We see a number of changes to the committee this year. Peter Ede steps down after two terms as Honorary Treasurer. Claire Samuel retires after a three year elected term on the committee as an ordinary member; we would like to thank them Claire for her inputs over this time. Matt Horritt also completes his term as a co-opted member. Matt was co-opted for a year, following the resignation of Kelvin Limbrick in 2007-2008. We also received a resignation from Neil McIntyre as the Water Panel representative; we would like to thank him for his inputs in this role as well as serving a full term as an elected member before taking on that role. This year we have only had 6 ordinary committee members. Therefore nominations were sought for three ordinary committee members and the Honorary Treasurer's position. Nominations were received from four Members for the ordinary committee positions on the Main Committee and one for Honorary Treasurer. We would like to welcome Claire Beloe from Mott MacDonald, Hannah Cloke from Kings College London and Simon Palmer from Peter Brett Associates as ordinary committee members and Matt Horritt as a co-opted member. We also congratulate Nigel Goody on his election as Honorary Treasurer. Andrew Black commences his term as President of the Society.

Finally, I'd like to thank the committee for the help and support they've given me this year, in particular the executive committee and for the organisational support from Celia Kirby our Technical Secretary. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contributions to BHS of Frank Farquharson and Peter Ede over the past three and four years respectively. Also welcome Andrew Black and Nigel Goody who I look forward to working with over the coming year.

Claire Walsh

Hon. Treasurer's Report 2008-2009

I am once again able to report a healthy financial position, with General Funds having risen by about £7,500 over the year, to £109,500. Over my four years as Honorary Treasurer the total has risen by about £20,000, an average of about 5% per year. In his final report my predecessor Steve Parsons reported discussions about whether the financial position might be considered too healthy; the incoming committee in 2005 agreed that the reserves were sufficient for the Society's needs, and set a target that the reserves should be maintained but not increased. Having approximately achieved this from 2005 to 2007 I have to admit to failing to do so over the past two years.

Membership

At the end of June 2009 we had 1071 paid-up members, an increase of 3% on the same time last year. The increase over the past four years averages 5% per year, in line with the increase in financial reserves.

Summary of Accounts for 2008/09

The accounts of the society are to be independently reviewed and submitted in the Trustees Report of the Society to the Charity Commissioners. A detailed breakdown of income and expenditure for the Year ended 30 June 2009 is shown in the Financial Statement. This shows a generally healthy picture. Points in the accounts include:

- A gain over a series of National meetings, where income (£19,500) exceeded expenditure (£14,600). For meetings held at the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) most of the room hire costs are included in the package of services for which we paid ICE £4,400 in the past year.
- An increase in postage costs; the previous year's figure was unusually low.
- An increase in Trustee meeting expenses, largely because a change in one meeting date in 2007 meant that there were only three meetings in the previous year rather than the usual four.
- An approximate doubling of travel awards from general funds, reversing the decrease of the previous year. The committee considers the provision of travel grants to be an important aspect of the Society's activities and would be happy for the total to be at a similar level this year.
- The surplus from the 2008 Exeter Symposium has largely been put towards initial costs associated with the 2010 International Symposium at Newcastle.
- For the second year in succession, a significant reduction in the value of investments held by the Exeter Fund, due to adverse stock market conditions. However, this has no direct impact on BHS because our responsibilities are limited to managing the fund and making grants from its income. There may be a reduction in income, but probably not in proportion to the drop in fund value. Grants were made to five members for the recent IAHS symposium in India, but these will only appear in the 2009/10 accounts.

Most of the assets of the General Fund are held in accounts in the CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) Bank, whilst the Exeter Fund assets are invested in the Charities Official Investment Fund. The Society has at no stage deposited money with Icelandic banks, and has therefore avoided the significant concerns affecting some other charities or professional organisations.

Forecast for 2009/10

The initial forecast for 2009/10 (included with the Financial Statement) shows a loss of about £5,000. This reflects several factors, including:

- An anticipated reduction in income from bank interest and website advertising due to prevailing economic conditions.
- An increase in Trustee meeting expenses, due to the expectation that more committee members are likely to have to claim from BHS rather than their employers, and the greater restrictions on off-peak rail fares.
- £1000 estimated contribution towards the UK subscription to IUGG which the Royal Society is devolving to relevant Learned Societies.

- An increase in ICE charges. These will double from January 1st 2010, so the effect will only be fully felt in the BHS accounts for 2010/11.

ICE's financial position has worsened dramatically during the recent economic downturn and one of the measures they have taken is to reduce the subsidy given to Associated Societies such as BHS (on normal commercial rates for room hire etc) from 75% to 50%. The view of the Committee is that this change does not require BHS to review its relationship with ICE, but charges for National meetings held at ICE may have to rise slightly.

The forecast does not include any income or costs in relation to the Newcastle International Symposium, but this should yield some surplus for the 2010/11 accounts because some costs have been taken in 2008/09.

Although projecting a loss is of some concern, I believe that it is acceptable in the light of the significant surpluses in the past two years. It is not considered appropriate at this stage to change subscription rates, but this will of course be kept under review.

In conclusion

As I hand over to my successor Nigel Goody, I would like to thank my past and present colleagues on the National Committee for their support, and to acknowledge the work of the staff of ICE who handle much of the business of running the Society. I believe that the finances of the Society are on a sound footing for the years ahead.

Peter Ede