Towards a better understanding

The RAS and the Geological Society of London now have a memorandum of understanding, which should enable the two societies to work more closely together, Ian Howarth, Senior Secretary, reports.

The RAS and the GSL have a lot in common – promoting science through publications, seminars, workshops and conferences are the chief vehicles to encourage this understanding and education. The RAS and the GSL recognize that each organization is expert in its own right in each of these areas. But now they will be able to work together to promote and encourage greater understanding and education of the scientific, technical and professional aspects of the earth sciences with particular emphasis on:

- encouraging high-quality scientific research;
- aiding communication between earth scientists and other scientists;
- collaboration on cross-discipline meetings;
- promotion and publication of books and manuscripts where there is a joint interest;
- expanding geoscience information systems and improving data access;
- enhancing public understanding of the contributions that the geosciences make to society;
- expanding science education in schools;
- increasing awareness of global science policy issues;
- expanding the role of geosciences in stewardship of the environment;
- co-ordination of advice to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Earth Sciences.

This memorandum means that the RAS and the GSL will provide mutual support and co-operation on matters such as the organization of seminars, workshops, or other scientific gatherings, subject to approval of both RAS and the GSL, for example through the British Geophysical Association. In addition, the two society magazines, Astronomy & Geophysics and Geoscientist will be available to Fellows of the other society at a discounted rate, and GSL books will be available to RAS Fellows at a 20% discount over published prices. More information is available on the Society website at www.ras.org.uk/html/rafttl.html.

The new RAS Executive Secretary

David Elliott introduces himself.

I feel both lucky and privileged to be the Society’s new Executive Secretary. This comes after a career in the British Council which took me, with my wife Jan and children Katie and Richard, to Nigeria, Norway, Brunei and Israel. I am not a scientist – although in my last post I was Science Counsellor as well as Cultural Attache! I do, though, have some experience of planning and evaluating projects and services as well as of managing people, facilities and budgets. I hope those skills will help me support the Officers in delivering the services that Fellows want and need. I know that the RAS is a “broad church” embracing full-time researchers in a variety of disciplines as well as serious amateurs. It is also, quite properly, proud of its history and time-hallowed traditions and any change must be made sensitively. As for my immediate agenda, in addition to reviews of our press relations, international activities and organizational structures, I am working on a new publishing contract for our journals as well as the small matter of seeing off the government’s attempts to change the basis on which we occupy Burlington House, which comes to a head in the High Court in January.

I hope I will have the opportunity of meeting as many of you as possible over the next few months. And please do not hesitate to contact me on any aspect of Society business – that’s why I am here.

New phone system for Burlington House

Colin Foster brings news of an easier way to contact the Society.

A new telephone system is now in place in Burlington House. A new introductory message will greet all callers as follows: “Welcome to the Royal Astronomical Society. If you know the extension number you require, please dial it now. Otherwise please hold.” If a caller does not dial an extension number, then calls will be directed to Judith Hodges and Colin Foster. If they are unavailable, the call will be directed to all other phones. Extension numbers for staff at Burlington House can now be found on the staff list at the back of each issue of Astronomy & Geophysics.

Notes for authors submitting to Astronomy & Geophysics

Astronomy & Geophysics is published by the Royal Astronomical Society. It is a journal for the publication of serious scientific articles of interest to a broad range of astronomers and geophysicists.

We are especially seeking Review Articles, which could cover any topic likely to be of interest to members of the RAS. We are looking for lively, topical summaries of active research areas, giving readers a chance to keep up with developments in research fields outside their own. The Editor expects such articles to be around 6000 words, plus figures, to make around six published pages. You should introduce material at a level comprehensible to a graduate in the subject, but should not limit discussion to this level. The Editor welcomes lively writing, suggestions for illustrations, and a variety of personal styles, but reserves the right to reject material that is unsuitable.

Electronic submission

It is helpful if articles are provided in electronic form; we use Words on Apple Macintosh. Other word processor files, Tex and LaTeX are also acceptable; please send pdf files as well. The Editor can supply details of our ftp submission site. All submissions should be accompanied by a paper copy or pdf files of the text and figures. Papers cannot be processed without this. All files should be labelled with the corresponding author’s name and figure number, etc., rather than “A&G”.

The edited text is sent to authors for approval as page proofs either by fax or as a pdf; corrections and changes must be returned promptly. Illustrations, both images and diagrams, are welcome, but not essential. We prefer a small number of high-quality illustrations to many poor ones. Suggestions for cover images are always welcome.

The Editor has discretion over which illustrations to use: the criteria are content, quality and suitability. Authors in any doubt should consult the Editor. Good quality prints or transparencies are suitable, as are high-resolution electronic images, preferable in tif or ps format. As a general rule, it is both more efficient and more satisfactory to send Astronomy & Geophysics a good quality print than for authors to spend time producing poor-quality electronic images.

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Submission implies that the manuscript has not been previously published nor is currently submitted for publication elsewhere. On acceptance of a manuscript, authors are required to transfer the copyright to the RAS.

Contact

All contributions should be sent to Dr Sue Bowler, Editor, Astronomy & Geophysics, Dept of Physics and Astronomy, The University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK. Electronic submission is preferred: send disks or email to s.bowler@leeds.ac.uk.