

## 11. Outreach Officer's Report 2022.

### (i) QRA Outreach Award

The QRA outreach officer encourages members and others to promote and foster engagement between Quaternary science and a wide and diverse audience. We maintain an annual Outreach fund from which grants are awarded. While activities this year are still recovering from the impacts of COVID, we have received two applications which are currently under review. Activities for two projects that were awarded pre-pandemic and initially suspended have been re-activated (Girls into Geoscience Wales, 2023-2026; and VR Glaciers and Glaciated Landscapes).

The QRA made two Outreach Awards in the last year. In lieu of a report for *Essex Rock – Geology Beneath the Landscape* the QRA have solicited a book review to be included in the Spring issue of QN. QRA members will also be eligible to buy the book at a discount secured as part of the terms of funding from the QRA. The QRA is also supporting the *PalaeoPERCS* series of online talks focussed at early career researchers, which is currently ongoing.

Outreach Awards are normally up to £1000, larger requests will be considered. For more details please contact the Outreach Officer ([outreach@qra.org.uk](mailto:outreach@qra.org.uk)).

### (ii) QRA Undergraduate Dissertation Prize

A total of 5 entries were submitted for consideration this year, down from 12 in 2021, and 18 in 2020. Though judges noted that entries this year were of a high quality, the year on year reduction in submissions is a concern. Enquiries by the Outreach officer with colleagues as to why this may be has raised the possibility that this may be due to this year's student cohort needing to undertake project planning during the height of COVID meaning that fewer field based projects (normally typical of submissions) are likely to have been either encouraged by supervisors or allowed by universities. There is some evidence of this in the types of submissions received this year, in that two of five projects were entirely desk based, and three of five were laboratory based using pre-collected material. None of the projects submitted involved the students undertaking their own fieldwork.

For next year's application round there will be multiple notices included in the QRA weekly circular, and the Outreach officer will also liaise with Catherine Souch at the RGS on how to improve the number and range of universities submitting projects for consideration. The winner of the 2022 dissertation prize will be announced at the QRA AGM and an abstract of the winning dissertation will be published in QN.

The Association gives thanks the examiners Mary Edwards and Gill Plunkett and acknowledges the continuing support of Catherine Souch and others at the RGS for the administration of the prize. The 2022-23 iteration of the award will be the final year of the current judge's term, and two new judges are sought in 2023 to commence a 3 year term for 2024-2027. Any QRA member who has familiarity assessing undergraduate level dissertations is eligible, and those who are interested should get in touch with the Outreach officer ([outreach@qra.org](mailto:outreach@qra.org)).

### (iii) Exploring Polar Environments Day, Royal Holloway, March 2022

In March the QRA supported the running of a *Exploring Polar Environments* Day targeted at under-served high school students in the broader London area. It was designed to build on the significant work carried out by British Antarctic Survey, the Polar Regions Department of the FCDO and Polar community including UK Polar Network in encouraging greater equality, diversity, and inclusion. Support from the QRA funded speaker travel and subsistence costs, in addition to QRA publicity material and freebies for attendees to remind and encourage participation in Quaternary related study. The Outreach Officer represented the QRA at the event, delivering a talk attended by all participants and answering questions at a QRA poster during break sessions. Other talks and student activities also emphasised Quaternary angles providing visibility to Quaternary polar research. A full report is published in QN 157.

James Lea

Outreach Officer 15/12/2022