

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY - 2022

a. Membership. Total membership of the Association currently stands at **966** (Table 1).

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change (21–22)
Ordinary Members	636	656	615	682	677	592	616	617	533	-84
Postgraduate Members	368	358	289	369	395	321	343	295	217	-78
Unwaged/Retired Members	146	147	134	137	137	118	123	130	134	+4
Honorary members	35	38	38	41	40	40	42	44	46	+2
Institutional members	29	26	21	22	17	17	16	16	15	- 1
Corresponding members*	23	23	23	23	24	24	23	23	21	- 2
Total Membership	1237	1248	1120	1274	1290	1112	1163	1125	966	-159

Table 1. Summary of membership data as of 1 December 2022. *Includes copyright members

Membership numbers have fallen again this year, in real terms for both the Ordinary and Postgraduate Members. Whilst there has been a new system for the following up on lapsed members, it is hoped that the new website subscription arrangements will enable a more efficient renewal process for members and for its administration.

Val Siviter retired as QRA Administrator and will be formally handing over the role at the end of December 2022. Val is our first QRA Administrator and will be familiar to many through membership enquiries, website log-in details and online book sales. Her contribution to the QRA over two or more decades has been profound and we thank her for all her hard work and gracious support.

The selection process for a new Administrator was undertaken in the summer of 2022 and we welcome Lucy Engelhart as the new QRA Administrator. Val and Lucy have been working together through a two-month handover from November and Lucy will be taking over fully on January 1st 2023.

Subscriptions for 2022 were unchanged at £20, with a reduced rate of £10 for students and unwaged members. The institutional membership rate is £35. The future subscription rates will be discussed later in the AGM in conjunction with proposed Constitutional amendments.

b. Meetings

i) QRA Annual Discussion Meeting 2022

5th-8th January 2022. Quaternary Glaciations: Processes, environments and reconstructions.

Location: The University of Sheffield (online)

Meeting Organisers/Leaders: Jeremy Ely, Chris Clark, Ann Rowan, Mark Bateman, Jennifer Doole, Stephen Livingstone, Grant Bigg, Darrel Swift.

Attendees: 205 (data forthcoming) Report: QN 156.

ii) 26th Annual QRA Postgraduate Symposium

Sheffield Hallam University, Friday 1st and Friday 9th September 2022 (hosted online)

Organiser: Sarah Walton and Gwyn Rivers

Attendees: 15. Abstracts in QN 157 and report forthcoming.

iii) QRA/Quaternary Engineering Research Group field meeting to West Cumbria 2022

17th-20th March 2022. The Quaternary engineering geology of the West Cumbria region.

Location: Santon Bridge, West Cumbria

Meeting Organisers/Leaders: The trip leaders were Jon Merritt and Emrys Phillips (British Geological Survey), Paul Fish and Chris Coleman (Jacobs), Nick Smith (National Nuclear Laboratory), with contributions from Sinead Birks (Imperial College), Dave Evans (Durham University) and Keith Nicholls (Network Rail).

Attendees: 30 (approximately 23% F and 77 % M)

University (13 incl. 3 PhD); Industry (12) Gov't Agency (3) Retired/Unwaged (2)

Report: *QN 156*

iv) QRA/Quaternary Engineering Research Group/Glacial Landforms Working Group field meeting to Anglesey and North Wales 2022

27th-30th October 2022. Field training course in sedimentology, engineering geology and geohazard significance of glacial and periglacial sediments

Location: The Conway Centre, Llanfairpwllgwyngyll, Anglesey.

Meeting Organisers: David Evans (University of Durham), Paul Fish (Jacobs), Julian Murton (University of Sussex), Simon Price (Arup)

Field trip leaders: Dave Evans (Durham University), Emrys Phillips (British Geological Survey), and Julian Murton (University of Sussex).

Attendees: 44 (approximately 11:33 F:M).

University (10); Industry (27) Gov't Agency (5); Retired (2)

Report: *forthcoming*

+ non-binary gender not included; work is ongoing to consider how to most effectively collect this data based on self-identification

The Executive Committee extends its thanks to the organisers of these meetings, the participants, and to those who have prepared reports on the meetings for *Quaternary Newsletter*.

The **Wiley Annual Lecture** for 2022 was delivered by James Scourse (University of Exeter) during the Annual Discussion Meeting hosted by University of Sheffield. The talk was entitled: "*BRITICE-CHRONO: what next? Problems, ideas, applications.*"

The Meetings Officer is always happy to receive offers of meetings from all members including ECRs. We are flexible on dates and formats and do not necessarily require the production of field guides to accompany field meetings. Updated guidelines for meetings are now available and provide excellent support for those wishing organize meetings.

➤ For further details of the above meetings and forthcoming meetings in 2023/2024 please see the Meeting's Officer's Annual Report.

c. QRA Grants and Awards

During the 2020-21 financial year, **£28,905** was awarded by the QRA to members under the standard awards schemes. This reflects a higher number of applications because of reduced travel restrictions after COVID-19 to enable fieldwork and conference attendance. This year the value of all awards was raised by £150 to reflect eligibility of carer-support costs. In the case of the Quaternary Research Award this amount would increase by £500.

The Awards Officer has rationalized the nomenclature for some of the categories to provide greater distinction between Awards and Grants. For example, the New Research Workers Award (NRWA) will be renamed the New Research Workers Grant, although the Bill Bishop Award will retain its original name established by the Bill Bishop Memorial Trust.

From the Financial Year 2023-2024, the funding rounds will be reduced to two from three. This is to reduce the administrative load and ensure a competitive number of applications. The total amount of funds will remain the same in a financial year. The new deadlines will be 15th September and 15th February. Details of the complete portfolio of QRA grants and awards are available on the QRA website: gra.org.uk/grants

- For further details of these awards please see the Awards Officer's report.

d. Publications

Quaternary Newsletter

3 issues: 155 (Feb 2022), 156 (June 2022) and 157 (October 2022) Editor:
Dr Sarah Woodroffe (Durham)

QN will be made more accessible in 2023 by providing a link via the weekly email circular and it will be made available to all visitors to the new QRA website. A new presentation of the QN will allow individual articles to be downloaded alongside the whole issue. All members of the QRA are encouraged to present articles to the QN. A small change will be the discontinuation of the Circular insert to the QN as only three hard copies of the QN are now sent out to members and the information is widely distributed via the weekly email circular.

- See the QN Editor's report for further details.

Journal of Quaternary Science

Volume 37 (2022): eight issues containing 99 articles (1479 pages). Editor-in-Chief: Professor Neil Roberts (University of Plymouth)

The inaugural JQS outstanding ECR paper award was made at the 2022 QRA AGM to Francesca Pasquetti (PhD candidate, University of Pisa) for her article entitled "On the chronology of the Mediterranean Sea-level highstand during the Last Interglacial: a critical review of the U/Th-dated deposits".

- See the JQS Editor's report for further details.

QRA Guides

One new field guide was published in 2022:

Glacial and Periglacial Materials: A field-based sedimentology and engineering geology workshop, North Wales. Evans, D.J.A. (ed.)

The bookstore has now been consolidated in Durham with Lucy Engelhart (QRA Administrator). Attempts to reduce the book stock have been made through an online sale in the autumn. The online availability of Field Guides and QN has been discussed in detail particularly with respect to potential copyright issues. The Publication Secretary would like to ask for donations from the membership of issues from 1 to 54 and individual issues of 66, 116, 120, 123, 127 and 128 if possible. Scanning of field guides before 2010 is also ongoing, although we do not have electronic copies of out-of-print guides from the early 1990's, 1980's and 1970's.

- See the Publications Secretary's report for further details and information on book stocks and sales.

e. Research Groups and Study Groups

The Association continues to support the following new QRA research groups, which were formally initiated early in 2021 and continue until the end of 2023. Please contact the lead organisers if you would like to get involved.

- ***Quaternary Engineering Geology***: Members: Paul Fish (Lead), Becky Briant, Tom Berry, Julian Murton, Jonathan Lee, Dave Evans, Dave Giles and others.
- ***Peatland Ecosystems and Time (PEaT)***: Members: Graeme Swindles (Lead), Angela Gallego-Sala, Tom Roland, Alice Milner, Paul Morris, Helen Roe and Gill Plunkett.

- **Virtual Palaeoscience Project (ViPs):** Members: Jane Bunting (Lead), Kim Davies, Simon Hutchinson, Fabienne Marret-Davies, Elizabeth Hurrell, Des McDougall, Danni Pearce, Irene Torereggiani, Nicki Whitehouse and others.

A new QRA Research Group has been approved to start in 2023 called **SLaCC: Sea Level and Coastal Change**, which will be organised by Louise Best (University of Gloucestershire) and Sarah Woodroffe (Durham University). The group's remit will be to address “*How can palaeo sea level and coastal data contribute to next generation UK Climate Projections and UK Climate Risk Independent Assessments?*”. For further details please contact the leaders.

New proposals for research groups are invited at any time and should be discussed with the Meetings Officer in the first instance.

f. Outreach

As a registered charity, outreach is an important part of our activities and, as our Outreach and External Liaison Officer, James Lea, has been pro-active in promoting our activities.

(i) QRA Undergraduate Dissertation Prize

A total of 5 entries were submitted for consideration this year. The winner of the 2022 dissertation prize will be announced during the AGM in January and an abstract of the winning dissertation will be published in *QN*.

The Association thanks the judges Mary Edwards and Gill Plunkett for their work in reviewing the entries and acknowledges the continuing support of Catherine Souch and others at the RGS for the administration of the prize.

(ii) QRA Outreach Award

Two projects that were suspended during the pandemic are now reactivated (Girls into Geoscience Wales, 2023-2026; and VR Glaciers and Glaciated Landscapes). New awards have been made to *Essex Rock – Geology Beneath the Landscape* the QRA have solicited a book review to be included in in 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. Funds have been allocated to ‘PalaeoPERCs’, an international organization which showcases early career research through online seminars to support seminar and outreach activity. Further details can be found at <https://paleopercs.com>

(iii) Polar Environments Day

A Polar Environments Day, a free event supported by the QRA, was held at Royal Holloway, University of London on the 31st March 2022 with the event being attended by 150 students from under-served schools about polar research. It received positive feedback from the students. The QRA supported with a stand that advertised the role of Quaternary research in addressing modern climate issues. All volunteers wore QRA branded t-shirts. A report is available in *QN* 157.

○ For further details please see the Outreach and External Liaison Officer's report.

g. Executive Committee

Four members of the Executive Committee have completed or will complete their terms of office by January 2023:

- Simon Lewis (*President*)
- Kirsty Penkman (*Ordinary Member*)
- Chris Darvill (*Publicity Officer*)
- Emily Watt (*Postgraduate Representative – September 2022*)

The Executive Committee extends considerable thanks to these individuals on behalf of the membership for their hard work and contributions towards the running of the Association throughout their periods in office.

There have been some challenging terms of office due to the pandemic and grappling with some significant changes to the QRA's organization.

h. Postgraduate activities

We welcomed a new postgraduate representative on to the Executive Committee in December 2022, Laura Boyall (Royal Holloway), who will represent the QRA postgraduate community for the next two years.

Postgraduate events continue to be an important component of the activities of the Association. The Annual Postgraduate Symposium series continued this year and was hosted online by Sarah Walton and Gwyn Rivers (Sheffield Hallam University) over consecutive Fridays at the start of September. The meeting was a success and a full write-up of the event will appear in a forthcoming issue of *QN*. Postgraduate interests are represented on the Executive Committee by two members, who are elected at the Annual Postgraduate Symposium (both posts last for two years).

Social Media interaction

The postgraduate representatives also maintain the social media accounts of the Association. The number of followers on the QRA Social Media accounts as of late 2021 was as follows: Twitter: 3140; Facebook: 2465 followers; Instagram: 180 followers. Twitter remains the most popular form of social media interaction. Please check the QRA website (homepage) for further details or contact the Postgraduate representatives (postgrad@qra.org.uk)

○ See the Postgraduate Representatives' report for further details.

i. Publicity

In 2021, the Publicity Officer, distributed regular E-mail Newsletters to members approximately once a week (members can opt out at any time in compliance with GDPR rules). These remain an effective means of advertising positions, events and news across the membership. They were also used to inform members of changes to QRA activities associated with Covid-19 disruption. The Publicity Officer currently schedules these for 3 pm on Fridays and requests that the relevant announcements are sent to publicity@qra.org.uk by Thursday for circulation that week. This email Circular will now replace the paper copy that was posted with the hard copy of the QN.

Significant progress has been made to redesign and upgrade the QRA website, which has become a key resource for the management of QRA Administration and the interface with members and beyond. Several challenges had developed with the old website and consequently the Executive supported the Publicity Officer's recommendation of redesign and support from a new agency. We have secured the services of LUV Design to initiate and discuss the design process, which is ongoing. Completion of the new website is currently scheduled for the 10th February 2023 and we may ask for feedback from user groups during the design phase.

○ See the Publicity Officer's report for further details.

j. Geoconservation

The work on Geoconservation continues within the QRA under Michael Dempster. We would like to highlight the QRA Geoconservation Award, which was not awarded in 2022 and the next deadline is 1st March 2023. Please contact conservation@qra.org.uk for further details.

Adrian Palmer
Honorary Secretary
15th December 2022