

The QRA and Geoconservation

Climate change during the Quaternary has produced a geological record dominated by landscape modifications and sediments deposited under glacial, periglacial and temperate environmental conditions. Learning from the past has an essential part to play in understanding and dealing with the challenges faced by society today, such as climate change adaptation, loss of biodiversity, sea-level rise and sustainable economic development. Quaternary science and the benefits it delivers for society and the environment depend on the availability of key sites for research and education. Such sites are an essential component of the UK's rich and internationally important geodiversity and a key part of its environmental assets, natural capital and rich geoheritage.

Geoconservation is not exclusively the responsibility of the statutory conservation agencies. The professional bodies, their members and the voluntary sector also have a significant role. Members of the QRA have made a major contribution to understanding and conserving Quaternary sites, particularly in the British Isles but also further afield. In particular, they have:

- co-ordinated and advised on the site assessments and written the scientific site reports for the published Quaternary volumes of the Geological Conservation Review (GCR) [<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2947>], the benchmark survey initiated by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) and continued by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) to identify and protect the key sites representing the geological history of Great Britain;
- provided expert advice for the practical conservation of key sites, including advice on management actions and planning casework;
- defended important sites when threatened (e.g. as a result of development, inappropriate management or stabilisation and coastal protection), including the provision of written scientific evidence in support of the conservation case in relation to planning developments, appearing as expert witnesses at public inquiries and undertaking rescue excavations;
- organised benchmark scientific conferences in partnership with other bodies and advancing our understanding of Quaternary geodiversity;
- promoted conservation awareness of Quaternary features and sites through interpretation and outreach, including field meetings and contributions to the work of local geoconservation groups.

For further information, see:

Anderson, D.E. & Brown, E.J. (2010). Perspectives on Quaternary outreach and aspirations for the future. *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, 121, 455 – 467.

Bridgland, D.R. (2013). Geoconservation of Quaternary sites and interests. *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, 124, 612-624.

Brown, E.J., Gordon, J.E., Burek, C.V., Campbell, S. & Bridgland, D.R. (2014). Geoconservation and the Quaternary Research Association. In: Catt, J.A. & Candy, I. (eds), *The History of the Quaternary Research Association*. Quaternary Research Association, London, 405-431.