

## ● Society publications – A learned Society's scholarly journals

As featured in the Spring 2012 Bulletin

**The scholarly journals are a cornerstone of the Society's international profile and reputation as a learned society and as one of the world's leading geographical societies. Read in more than 160 countries, last year the journals were accessed 1.3 million times online.**

For the journals to be successful in today's highly competitive world they have to combine a strong global standing with a sound commercial basis. More than that, they depend on the people who publish in the journal and the many who kindly give time and expertise freely on editorial boards, as referees for papers, and as editors.

The Society publishes four leading scholarly journals: The Geographical Journal (GJ), Area, and Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers in partnership with Wiley-Blackwell; and WIREs Climate Change with, in addition, the Royal Meteorological Society. All four flourish and each occupies a different niche. Commercially, the publication of each is underpinned by income from international library subscriptions. This also enables the Society to offer journals at a marginal cost to Fellows as part of their Society membership.

The need to retain global standing, linked to the commercial imperative to maintain library subscriptions, explains why the GJ in particular has seen changes in the past 15 years. Some of the items of report enjoyed by Fellows have had to make way for academic papers, and Fellows receive Society information in other ways. The GJ, because of its longevity and history, as well as its contemporary focus on geographical research of relevance to public debates and policy, is the most widely read geographical journal in the world. It is also exchanged for the journals of many other geographical societies, making the Society's library an unparalleled resource.

In the past five years there have been a number of important innovations:

- The past content of all the journals has been digitised and is available through the online archive JSTOR, with pre1870 content now available free. Details of how to access this are in the Members' Only section of the Society's website

- Across much of the developing world, free access to the journals for universities is provided through the philanthropic programme Research4Life by Wiley-Blackwell

- WIREs Climate Change has been introduced as a new journal, meeting the need for an encyclopaedic reference for climate change scholarship

The coming years present new challenges too, particularly around open access and the need both to support researchers and geography as a discipline with peer reviewed, quality publications while also sustaining a viable business model.

Website: [www.rgs.org/journals](http://www.rgs.org/journals)

