The Society

Vision
The leading learned and professional body for geography in the world, widely respected for its independence, quality, innovation and for the breadth of its activities promoting and supporting geography as the means for everyone to discover, understand and respect the world’s people, places and environments.

Mission
A world centre for geography and geographical learning dedicated to the development and promotion of knowledge together with its application to the challenges facing society and the environment.

Society objectives
The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) exists for ‘the advancement of geographical science’. For the current strategy, 2012-2016, this purpose has been expressed as six strategic objectives of the organisation. The aims concern sustaining and promoting the discipline, advancing and sharing knowledge and understanding, and enabling professional and student communities of geography practitioners. In doing so, the Society also aims to grow its own reputation, enhance its membership and ensure sustainability for the future.

The Society’s work is organised into thematic departments, each of which contributes work to several objectives.

The Society is a charity that exists for public benefit and which also has a broad-based membership that supports its mission and aims. The Society is the most active scholarly geographical society in the world and one of the largest.

Registered Charity 208791
From the President

It is hard to believe that my term as President is coming to an end: it has just flown by. I have learnt a lot; not only about all the great work that the Society does, but also about many subjects of interest to geographers, travellers and those with intellectual curiosity about the world around them.

Throughout my three years I have never failed to be impressed by the achievements of the Society and the range of its activities. Without a doubt, it punches well above its weight. For this I am, and hopefully all of you are, grateful to the Director, her dedicated staff and the many volunteers who support the Society in different ways, as Council and Committee members, Ambassadors, mentors, assessors, reviewers, speakers, project supporters, sponsors and donors. Thank you all.

To my great relief, the pension problem, which posed considerable financial and legal risks for the Society over the last three Presidencies, has at last been resolved. At the end of 2014, the Society secured the funding needed to pay the deficit on the final salary scheme. This resolution and the work done to remove the small structural deficit in our accounts are great steps forward.

With my background, it is perhaps not surprising that I have been especially interested in, and proud of, the work the Society has done to protect the health of the discipline. Behind-the-scenes consultations, to help ensure the place of geography within the national curriculum and to secure a good, well-balanced geography curriculum, have been time-consuming but vital at a time when the Government was seeking to make wide-ranging changes to education policies. Equally important has been the Society’s efforts to provide a wealth of resources to help teachers and pupils cope with the new curriculum when it is introduced in September 2015. This work is critical to maintaining student recruitment and the strength of the discipline at university level.

Geographical research is flourishing in the United Kingdom. The 2013 International Benchmarking Review of Human Geography, led by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), ranked UK research as first in the world. Our Annual International Conference also testifies to the strength and diversity of geographical research, attracting an increased number of delegates (over 2,200 in 2014) from an ever-widening set of countries.

We hope, indeed have the expectation that, the Society’s new Field Research Programme, *Migrants on the margins*, will become a valuable addition to the body of geographical research. The programme, chosen after consultations with members and an open competition, is ambitious, interdisciplinary, addresses a key issue in some of the poorest and most vulnerable parts of the world, and engages with local researchers. It is worthy of support, and I hope many of you will feel able to respond to the Society’s recent appeal to fund field research, if you have not already.

I want to close by acknowledging the contribution that the Society makes in promoting the discipline, and learning through travel more generally, to wider audiences. *Discovering Britain, Britain from the Air*, and diverse London and regional lectures and exhibitions, such as the forthcoming centenary exhibition on Shackleton, all serve to widen the public’s understanding of geography in all its guises.

My task over the last three years has been an enjoyable and easy one, made so by the support of the Director and her team, the Vice-Presidents and members of Council. Thank you.
From the Director

In 2014, the Society celebrated the 10th anniversary of its opening to the public. In 2004, thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other donors, we opened all the Collections to public access, supported by new, imaginatively designed buildings and refurbished historic rooms that enabled new activities. The Foyle Reading Room and environmentally-controlled stores in the basement allowed the ground floor of Lowther Lodge to be reorganised to accommodate exhibitions and events of every type and size.

Ten years on, the public entrance on Exhibition Road is just as uplifting with its glorious view of the south façade of Lowther Lodge and the Royal Albert Hall. It is wonderful to see the wide range of people now using the Society; from tens of thousands each year coming to view exhibitions and to attend talks in the Ondaatje Theatre, to community groups partnering with the Society in their projects. In August 2014, the garden overflowed with thousands of Annual International Conference delegates, at home in the Society. The same was true in November for the several hundred attendees coming to learn, develop and share their expedition plans at the Explore weekend. Throughout the year, student and school groups, and teachers on professional development courses, populated the Education Centre. Monday evening lectures regularly saw audiences of 650 or more per lecture.

In 2014, the Society held more than 400 events in London and across the UK regional, Hong Kong and Singapore branches. They ranged from lectures to conferences, seminars, discussions, interviews, training days, field visits and walks, Collections events, exhibitions and award ceremonies. Each, in their own way, advanced and shared geographical knowledge among and between our key audiences: academics, professional geographers, field scientists and expeditioners, teachers, students, policymakers and the wider public, including those interested in learning through travel and exploration. Our activities were supported by more than 2,800 people who volunteered their time. The Society’s rooms were also used more than 340 times by not-for-profit and commercial clients, with turnover from House lettings exceeding £750,000.

The Society was just as active and effective in other ways too. One of the greatest policy achievements was successfully advocating to government for a full review of A Level geography, and then playing a strong role, alongside others, in the content of the revised A/AS Level. The re-introduction of an independent study for each student at A Level was especially important, as was strengthening of physical geography, modernising of topics studied, clear fieldwork and skills requirements, and ensuring progression from GCSE in both content and concepts.

We reached out effectively to ‘new’ professional communities that employ geographers in significant numbers to engage them in the Society’s Chartered Geographer accreditation. In our work with schools, we started to provide support for teaching of the new geography national curriculum. In field research and expeditions, the plans for the Society’s new Field Research Programme took shape. In communications, innovations included #geogtoday, to increase visibility of geography stories in the news. These and many other achievements are described in the pages that follow on each of our six strategic objectives.

Warm thanks are extended to everyone involved and to all the Fellows and members who supported this work.
1 **Geography**
Promoting and sustaining a vibrant discipline

**Objective**  Represent, promote and advocate for geography as a leading discipline, so that it is seen as engaging and useful by the public and it maintains a strong position in education, research, fieldwork and expeditions, and in informing policy and business.

**Context**  Major changes are underway in the UK in school and higher education, in the funding of research, and in the shaping of national policy. If geography is to sustain its strong position and fulfil its full potential it needs an effective champion, ensuring decision makers and others understand its relevance and contribution. Geography has an essential role in the 21st century. It is the spatial discipline that helps everyone understand our world – its places, people and environments. Without it, people would struggle to grasp how social, economic and environmental processes bring about change in communities, places and regions; and how to manage a sustainable future.

2014 was another busy year in support of geography. The Society continued to be influential, sought out and highly regarded as an advocate and expert advisor. The discipline ended the year in a better position than at any time in the previous 20 years. The Society also helped to lead developments more widely in the social sciences and advised on the implementation of government policy on open access publication.

**In particular**

- Following the Society’s advocacy for substantial changes to A Level geography in 2013, then Education Secretary Michael Gove announced a major review in February 2014. The Society was deeply involved in the formulation of the new A/AS Level criteria, published in December. The Society’s Director was a member of the A Level Advisory Board (ALCAB) and active Society input also came from the Education Committee, leading schools members, and colleagues.

- The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) latest review of the Geography Benchmark, the framework for teaching geography in undergraduate programmes, took place in 2014. The Society’s Vice-President, Professor David Thomas, chaired the review group and engaged both educators and employers in the consultation. The outcome, which has greater specification on both fieldwork and methods/skills, including quantitative skills, was well-received by the community.

- The Society’s advocacy, its Geography Ambassadors, and government school targets continued to encourage the uptake of geography. Numbers studying geography at AS Level rose substantially in 2014, following a 19% increase in numbers studying GCSE geography in 2013. At university, high levels of student satisfaction, strong demand and enrolments, and low levels of graduate unemployment all helped to reinforce the subject as both interesting and relevant.

1.1 **Making the case for geography**
Without doubt, the successful reformulation of AS/A Level geography was the policy highlight of 2014. It was the culmination of more than four years of sustained work to advocate, advise and support government and the community in reshaping the study of geography at school from 5-18. The Society played a significant role. With clear progression, strengthened subject knowledge and higher levels of demand, better balance between human and physical geography, greater focus
on understanding processes, and an enhanced role for fieldwork embedded into the curriculum topics, the outcomes of the four years of work represent an important achievement. Having been a trusted organisation at the heart of the reforms, it is particularly pleasing to see these ideas come to fruition and, through the developments, to enable young people to have a more informed understanding of some of the big ‘geographical’ issues facing the UK and the world, including climate change.

In 2014, as part of the reforms, the criteria for the new geography GCSEs was announced; the national curriculum was taught for the first time to pupils aged 5-14 from September; and the AS/A Level criteria were published, after consultation, at the year end. The new national curriculum for geography aims to ‘inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives’. In 2014, the Society started a programme to support primary and secondary schools in implementing it (see Section 3.2).

Quantitative skills and methods is another area which the Society advocated for in 2014. This was through the identification of key skills for GCSE, A Level and Higher Education, and in discussion with the Royal Statistical Society (RSS), government and others. The Society was a lead author on a report published with the Higher Education Academy on Skills in mathematics and statistics in geography and tackling transition and contributed to the RSS report A world full of data.

The Society was active in the campaign for small area census data. This was successful in retaining the collection of these data in the 2021 census. The Society published a policy briefing document, in June 2014, with case studies demonstrating how such data are vital to business, research and the policy community.

Consultations on the proposed College of Teaching continued, with the Society expressing concerns as to how potential overlaps in roles between the College and subject specialist bodies may be averted in the areas of subject specialist professional development, policy engagement and accreditation.

Following the publication of the International Benchmark Review for UK Human Geography in 2013, the Society, working with the academic community, established an action plan in 2014 to take forward the review’s recommendations.

In late 2014, the Society developed a proposal for a new programme of policy discussions. This programme will draw more fully on geographical research to inform some of the challenging policy issues facing the UK. It also seeks to raise further the profile of geography in policy circles. Funding was agreed in January 2015.

1.2 Advising on geography

In 2014, the UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) reported its assessment of research quality and impact across all disciplines. The Society had worked with the community to nominate members of the REF Sub-Panel for Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies. The report found UK geography to be in excellent shape, echoing the conclusion, in 2013, of the International Benchmarking Review, which found UK human geography research to rank first in the world.

The Society continued to host the Heads of Departments’ of Geography annual meetings and to update Heads about its work in support of the discipline, as...
well as other matters relevant to the community. The Society was also called upon to advise a number of universities individually who were contemplating setting up degrees in geography for the first time, or extending existing programmes. The data held by the Society on the health of the discipline provided a useful evidence base.

During the year the Society provided nine written responses to government consultations, attended community meetings with the Research Councils, and kept a close liaison with the Department for Education subject and curriculum teams and with Ofqual.

On behalf of the wider social sciences and humanities, the Society advised on issues relating to the academy in general and represented the learned societies sector. The Open Access agenda, for publishing of peer reviewed scholarly papers, moved from developing policy, in 2012/13, to advice over implementation in 2014. The Director represented the Learned Society sector on both the Research Councils UK implementation review group and the Universities UK Committee tasked with oversight of open access implementation in the UK. The Director also was a member of the Council of the Academy of Social Sciences and the British Academy Higher Education Policy Group.

1.3 **Promoting geography to wider audiences**

The promotion of geography to wider audiences, including the public, young people and employers, is essential for the discipline to thrive. The Society addresses this through its work to advance knowledge and understanding (Section 2) and by direct promotion.

The Society’s well-known Geography Ambassadors programme, supported by Esri UK, continued to flourish. Ambassadors provided around 1,200 presentations in schools to more than 30,000 school pupils, highlighting the value of geography to further study and careers. To achieve this, 24 Ambassador training events were provided at universities across the UK, including sessions for ‘Geographical Information Sciences (GIS) Ambassadors’ selected from Esri UK’s team. The Society also published a new *Going Places with Geography* careers booklet and poster, available to all secondary geography departments and online. These illustrate the wide range of careers across many sectors of the economy that geography graduates enter. This work was further extended with regular *Going Places with Geography* events, which engaged around 550 pupils; *Restless Earth* workshops, run in association with the British Cartographic Society, Esri UK and the Defence Geographic Centre; and events linked to GIS Day.

Our media work continued to raise awareness of the Society whilst promoting geography. Notable national media coverage included: four articles in the *Times Education Supplement*, including opinion pieces and letters to the editor; an interview on BBC Radio 4’s *Woman’s Hour*, coinciding with the 50th Anniversary of the Society’s Henrietta Hutton Research Grants, that discussed the value of fieldwork and of supporting women undertaking field research; and coverage of papers presented at the Annual International Conference from the *Times Higher Education*, BBC News Online and BBC Wales TV. The Society also received some excellent local media coverage: at least 15 articles featured *Discovering Britain* walks and more than 20 local press articles told the stories of the Young Geographer of the Year Awards and the GCSE and A Level Excellence Awards.
2 Knowledge and understanding
Helping create a better informed world

Objective  Advance, interpret and share geographical knowledge more fully, so that the world is better understood and more people benefit from using and enjoying geographical knowledge in their work, leisure and communities.

Context  In a rapidly changing world we constantly need to advance our knowledge and understanding of it, so that we can better care for our environments and landscapes, respond to social and economic challenges as they affect our towns, communities and countryside, and act more responsibly as citizens. Helping to advance geographical knowledge through research and scientific expeditions, share it with professional users and make it accessible and engaging through interpretation to non-specialists are all at the heart of the Society. We will bring our independence, balance and inspiration to bear in doing so.

In common with recent years, this objective encompassed a substantial part of our work in 2014. We advanced knowledge through our grants programme; agreed a new Field Research Programme on the globally important topic of migration to rapidly growing cities in Asia and Africa; and shared geographical knowledge, understanding and inspiration with, and between, an estimated 3 million people, from professionals to enthusiastic amateurs, in the UK and around the world, online and at more than 400 live events.

In particular

- The programme of events in London, regionally and internationally expanded further to a total of 415. Enhancements in technology in the Ondaatje Theatre late in the year ensured that all Fellows and members will enjoy high quality online recordings of the Monday evening lectures in 2015, improving access to talks on a wide range of topics. The Society’s Annual International Conference, which provides a forum for presentation and discussion of the latest geographical research, attracted a record attendance in 2014, showcasing the diversity, range and impact of the discipline.

- The Society selected its new Field Research Programme, Migrants on the margins, a three year project involving researchers from UK universities and a number of international research partners. The project will focus on migration and the vulnerability of migrants in some of the world’s most pressured cities, including Colombo (Sri Lanka), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Harare (Zimbabwe) and Hargeisa (Somaliland).

- The Society built on its strong existing programme of school resources with new materials for the secondary curriculum. These resources connect the development of geography within higher education with the school classroom and are an important opportunity to help teachers keep their subject knowledge up-to-date and refresh their case studies. Highlights included new online case study materials on Antarctica’s Pine Island glacier; ask the expert interviews spanning oil and gas extraction and the geographies of manufacturing; an award winning unit to accompany the Pole of Cold expedition; and resources for both the new Global Learning Programme and the Discovering Galapagos project.
2.1 Advancing knowledge

*Migrants on the margins*, the Society’s new Field Research Programme, was confirmed in 2014. It addresses a number of key, interlinked geographical themes of global significance: migration, environmental change and urban governance. The project team will carry out in-depth field research in at least four cities in partnership with international researchers. The team is led by Dr Mike Collyer from the University of Sussex and includes collaborators from Durham University and the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. During the year the governance structures for the project were put in place and fundraising was started to reach the minimum target of £500,000 required.

The Society’s grants programme continued to support a wide range of innovative research projects and expeditions, for academics, students, educators, and independent travellers. In 2014, a total of 66 projects were supported to enable fieldwork in 41 countries – from Mexico to Mongolia and from Kenya to Kyrgyzstan. A total of more than £169,000 was awarded for these projects. Research focuses ranged from investigating the effects of new media and technology on women’s lifestyles across the Gobi desert, to assessing volcanic hazard management in Iceland, to lake sediment-based reconstructions of tropical cyclone activity in the South Pacific.

*InTheField* was launched to tell the stories and experiences of the grants recipients in the field and upon their return. The 2014 *Journey of a Lifetime* investigated the modernisation of Mongolia through the lens of wrestling. Broadcast on BBC Radio 4, it was featured in their *Pick of the Year*. The 2014 Land Rover Bursary brought together artists, scientists and a Land Rover Defender, to retrace the nineteenth century Grand Alpine Tour, with 21st century technology and drones to document landscape change.

The grants programme is fundamental to the ways in which the Society facilitates the development of new geographical knowledge, advancing geographical science and supporting its practitioners. Fellows and members, since 1956. This provides new insights into the places, people and themes supported. A special event to celebrate 50 years of the Henrietta Hutton Research Grants and all of its recipients was hosted at the Society in May.

In partnership with the Royal Society, Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded doctoral students started new Collections-based research on *The Geographical Journal* archives; family history, place and diaspora; and the Mato Grosso (1967-69) expedition. Currently, nine PhD students are actively researching the Society’s collections through this scheme. *On View Collections* displays targeted at research audiences shared new insights, including *Arabia Deserta* and the *Search for the Source of the Nile*.

2.2 Interpreting and sharing knowledge

The Society ran a vibrant and popular programme of London, regional and online events for public audiences and the membership, with 55 events in London attracting more than 21,500 attendees. The 750-capacity Ondaatje Theatre was full on many Monday evenings, with audiences informed and
inspired by lectures on subjects including the gentrification of London; land-grabbing; following in the footsteps of Genghis Khan; and the impacts of the Asian monsoon on human culture and wildlife. The programme’s high profile and expert speakers included Professor Michael Bradshaw, Evan Davis, Michael Palin and Ahdaf Soueif.

Professor Richard Dawkins, Alain de Botton and Camila Batmanghelidjh CBE shared their thoughts and experiences in the Society’s Discovering People interviews and the Discovering Places events took audiences to Cuba, Uganda and Jordan. The annual Children’s lecture was given by Christiane Dorion on ‘How we make stuff’.

Regional events were also very popular, with more than 142 events around the UK organised by our nine volunteer regional committees. Field visits included trips to Glenderaterra Valley, Walsham-le-Willows, Brownsea Island and Dartmoor, and lectures were presented on a wide range of topics, including Alfred Russel Wallace’s research; India’s hill railways; global pandemics; South Asian geology; flooding; and Captain Cook’s voyages. Several events looked at UK energy – from debates on fracking to discussions on geothermal energy and tidal power. Regional Theatre Programme speakers included Hugh Thomson, Kari Herbert, Will Millard, Emily Penn and Nick Crane.

Four 21st Century Challenges panel discussions, supported by Shell UK, focused on the rise of the global middle class, liveable cities, air quality, and girls’ access to education. The 21st Century Challenges website attracted 100,000 visitors with its 200 freely available videos, news, fact sheets and teaching resources, and remains the number one search engine hit for ‘challenges for society’.

The Society’s Collections supported nine Monday evening lectures with displays linked to the subject matter of the lecture. These ranged from a display of historical material relating to a talk on Ethiopia by immediate past President, Michael Palin, to Antarctic Heritage linked to a lecture by Dr Peter Fretwell on ‘Penguins from Space’. Resources to support the Society’s Discovering Places travel events also were developed, including web resources available to Fellows and members of the Society through the Members’ Only section of the website.

The publication of case studies, ask the expert interviews, and other resources on Geography in the News, a Society website focused on A Level geography, is at the heart of the Society’s work to share new knowledge and understanding with teachers and students. New additions to this site included units on global development; UK water and climate risks; air pollution in China; responses to Typhoon Haiyan; the growth of fracking; and the role of technology in development.

Additional resources were also developed as part of the Society’s work as a partner on The Global Learning Programme, supported by the Department for International Development, and as a contributor to the Greater London Authority’s London curriculum. Two new educational units were also completed to accompany the 21st Century Challenges discussion series focusing on the mobile middle class and the challenge of feeding a future world population of nine billion people. The Pole of Cold educational resource, developed for the 2013 Land Rover Bursary, was awarded Overall Winner in the Scottish Association for Geography Teachers Awards 2014.
A new partnership with the Galapagos Conservation Trust led to the launch of *Discovering Galapagos*, a new educational website exploring many different aspects of these islands including their unique biodiversity, human habitation and the challenges they face. In partnership with the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and Foreign and Commonwealth Office Polar Regions Unit, the Society also updated its two polar websites *Discovering Antarctica* and *Discovering the Arctic*. New materials included a new module on glaciation, recently re-introduced into the school curriculum, which focuses on BAS’s research work on Pine Island Glacier, and on the UK’s role in the Arctic. The Society’s support for the professional development of teachers is presented in Section 3. In total, the online educational resources provided by the Society received more than 3 million pageviews in 2014.

A major highlight of the year was the Society’s Annual International Conference. Themed ‘Co-production of geographical knowledge’, and chaired by Professor Wendy Larner (University of Bristol), the event attracted a record attendance of more than 2,000 registered delegates, presenting more than 1,700 papers. Particular highlights were the Chair’s plenary on Public Geographies; sessions on water, social mobility, waste and diaspora communities; and a variety of events that reflected on the geographies of ‘making’ and engagements with art and artists. The next generation of scholars were active participants, strongly supported by the Postgraduate Forum, the Society’s research group for postgraduates. Earlier in the year, the Society co-organised the very successful fifty year anniversary conference of the Quaternary Research Association.

Directly engaging more than 2,400 Society Fellows and members, as well as a wider group on non-members, the Society’s 28 Research Groups were particularly active in 2014, organising conferences and workshops across the UK on a range of topics at the forefront of geographical enquiry. Of particular note was the pre-Annual International Conference workshop ‘Generating Research Impact’, run by the Economic Geography, Developing Areas, Social and Cultural and Political Geography Research Groups. The event attracted around 160 delegates, all keen to ensure that their research has impact. Outside the Annual International Conference, the Geographies of Justice Working Group ran a timely and important event on Food Justice, including speakers from the Trussell Trust, and the Participatory Geography Research Group ran a training day on participatory methods. The Geography of Leisure and Tourism Research Group continued its flourishing book series with Ashgate, with three new titles in 2014 and two more to come in 2015. The Society’s journals and book series are featured in Section 4.

2.3 **Reaching new audiences**

The Society continues to inspire and inform new audiences through a broad programme of activities and events. Redevelopment of the website, greater use online of film, and new features on the Society, led to significant increases in web traffic. Upgrades to AV equipment in the Ondaatje Theatre in the latter part of the year will allow the Society to offer better quality online films of events, including Monday evening lectures, to Fellows and members in 2015.

*Discovering Britain*, which tells the stories of Britain’s landscapes through walks, reached the milestone of having 150 walks on its website. During 2014, more than 17,000 walks were downloaded. The most popular walk
was Darent Valley, closely followed by Salisbury Plain. During the year a plan was put in place to extend this programme in a new development phase, to include viewpoints and shorter trails and further Britain from the Air exhibitions. Fundraising commenced to support it.

Work with young people in challenging circumstances through the Learning and Leading programme developed further in 2014 (see Section 3).

New approaches from community groups interested in working on the Society’s Collections and developing exhibitions continued. Applications for funding were submitted and Aspara Arts received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a 2015 project focused on exploring people’s memories of the Croydon Mela.

The Society also extended its work with undergraduates, individually and in groups. Representatives from 10 universities across the UK attended the annual geography societies conference in April, where they networked and shared ideas in workshops on how they could best run their society. Over 1,000 undergraduate students benefited from visits to the Society to learn more about historic and contemporary work; a suite of online resources has been developed to make material covered in these sessions accessible to those who cannot attend in person.

Exhibitions hosted at the Society with strong Collections content included Aurel Stein and the Silk Road: A Hundred Years On, a collaboration with the International Dunhuang Project and the University of Nottingham. New confirmed projects include Michael Drayton’s Poly-Olbion exhibition, funded by the Arts Council and led by the arts organisation Flash of Splendour, which specialises in working with children with disabilities. As part of its contribution to the project, the Society enabled research access to its Collections for the project team in preparation for the delivery of the exhibition in 2015.

Hidden Journeys content continued to be featured on Singapore Airlines throughout the year as part of the moving map in-flight entertainment.
3 Geography in practice
Enabling professional and student communities

**Objective** Help meet the needs of practising geographers and students, so that there are vibrant, well trained, accredited professional communities, and highly employable students.

**Context** Geographical knowledge and skills are increasingly used at work and sought out by employers. Students have a keener than ever interest in training and employability in a world characterised by competition for jobs. Professional accreditation is becoming more widely valued and rewarded.

The Society has developed as a professional body as well as a learned society in the past ten years to meet individual needs for advising, maintaining and accrediting standards and in providing selected training for expeditions, fieldwork and subject knowledge. It is timely for that to expand.

*This objective underpins the Society’s support for practicing geographers working in higher education, schools and many other professions, as well as those involved in undertaking their own geographical research, particularly through fieldwork and expeditions. Through the provision of training, professional networking, sharing good practice and professional accreditation, the Society is actively supporting geographers and raising the profile of geography in many different professional settings.*

**In particular**

- Chartered Geographer (CGeog), the Society’s internationally-recognised professional accreditation, benefited from several new partnerships with the geo-spatial, insurance and government sectors.

- More than 1,000 teachers attended the Society’s training events to enhance their subject knowledge and use of geographical skills, including fieldwork and GIS. During 2014 sessions were run at Lowther Lodge, across London, and also regionally, including fieldwork training in the North Yorkshire Moors.

- The revised British Standard (BS) 8848, a safety standard for overseas field research and expeditions, was launched at the Society in April. The Society was centrally involved in the five year review of BS 8848, having participated in the British Standards Institution technical committee that first drafted the standard.

3.1 **Developing a full programme of professional support and accreditation**

The Society’s CGeog accreditation continued to grow. An additional 45 individuals were accredited during the year to bring the total to 585. CGeog is an important opportunity to recognise and support an individual geographer’s professionalism and to also highlight the contribution of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills to a wide range of professions.

The Society continued to run a dedicated LinkedIn group for Chartered Geographers, and a parallel group for those who are currently working towards this accreditation.

3.2 **Sustaining a strong training function**

Training was provided, with events held at the Society and regionally, for A Level students, postgraduates, teachers and those planning independent expeditions and field-research.
Geography Outdoors, the centre supporting field research, exploration and outdoor learning, ran 18 workshops attended by over 570 individuals. These included Land Rover driving training; camera trapping and sound-recording; using GIS on expeditions; and field safety and logistics courses. In 2014, the flagship expeditions and fieldwork planning weekend Explore opened with a lecture on the uses of drones as a tool for exploration and field research. The weekend attracted over 200 delegates and close to 100 expert speakers and advisors.

In addition to providing training and advice, Geography Outdoors gave substantive advice on expeditions and fieldwork to both members and non-members, many of who were applying for or have received funding through the Society's grants programme.

The Society provided training to over 1,000 teachers to update their subject knowledge and key skills, including the use of fieldwork and GIS. The Rediscovering London's Geography project was launched in 2014 as a new resource for teachers ahead of the introduction of the new national curriculum in September 2015. This programme actively supported 223 primary and secondary teachers in 2014. Many events were run jointly with partners, including the Ordnance Survey, Esri UK, Ofsted, SSAT (The Schools Network), and the Historical Association.

The Learning and Leading programme continued to provide fieldwork masterclasses, overseas travel and field research opportunities for young people and teachers from challenging circumstances. The programme’s gap scholars undertook geographically-focused gap travels and experiences in 15 countries, with the Society also approving gap scholarships for 16 new students who will travel in 2015. Four undergraduate students were supported as 'fieldwork apprentices’ in 2014, allowing them to participate, alongside academic tutors, in field research investigating weathering, sustainability and environmental change in Svalbard, Iceland, Slovakia and Jordan.

The Postgraduate Forum continued from strength to strength, running a very successful mid-term conference, at Loughborough University, and the popular pre-conference programme at the 2014 Annual International Conference. The event provided opportunities for postgraduates to network, attend useful training sessions, and present their research in a supportive setting.

3.3 Consolidating, sharing and promoting best practice

The Society has played a central role in the development and dissemination of the British Standard 8848 since its first publication in 2009. This standard supports good practice in the provision of overseas fieldwork and adventurous activities. In 2014, the Society hosted the launch of the revised standard, following a five year review in which the Society was closely involved. The Society also provided advice to officials from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Department for Education in relation to the development of new guidance for the application of BS 8848 to the youth expeditions sector.

Further developments to the Society’s fieldwork database were made by the Geography Outdoors team. This unparalleled resource provides online access to information about over 8,000 past and present expeditions and fieldwork projects, with reports available on almost 6,000 of them.

“Chartered Geographer opens doors for you; professionally and also with your own development. It gives your employer a reason to invest in your development and it gives you a professional standing.”

Zoe Briggs CGeog, GIS team leader at the Canal and River Trust
2014 at a glance

Research and Higher Education

• The Society’s first fully open access journal, Geo: Geography and the Environment, was launched.

• The Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 concluded that UK geography is setting intellectual agendas.

Fieldwork and Expeditions

• The Society was centrally involved in the five year review of BS 8848, a safety standard for visits, fieldwork, expeditions and adventurous activities overseas.

• £169,000 was awarded for field research projects and expeditions across the world.

• The Society’s first fully open access journal, Geo: Geography and the Environment, was launched.

• The Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 concluded that UK geography is setting intellectual agendas.

2,000

• More than 2,000 geographers from the UK and around the world attended our Annual International Conference.

50

• A special event to celebrate 50 years of the Henrietta Hutton Research Grants and all recipients was hosted at the Society.

£169,000

• £169,000 was awarded for field research projects and expeditions across the world.

Geographers remain among the least likely to be unemployed after 50 years.
Education

- A **new education website**, *Discovering Galapagos*, was launched in partnership with the Galapagos Conservation Trust.
- *Rediscovering London’s Geography* was a new, Society-led education project to support the teaching of geography in London schools.

570

- **Geography Outdoors** ran 18 workshops, attended by over **570** individuals.
- *Migrants on the margins* was selected as the Society’s **new Field Research Programme**.

1,000

- More than **1,000** teachers attended the Society’s professional training events.

1,200

- Our Geography Ambassadors gave around **1,200** presentations to more than **30,000** young people.

30,000

- Geography at AS Level is in the top 10 most popular subjects for the first time • 225,000 studying geography at GCSE
Geographical studies have the second highest student satisfaction averaged over the last five years • Geography departments

Policy

- The Society successfully led advocacy to re-instate an independent project at A Level.

AS/A

- Society lobbying and advice resulted in both a full review of AS/A Level geography and the reformulation of A Level content, in 2014.
- The Society led initiatives to strengthen quantitative skills in A Level and undergraduate geography curricula.

2021

- The Society and the community argued successfully for the retention of small area data in the census 2021.

Public Engagement

- Over 70 Collections displays were specifically created for educational and public users.

400

- The Society organised more than 400 events for public audiences and members, reaching almost 60,000 people.
Our Discovering Britain website published 150 downloadable walks, all telling the story of Britain.

The Society’s websites received over 1.7 million visits.

2014 marked ten years since the Pavilion and Foyle Reading Room were opened, enabling full public access to the Society’s resources as part of the Unlocking the Archives project.

The Pavilion hosted seven commercial exhibitions on geographical themes.

Turnover from House lettings exceeded £750,000; the profits supporting the Society’s charitable activities.

The Society has Fellows and members in 105 countries and territories across the world.

Across the UK are recognised for their world-leading research • Fieldwork strengthened throughout the geography curriculum.
4 Growing our reputation
Building on tradition, independence and contemporary relevance

**Objective** Build further the Society’s strong profile and reputation, nationally and internationally, reinforcing and publicising its role as a leader among learned societies and a partner of choice.

**Context** The Society is one of the largest, most active and most innovative of scholarly geographical societies worldwide. It is well known and highly respected in the UK. It has a well-developed international reach and reputation through its journals, the field projects and expeditions it supports, the Annual International Conference and an international membership. It is sought out for advice by other national geographical societies; and has two international branches. Global changes offer opportunities to establish stronger partnerships with selected nations and sister societies for the mutual benefit of the organisations, their memberships, and geography globally.

During 2014 the Society continued to reinforce its position as an influential leader among learned societies and to raise its profile through both traditional and social media. The range of activities and audiences reached, both in the UK and internationally, were increased through a combination of reputation, partnerships and collaboration.

**In particular**

- The implementation of the new strategic communications plan, approved in June, saw the introduction of two new website sections, *Society News* and *#geogtoday*. These features increased the Society’s online visibility by profiling Society activity and highlighting contemporary geographical research news respectively.

- The Society launched a new open access journal, *Geo: Geography and Environment*, in July. Professors Gail Davies (University of Exeter) and Anson Mackay (University College London) were appointed as the inaugural co-Editors.

- A number of the Society’s Collections items featured in displays in public exhibitions nationally and internationally, including at the National Portrait Gallery in London, L’Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, and the Manchester Central Library.

4.1 **Developing and consolidating bilateral relationships**

The Society and the Geographical Association (GA) continued to work together as part of the Global Learning Programme, while a number of our regional committees held joint lectures and events with local GA branches.

The Society received many invitations to share knowledge and best practice. These included giving presentations at the launch of the Q-Step project in March on what learned societies can do to support the teaching and learning of quantitative social science; for the National Archives on our work with the Collections and with minority ethnic communities in particular; and to the Geobusiness conference about geospatial education. The Director was also the learned society representative on the Academy for Social Sciences’ Council and on the British Academy’s Higher Education Policy Group; and funding was awarded for a project on strategic planning in the learned sector. This project is a new partnership between the
Society and the Research Information Network.

Further examples of bilateral relationships enjoyed, and newly developed, by the Society can be found in other sections of the Annual Review. These include relationships with the Society’s corporate supporters (see Section 6).

4.2 Enhancing communication and liaison

In June, the Society’s Council approved a new strategic communications plan which set out the broad principles that all our communications will follow as well as setting priorities for 2014 and 2015.

In addition to the introduction of two new sections, improvements to the Society’s website during the year included a new design for the homepage which has enabled the breadth of the Society’s activities to be seen much more clearly. The new design is now being rolled out across all sections of the website.

Towards the end of the year, a new social media plan was agreed and a series of new social media channels aimed at specific audiences, including teachers, the research community and young geographers, will be launched in early 2015.

Over 35 press releases were issued and media coverage included BBC TV, radio and online; Times Higher Education (THE) and many local newspapers (see Section 1.3 for more on media coverage). The Society also made a significant contribution to the TES’ geography week in late April.

4.3 Extending the international dimension of current activities

The Society’s world leading journals – Area, The Geographical Journal and Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers – and the RGS-IBG book series continued to showcase cutting edge academic research advancing geographical knowledge. The journals were read in more than 160 countries across the world with more than 1.3 million downloads of articles during 2014. Transactions retained its place in the top three of geography journals worldwide based on its impact factor. WIREs Climate Change, which the Society publishes in partnership with Wiley and the Royal Meteorological Society, increased its impact factor from 3.45 to 4.4, establishing itself in the top tier of academic journals in this field.

In response to changes in scholarly publishing, the Society launched a new open access journal – Geo: Geography and Environment – and Professors Gail Davies and Anson Mackay were appointed as the inaugural editors.

During 2014, three Editors came to the end of their five-year terms. The Society sincerely thanks Professor Klaus Dodds (The Geographical Journal), Professor Kevin Ward (Area) and Professor Neil Coe (Book Series) for their outstanding stewardship of the publications during their time as editors.

The Singapore and Hong Kong branches of the Society extended their activities in 2014. The Singapore branch continued work on its developing events programme, while the Hong Kong branch organised over 65 talks over the course of the year, with speakers including Paul Theroux and Dr Jane Goodall DBE. These talks for local members were complemented by a Hong Kong schools programme.

“Geo is an online journal, first and foremost. This opens up new possibilities in terms of the format and media that can be published in a peer-reviewed journal.”

Professor Anson Mackay, co-editor of Geo, University College London
5 Enhancing our Membership
An important source of expertise, funding and enthusiasm

Objective Reach and engage new supporters and retain the enthusiasm and expertise of existing Fellows and members, across the UK and beyond, ensuring a strong and growing membership of both professionals and enthusiasts who support our activities.

Context The Society benefits greatly from its Fellows and members, their knowledge, advice, enthusiasm and contacts, and their subscriptions which provide the single largest contribution to charitable income – 25% - 35% of total annual income. The Society especially values its many local Fellows and members, who have provided long term support. If the Society is to continue to develop in a sustainable way then membership needs to continue to increase year on year, while being mindful of not adding too much additional pressure on London facilities.

Fellowship of the Society, or membership – which is open to anyone with an enthusiasm for learning about the world, its peoples, cultures and environments – enables individuals and organisations to become part of a vibrant geographical community. The Society’s historic premises are at the heart of its London-based events and activities, but throughout the UK regions, as well as internationally, the commitment and support of an engaged membership continues to underpin and strengthen our work.

In particular
• The Society successfully sustained its membership levels through an active programme of retention and recruitment activities, and thanks to the loyalty and support of its many Fellows and members. At the year end, membership in total stood at more than 15,600.
• The Society continued to engage successfully the next generation of geographers, with Young Geographers representing nearly half of all new joiners in 2014. Young Geographers joining the Society benefited from access to both talks by leading geographers and a range of online resources.
• 2,800 Fellows, members and friends provided outstanding volunteer support, enabling the Society’s activities to develop further and engage more widely in 2014. The commitment of all those who volunteer, across the UK and internationally, is hugely valued.

5.1 Improving communication with members
The Society has been committed to improving the digital offer for members, especially for the benefit of those who cannot access activities in London. Late 2014 saw the introduction of some significant improvements. The redesigned Members’ Area of the website went live in December 2014, providing easier access to online lectures. Throughout the year the Society also invested in upgrading the quality of the equipment in the Ondaatje Theatre, thus enabling high quality recordings of the Monday evening lectures. These will be available online to members in early 2015. Digital Geographical magazine has been favourably piloted and in 2015 the new Geographical app will be launched, enabling members to opt for the digital instead of the paper version.
5.2 **Enhancing recruitment and retention of Fellows and members**

The prioritised recruitment and retention plan for 2014 was implemented, reviewed and updated monthly, with the support of a new Membership Recruitment Co-ordinator appointed in 2014. More invitations were sent to potential Fellows to encourage them to join the Society. Engagement with university geography departments and alumni groups was also enhanced through the development of new networks. The Society hopes to establish regular alumni events to engage geography alumni. This work complements those aspects of the Society’s strategy that target and recruit geography graduates as Fellows and members.

Attention was also given to key transition points within membership. This included inviting Young Geographers who are eligible for Postgraduate Fellowship and Fellowship to become Fellows and Postgraduate Fellows of the Society, as well as encouraging Postgraduate Fellows to continue their Fellowship beyond their postgraduate studies.

We have also continued to welcome the school student and wider undergraduate community to the Society. Over 1,500 A Level and university students benefited from guided visits to the Society, or attendance at careers and expedition planning events, which have further raised the Society’s profile and the value of membership to this important cohort for the future. We also continued to invite those who have been members for five years to become Fellows.

5.3 **Reviewing members’ benefits**

As part of our strategy to improve access for Fellows and members outside London, the Society has worked with local regional committees to develop a series of pilot events which will complement and support the excellent existing local programming on offer by better engaging those currently living far from Society events. Three events were held for Fellows and members as part of the regional pilots and these have also been successful in identifying new people to involve in regional activities. Further activities will take place in 2015.

The Society warmly thanks its highly committed volunteer regional committees for organising more than 124 wide-ranging events for members and the public throughout the year, including a comprehensive programme in Hong Kong and a developing programme in Singapore.

In the UK, new committee members were welcomed and appointed to roles in the South, Midlands and Yorkshire and North East regions, replacing those who are standing down after many years of service to the Society. Many events have received excellent feedback – including a sell-out tour of the six regional theatres programme venues by Nick Crane.

Members not only benefit from Society activities, they also give back to our work. Very considerable support in kind came from more than 2,800 volunteers in 2014, many as Fellows or members.

Their roles included the following: as national and regional committee members; in supporting the Collections; as speakers and chairs at events; as Geography Ambassadors; in the *Discovering Britain* walks and field activities programme; as expert advisors for expeditions and other activity areas; in supporting journals as Editors, members of editorial boards and peer reviewers; and as reviewers of grant applications. In total, this amounted to an estimated 6,000 days of direct volunteer support, which equates to more than 24 full time staff equivalent.

“The reason that I joined was a feeling that I needed to – wanted to – contribute and be part of the broad community of people interested in geography”

**Gavin Bridge, Fellow**
Securing the future

As one of the world's largest and most active scholarly geographical societies

Objective Enable a robust future for the Society, by increasing income sustainably, using technology effectively, and enhancing staff capabilities.

Context The Society is an independent body with a strong reputation for quality and objectivity. In common with most other learned and professional bodies, it receives no core government funding. It is proud to have developed to be among the most dynamic scholarly bodies worldwide. Over the past 15 years it has grown to become recognised both for its work to advance geography with the research and scientific expedition communities, and also beyond, with schools, students, the public at large, and policy makers. The Strategy 2012-2016 builds on the breadth of our activities and reputation, seeking new ways to involve people and to increase our income.

The Society’s work benefited from a clear strategy, sound governance, committed membership, well-qualified staff and strong volunteer support. The Society ended the year with an operating surplus on the general fund of £59,000, excluding exceptional income, on an income of £4.63m. Major income sources in 2014 were membership subscriptions, enterprise, operating activities and fundraising.

The financial review (pages 24/25) sets out how the Society generated and spent its income in support of the charitable activities. The finances are in line with the five year business plan. 2014 saw developments in using the new central database system, installed in 2013, to improve administrative processes; and the continuation of the monthly programme of staff development and training activities.

The Society continued to receive valued assistance from both volunteers (section 5.3) and donors, as set out below. All are warmly thanked for their contributions. Fundraising in 2014 brought in commitments of over £950,000 for core support and projects delivered in 2014 and future years. It also paved the way for an additional commitment of c. £800,000 in January 2015, to support policy and public projects in 2015/16.

Trusts, foundations and statutory sources for major strategic projects The UK Antarctic Heritage Trust, Royal Commission of 1851, British Antarctic Territories and The Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands agreed donations totalling £135,000 to fund the creation and delivery of the Society’s centenary Shackleton Endurance exhibition in London in 2015. £264,000 was agreed from the London Schools Excellence Fund for schools work and £40,000 from the Deutsche Post Foundation for new grants.

Members The Society launched its latest appeal to the membership in the summer of 2014 to help support the Society’s Field Research Programme and Postgraduate Grants. By the year end approximately £20,000 had been donated.

Individual donors supported the Society’s grant giving with a total of £13,000.

Corporate partnerships A total of £333,000 was provided in 2014 from valued relationships with corporate benefactors and partners, as described on page 23. The Society warmly thanks Land Rover, Ordnance Survey Ltd and Trailfinders for renewing their corporate support for a further three years. £50,000 was also committed to the Discovering Britain project in 2015/16 by Craghoppers; a new relationship.
Corporate Benefactors

**Land Rover** supported our core scientific expedition and fieldwork training activities, including Land Rover driver training courses, the loan of a Freelander to facilitate outreach visits, and the Land Rover Bursary to support one major field expedition each year.

**Ordnance Survey Ltd** supported our core work with schools and teachers, helping to strengthen geography in education, to ensure sound use of maps and GIS, and to reward excellence in teaching and learning.

**Rolex** supported our core work with and through the Society's large, unique and iconic collections of maps, photographs, books, documents and objects, helping to underpin public access, conservation and new uses for, and users of, the Collections.

**Trailfinders** supported the Society's work with the public, to inspire and promote the wider relevance and enjoyment of geography and to foster a greater understanding of our world. This builds on a shared common interest in informed travel.

Corporate Project Partners

**Esri UK** the leading provider of GIS technology, supported the Society's Geography Ambassador programme and brought GIS expertise to it. Ambassadors inspire 30,000 young people a year with geography and GIS.

**Shell UK** supported the Society's 21st Century Challenges series of public discussions and online resources to promote understanding of some of the key issues facing society in the UK, and the world.

Corporate Business Member

**Silversea** engaged the Society in providing educative materials on their expedition cruise ships, drawing on the Society's heritage.

Other supporters

Owing to space limitations, not everyone can be mentioned but we thank you all warmly as every donation matters. The Society would also like to thank those who provided support in earlier years for projects which are now taking place, those who have chosen to remain anonymous, and those individuals who have provided fundraising guidance and assistance.

Education

**A New Direction**
Department for Education
Department for International Development
Greater London Authority
Polar Regions Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
The Galapagos Conservation Trust

Fieldwork and expeditions

**Land Rover Experience**
**Learning and Leaining** project supporter

Grants

Fleming family (PF Charitable Trust)
The Goldsmiths’ Company
HM Qaboos, Sultan of Oman
John Pilkington and the BBC
Neville Shulman
Paul and Mary Slawson
Ralph Brown Memorial Fund
Rio Tinto plc

Information services and resources

NADFAS

Legacies received

Estate of Nita Ferrar
Estate of Sybil Sassoon
Estate of Patricia Claire Waller

Membership services

Phillip’s Publishing
Stanfords Maps and Books

Public engagement

The Council of Asian People
Discovering Britain project supporter
The Clothworkers’ Company
W David Lyons
Heritage Lottery Fund (via community projects)

Research and higher education

Higher Education Academy
Financial review

The summarised financial statements for 2014 on the following page provide an overview of the Society’s balance sheet assets, liabilities and funds, together with its sources of income, and expenditure of resources by activity.

In 2014, the Society’s annual operating result, before investment valuation, FRS 17 pension scheme investment movements and gains on disposal of collections assets (of which more below) was a surplus on the General Fund of £59,000 (2013: £167,000), which was ahead of budget for the year.

A particular highlight in 2014 was the increased level of incoming resources, excluding exceptional income, up 7% on 2013, at £4.63m (2013: £4.32m). The first of the pie charts demonstrates that membership income was the biggest contributor, albeit naturally, up 2013, at £4.63m (2013: £4.32m). The first of the pie charts demonstrates that membership income was the biggest contributor, albeit in 2014, at £4.63m (2013: £4.32m). The first of the pie charts demonstrates that membership income was the biggest contributor, albeit we were fortunate in being able to rely on a broad range of income sources. The key income growth areas for 2014 were in the Society’s charitable activities, most notably for the delivery of new education projects including the DfID-funded Global Learning Programme and the London Schools Excellence Fund projects, along with income from a large and successful Annual International Conference. Other core charitable activities also performed well. The Enterprises business had a somewhat mixed year, however, with declining income in the Picture Library being largely offset by growth in venue hire and modest growth in corporate support. Membership income remained stable.

The incoming resources pie chart excludes the £2.5m exceptional item received just prior to year-end for the sale of the Thomas Baines North Australia Expedition of 1855 - 1857 Collections assets to The Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth, W Australia. The sale had been approved to meet the Society’s legal obligations to fund the deficit on its closed final salary pension scheme; the work towards completing the sale was reported in the 2013 Annual Review.

The second pie chart, for resources expended, at £4.61m also shows a 7% increase against 2013 (£4.31m); all figures excluding depreciation. The main changes since 2013 have been an increase in expenditure on education projects (primarily the same projects mentioned above). This was partially offset by reductions in expenditure in engaging wider audiences, as the funding for the Hidden Journeys project concluded. Enterprises costs rose due to additional Pavilion hire costs for the Oman exhibition and additional staff costs.

Consolidated balance sheet net assets increased by £1.56m (2013: £325,000 increase), largely reflecting the £2.5m receipt of the Collections disposal proceeds referred to above less the increase in FRS 17 defined pension liability of £867,000.

The balance sheet presentation classifies the Society’s resources. Restricted Funds are subject to donor-imposed conditions and include current projects and settled funds for grant-giving. Designated Research and New Initiatives Funds represent the amounts raised from the Society’s 2000-2004 Capital Appeal to members. Other Designated Funds, including a small Contingency Fund have been set aside by Council for specific purposes, but may be called upon for general purposes. The General Fund is the Society’s unrestricted income fund that is used to support the charitable objectives of the charity at the discretion of the Trustees in line with strategy.

Independent auditor’s statement to the Trustees of the Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers)

We have examined the summarised financial statements of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) for the year ended 31 December 2014 set out on page 25.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the auditor

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law and the recommendations of the charities SORP.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full annual Financial Statements and the Trustees’ Report.

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 2008/3 issued by the Auditing Practices Board.

Opinion

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full annual Financial Statements and the Trustees’ Report of the Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers) for the year ended 31 December 2014.

Baker Tilly UK Audit LLP
Statutory Auditor
The Pinnacle
170 Midsummer Boulevard
Milton Keynes MK9 1BP

April 2015

These summarised financial statements are extracted from the Society’s full audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2014, which were approved by Council on 31 March 2015. The full Financial Statements and Trustees’ Report will be submitted to the Charity Commission after the Society’s AGM, and are available on the Society’s website [www.rgs.org](http://www.rgs.org) and the Charity Commission website [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk).
### Consolidated Balance Sheet

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<td>Current assets</td>
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<td>Inter-fund accounts</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRS17 pension scheme liability</td>
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<td>-1,358</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net assets</td>
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<td>2,273</td>
<td>2,831</td>
<td>1,939</td>
<td>15,787</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Funds balances 31.12.2014

- Restricted: £8,744
- Designated: £2,273
- Designated Other: £2,831
- General: £1,939
- Total: £15,787

#### Funds balances 31.12.2013

- Restricted: £9,058
- Designated: £2,174
- Designated Other: £2,826
- General: £173
- Total: £14,231

#### 2014 net Funds movement

- Restricted: £-314
- Designated: £99
- Designated Other: £5
- General: £1,766
- Total: £1,566

### Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities

#### Incoming resources

- £291
- £80
- £58
- £6,700
- £7,129

#### Resources expended

- £-822
- £-34
- £-19
- £-4,086
- £-4,961

#### (Deficit)/surplus before transfers

- £-531
- £46
- £39
- £2,614
- £2,168

#### Transfers between funds

- £96
- £-7
- £-34
- £-55
- £0

#### (Deficit)/surplus after transfers

- £-435
- £39
- £5
- £2,559
- £2,168

#### Net investment gains

- £121
- £60
- £46
- £227

#### FRS17 actuarial loss on pension scheme

- £-839
- £-839

#### 2014 net Funds movement

- Restricted: £-314
- Designated: £99
- Designated Other: £5
- General: £1,766
- Total: £1,566

#### Funds balances 31.12.2013

- Restricted: £9,058
- Designated: £2,174
- Designated Other: £2,826
- General: £173
- Total: £14,231

#### 2014 net Funds movement

- Restricted: £-314
- Designated: £99
- Designated Other: £5
- General: £1,766
- Total: £1,566

### £4.63m income by source*

- 33% Membership subscriptions
- 11% Donations, grants, appeals and endowments
- 16% Income generated by charitable activities
- 24% RGS Enterprises turnover
- 6% Investment income
- 7% Corporate supporters
- 2% Tenants
- 1% Appeal and endowment donations; legacies

*Excluding one-off sale receipt to fund final salary pension scheme deficit

### £4.61m resources expended by activity

- 19% Education, expeditions, fieldwork, grants
- 15% Engaging wider audiences
- 9% Information services & resources
- 4% Policy, communications, media
- 15% Research, higher education, grants
- 15% Membership services
- 16% RGS Enterprises costs
- 7% Other, including governance
The Society is governed by its Council which largely comprises Fellows elected from and by the Fellowship. They represent the main areas of activity of the Society. Up to four of the 25 Council members may be co-opted, including a postgraduate representative, to bring further breadth, expertise and contact networks.

In 2014, for the first time, and in line with recommendations of good practice by the Charity Commission, the Council identified the skills and expertise gaps that would be most helpful to fill in the elections to the Council in June, at the Annual General Meeting. Fellows standing for election were encouraged to state how they met those identified gaps. However, this approach did not preclude any Fellow standing for election to positions relevant to their background. This development was generally welcomed by the Fellowship.

The process was informed by a skills and expertise audit in 2013 together with an assessment of the skills, knowledge and expertise the Council required to fulfil its duties. A similar approach was taken in December 2014, for elections in 2015, taking note of the expertise being lost from the Council as members completed their terms of office. Council positions are elected for a single term of three years at the Annual General Meeting, including a postal vote of the Fellowship. Elected Council members also serve on the appropriate Committee of Council to provide liaison between the two levels.

The Council is cognisant of gender balance, while seeking to attract the most appropriately qualified persons to guide the Society’s governance.

The Council met, as usual, three times in 2014. The Executive Committee of the Council, which comprises the senior-most Trustees, met in the intervening periods as the need arose. Attendance at Council meetings in 2014 averaged 80% across all three meetings. The Finance Committee, which oversees all financial matters, met four times, as usual, and comprises a core membership of accounting, financial, legal and investment professionals.

The following Council members were in office at the end of 2014:

**President**
Professor Dame Judith Rees

**Immediate Past President**
Michael Palin CBE

**Vice Presidents**
Andrew Linnell
(Edentucation)

Dr John Shears
(Expeditions and Fieldwork)

Professor David Thomas
(Research and Higher Education)

**Honorary Treasurer**
Mark Humphreys

**Chair of Annual Conference 2014**
Professor Wendy Larner

**Honorary Secretaries**
Dr Mark Mulligan
(Expeditions and Fieldwork)

Laura Stone
(Education)

Dr Nicola Thomas
(Research and Higher Education)

**Ordinary Members of Council**
Professor Phil Ashworth
Paul Baker
Professor Alison Blunt
Llinos Brown
Alistair Carr
Barbara Hamnett MBE
Dr Vanessa Lawrence CB
Peter Mather
Dr Emma Mawdsley
Dr Kathryn Monk
Professor Joe Painter
Rebecca Stephens MBE

The following also served as Council Members until June 2014 when they completed their terms of office:

Michael Ashby
Robin Ashcroft
Stacey Balsdon
Professor Georgina Endfield
Stephen Henwood CBE
Justine Marozzi
Professor Jonathan Rigg
Paul Rose

The Council is advised by specialist committees for Education; Expeditions and Fieldwork; Finance; and Research and Higher Education. Attendance at these committee meetings averaged 74% across the year. In addition, advice was provided by the Regions Committee, a small number of specialist Sub-Committees, including one for investments; and, where appropriate, individual professional advisors. RGS Enterprise Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Society, is governed by its Enterprise Board.

**Staff**
The Director reports to the Council and has responsibility for implementing the Society’s strategy, assisted by a senior team of five departmental heads and a staff that numbered 52 in December 2014, with four positions in the process of being filled. Two new permanent positions were appointed in 2014, in line with the Society’s strategy, to support fundraising and membership recruitment. All staff members are based at the Society’s headquarters in Kensington, London.

Reorganisation of the staff roles that support the Society’s premises and venue hire followed the resignations of Denise Prior and Steve Quinton, who had served the Society for 24 and 26 years respectively and are gratefully thanked for their long service and loyalty. David Riviere, Head of Finance and Services and a key member of the senior management team, left the Society in autumn 2014 after 14 years of dedicated service.
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Development
✉ development@rgs.org

Policy
✉ policy@rgs.org

Education and Outdoor Learning
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✉ eol@rgs.org

Ambassadors programme
✉ ambassadors@rgs.org

Education general
✉ education@rgs.org

Geography Outdoors
✉ go@rgs.org

Finance and Services
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✉ finance@rgs.org

House Office and Lettings
✉ house@rgs.org

Information technology
✉ it@rgs.org

Membership Office
✉ membership@rgs.org

Public Engagement and Communications
Caitlin Watson; Athol Hendry (interim)
✉ pec@rgs.org

Communications
✉ press@rgs.org

Exhibitions
✉ exhibitions@rgs.org

Programmes
✉ events@rgs.org

Public Engagement projects
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Research Groups & general
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Scholarly Journals
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Grants (all types)
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Resources and Enterprise
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The Society warmly thanks John Leonard CBE for his dedication to the South Region. John stood down as co-ordinator at the end of 2014. All other regional committee members who completed terms of office are also warmly thanked.
Looking ahead

Each year in the Society brings different challenges to be managed, and opportunities to be taken in line with our strategic and business plans.

In 2015, we will need to be cognisant of the many possible impacts on the Society, and our work, of a changing UK government. As it is the fourth year of our current strategy we will be making a push to grow further our income sources and to fund and develop the small number of outstanding strategic projects not yet fully underway. As ever, we also need to ensure our core charitable work continues to flourish, in a balanced way across the Society, to advance geography and the understanding of our world.

Sustaining the steady growth, overall, that we have seen in the past ten years in two important income-generating activities – enterprise and membership – is a key activity for 2015. We will use this year to grow existing activities, carry out relevant business reviews and pilot new initiatives.

One example is in developing our partnerships to encourage more geography graduates to join as Fellows. A first alumni evening hosted by the Society in partnership with Oxford Geography alumni is planned for February 2015. We hope similar ventures with geography departments across the UK will follow.

The Society’s exciting centenary Shackleton *Endurance* exhibition, from November 2015, will bring our holdings of Hurley’s glass plate negatives to public attention for the very first time. Fascinating in their detail, evocative and extraordinarily powerful, the plates will form the exhibition centrepiece. It will be a timely pilot for overseas licensing of major Society exhibitions in the future, as part of our commercial, enterprise income generation.

Re-organising the staff team that manages the Society’s premises and their letting, and completing the audio-visual equipment upgrades in the Ondaatje Theatre, will also offer new opportunities. Capabilities will be enhanced for internally organised events, from Monday evening lectures and their capture on video for the membership, to the Annual International Conference. The improvements will also further support income generation from venue hire.

Two of the four major projects that we hope to fund this year have already had funds committed to them in early 2015. It’s a great start to the year. One sees phase two of *Discovering Britain* walking project commence. The other supports a significant strengthening of the Society’s work in geographical knowledge exchange between researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

The remaining projects both support fieldwork and field research in different ways. The Field Research Programme, *Migrants on the margins*, will be a focus for fundraising in 2015 and 2016, through the appeal and other sources. The second project area aims to support fieldwork and quantitative skills teaching at school, following the strengthening of both at all levels in the curriculum.

Finally, among the many core Society activities next year, developments in Chartered Geographer professional accreditation are worthy of particular note. Closer working in 2014 with geographers in government opens opportunities to widen Chartered Geographer take up, and the new QAA benchmarking framework for degrees will enable the Society to commence the planned course accreditation programme.
Recognising excellence in 2014

The Society’s Medals and Awards have recognised excellence in the breadth of geographical research, practice and public promotion since the foundation of the Society in 1830.

The two Royal Medals (The Founder’s and Patron’s Medals) are among the highest international accolades. They are awarded for ‘the encouragement and promotion of geographical science and discovery’.

In 2014 Her Majesty the Queen approved the award of the Royal Medals as follows:

**Founder’s Medal**

**Professor Geoffrey Boulton**

‘for the development and promotion of glaciology’

**Patron’s Medal**

**Hans Rosling**

‘for the encouragement and development of the public understanding of geographical data and influencing decision makers across the world’

The Society’s Council made the following awards:

**Victoria Medal**

**Professor Susan J. Smith**

‘for conspicuous merit in research in human geography’

**Busk Medal**

**Professor Uma Kothari**

‘for fieldwork to support an understanding of global development’

**Cherry Kearton Medal & Award**

**Jens Bjerre**

‘for photography of indigenous peoples across the world’

**Murchison Award**

**Professor John Dearing**

‘for publications contributing to the understanding of environmental change’

**Back Award**

**Professor David Gibbs**

‘for research that contributes to the development of environmental and economic policy’

**Gill Memorial Award**

**Dr Katherine Brickell**

‘for the potential shown in studies on gender relations’

**Ness Award**

**Nicholas Crane**

‘for popularising geography and the understanding of Britain’

**Ordnance Survey Awards (two awards)**

**Dr Simon Oakes**

**Elizabeth Phipson**

‘in recognition of excellence in geography education at secondary level’

**Taylor & Francis Award**

**Dr Richard Harris**

‘for excellence in the promotion and practice of teaching quantitative methods’

**Alfred Steers Dissertation Prize**

**Jonathan Collings**

‘for the undergraduate geography dissertation judged to be the best in 2013’

**Area Prize**

**Dr Thomas Birtchnell**

‘for the best article in the journal by a new researcher’

**Geographical Award**

**Jamie Buchanan-Dunlop**

‘for supporting school students in learning from, and being inspired by, expeditions’

**Honorary Fellowship**

**Michael Jackson**

**Stephen Henwood**

‘in recognition of outstanding commitment and contribution to the Society’s work’
This report summarises the Society’s charitable activities and finances in 2014 in pursuit of its objective to ‘advance geographical science’. The Society’s work is guided by its current strategy and benefits a wide range of professional and public audiences. The Society is a vibrant organisation that seeks to balance its stakeholders and activities for the benefit of all our users and of geography. The full annual accounts and report can be found on our website and that of the Charity Commission.

If you would like to receive a copy of this report in PDF so that it can be read in larger print or using Adobe Reader software, please visit www.rgs.org/annualreview

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