



# Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland

[www.minersoc.org](http://www.minersoc.org)

## POLITICS AND LEARNED SOCIETIES

Politics and politicians have always had the ability to influence the lives and work of scientists. It is they who decide what share of the public purse is allocated to research and to teaching the next generation of scientists.

Learned societies and other non-profit organizations are also affected by governments. How will libraries be funded? Will our conferences be supported by those whose salaries/expenses are paid by governments? And what about taxes on a learned society's earnings?

Two significant, politically motivated changes are coming our way: the open-access science publishing revolution known as Plan S [the 'S' standing for 'Shock'!], and Brexit.

### Plan S

We are now less than a year away from probably the biggest single impact the world of politics could have had on those learned societies which engage in the publication of scientific journals.

Plan S is a new European initiative designed to complete the move from a traditional, subscription-based, financial model, to an "author-pays", Open Access, model for journal publishing. The following is taken from the ScienceEurope.org website ([https://www.scienceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Plan\\_S.pdf](https://www.scienceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Plan_S.pdf)):

"After 1 January 2020 scientific publications on the results from research funded by public grants provided by national and European research councils and funding bodies, must be published in compliant Open Access Journals or on compliant Open Access Platforms.

1. Authors retain copyright of their publication with no restrictions. All publications must be published under an open license, preferably the Creative Commons Attribution Licence CC BY. In all cases, the license applied should fulfil the requirements defined by the Berlin Declaration;
2. The Funders will ensure jointly the establishment of robust criteria and requirements for the services that compliant, high-quality Open Access journals and Open Access platforms must provide;
3. In case such high-quality Open Access journals or platforms do not yet exist, the Funders will, in a coordinated way, provide incentives to establish and support them when appropriate; support will also be provided for Open Access infrastructures where necessary;
4. Where applicable, Open Access publication fees are covered by the Funders or universities, not by individual researchers; it is acknowledged that all scientists should be able to publish their work under the terms of Open Access even if their institutions have limited means;
5. When Open Access publication fees are applied, their funding is standardised and capped (across Europe);
6. The Funders will ask universities, research organisations, and libraries to align their policies and strategies, notably to ensure transparency;
7. The above principles shall apply to all types of scholarly publications, but it is understood that the timeline to achieve Open Access for monographs and books may be longer than 1 January 2020;
8. The importance of open archives and repositories for hosting research outputs is acknowledged because of their long-term archiving function and their potential for editorial innovation;
9. The 'hybrid' model of publishing is not compliant with the above principles;
10. The Funders will monitor compliance and sanction non-compliance."

A feedback period may well mean that some of these points are adjusted but it is clear that we are looking eye-to-eye at a fundamental change in what we do.

Open Access is a good thing, and desirable. But not everybody has the money available to them to pay the author fees that are necessary to cover the costs of publication. "The scientists who do all the work for these journals are paid from the public purse", I hear you say. That is true ... to an extent. But what about manuscript submission, editing, typesetting, hosting, maintenance, and administration? What about promotion of our science, funding for students, conferences to enable scientists to share their ideas? Who pays for all that?

Is there a simple sum which shows that if library budgets were changed from paying subscriptions to paying article processing fees, that there would be enough money for everything? Would all authors be satisfied? Could authors get all their work published in appropriate journals? Would all publishers continue to be viable? Will quality be maintained? Can we build sufficiently high walls between a publisher's need to maintain scientific integrity and quality and that publisher's need to source sufficient income to remain viable? There is much uncertainty. We have experienced an inexorable move towards a smaller number of larger commercial/pseudo-commercial publishers. The Mineralogical Society (MinSoc) has joined with Cambridge University Press in a publishing partnership for its journals. Cambridge is certainly better equipped to deal with and respond to Plan S than the MinSoc could on its own. But this time of uncertainty is undoubtedly unsettling.

### Brexit

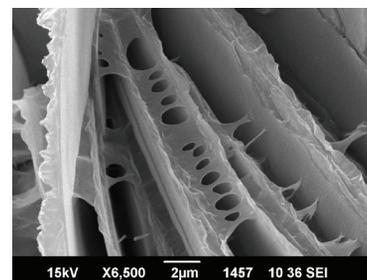
Even though the British public has stated a desire to leave the European Union (at the time of writing, the exact nature of that departure is still being decided), some British funding agencies (both state and charitable) have supported the Plan S initiative, so British authors and publishers do not escape Plan S by means of Brexit.

The Mineralogical Society continues to offer the best possible service to its members and others who engage with us (authors, conference delegates, etc.). We are keeping a close eye on developments in Westminster (London, UK) and in Brussels (Belgium) and are making every reasonable attempt to position the MinSoc where it can continue to best serve the mineralogical community from around the globe, irrespective of the separationist views of some in these islands.

**Kevin Murphy**, Executive Director

### IMAGES OF CLAY

Following the recent 'Images of Clay' competition, 20 new images were submitted and the 'best' image was chosen by a panel of five judges from The Clay Minerals Society and the Clay Minerals Group of the Mineralogical Society. All the images were of high quality, so judging the 'best' was not an easy task: 10 images appeared in different judges' top 3. However, the winner is ... drum roll ... an image of 'beidellite on chamosite' submitted by Adrian Biron (Earth Science Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences) and it has been added to the archive [www.minersoc.org/images-of-clay](http://www.minersoc.org/images-of-clay) as the 100<sup>th</sup> image. All the other submitted images have also been added. If you have images you would like to submit, please see the instructions on the web site.



## THE VOLCANIC AND MAGMATIC STUDIES GROUP

# VMSG

We are delighted to write a spotlight article on behalf of the Volcanic and Magmatic Studies Group (VMSG), a large and active special interest group that is jointly affiliated to the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland and to the Geological Society of London. The main mission of the VMSG is to facilitate discussion, in an inclusive environment, amongst researchers with interests in volcanology, igneous petrology and geochemistry and allied fields. Membership of the VMSG is free and open to all; post-graduate students and early career researchers are particularly welcome.

The VMSG was initially founded as the Volcanic Studies Group (VSG) at Birkbeck College, University of London (UK) in 1963 by Dr Archibald T.J. Dollar and Dr George P.L. Walker. In 1964, the VSG became one of the first special interest groups of the Geological Society of London. Following affiliation to both the Mineralogical Society and the Geological Society of London in 1997, and in recognition of the scientific diversity of its membership, the special interest group became known as the VMSG.



Professor George P.L. Walker at Imperial College, London (UK). IMAGE FROM ROWLAND AND SPARKS (2009).

### VMSG Field Trips

Fieldwork is vital to the research efforts of most VMSG members, and we continue to run short residential fieldtrips. In the past, these have visited classic igneous locations on Ardnamurchan and on the Isles of Rum and Mull (all in Scotland), the Lake District of northern England, Iceland, the Canary Islands and the Auvergne region of France. These trips prove particularly popular with young scientists who are keen to expand their knowledge and experience and also to network. This year VMSG is organising a field trip to the Isle of Arran (Scotland) to learn the latest about its diverse volcanic geology. We are always looking for field trip suggestions, so please contact us if you have ideas.



A recent VMSG field trip to the polygonal basalt columns of the Giant's Causeway in Antrim (Northern Ireland).

### VMSG Meetings

The first VSG meeting was a one-day colloquium on pyroclastic rocks, held in 1964 at the 'apartments' of the Geological Society of London and located in Burlington House, Piccadilly (London, UK). A series of biannual one-day colloquia followed, with topics reflecting the major discourse in volcanology and also petrology at that time. These included meetings entitled, "Acid Rocks in the North Atlantic Tertiary Province", "Atlantic Volcanoes with Special Reference to Magma Types and Eruptive Mechanism", "East African Volcanoes" and "Alkali Basalts and their Associates".

A two-day symposium at the University of Edinburgh (Scotland) in 1966, titled "The Origin and Evolution of Basaltic Magmas", was the first meeting of the VSG to take place away from Burlington House. Following this, the tradition of holding a conference in a different university each year seems to have developed. In 1967, VSG held its first AGM and elected its first committee.

In the late 1990s, the VMSG combined what were once one-day biannual meetings into a large annual 2.5-day conference with a special dinner. In the last two decades, these meetings have been hosted by at least 14 different institutions in the UK and Ireland and typically attract >200 delegates. The 2019 VMSG conference in St Andrews (Scotland) welcomed delegates from as far afield as Australia, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Montserrat, The Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Wales and the USA. For the first time, this year's VMSG meeting had an outreach event with talks to local school children given by Sir Steve Sparks (University of Bristol, UK) and Prof. Rosaly M.C. Lopes (NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, USA).

The annual VMSG meetings have a series of thematic oral and poster sessions that are designed to reflect topical research and that are led by internationally renowned keynote speakers. Poster presentations are accompanied by 'lightning talks' (talks lasting only a few minutes). Typically, up to half of the conference delegates will be post-graduate students. The best oral and poster presentations by students are awarded the Bob Hunter and Geoff Brown prizes, respectively.

### VMSG Awards

Each year the VMSG presents the prestigious Thermo Fisher Scientific VMSG Award to a member who has made a substantial contribution to the field or the group, be it excellence in research, service, or some other vital contribution. The recipient is nominated by members of the VMSG community.

Recently, the VMSG has been proud to announce two new awards: the Willy Aspinall Prize, given in honour of the work of Professor Aspinall (University of Bristol, UK), is awarded to the author of a recent outstanding paper in applied volcanology; and the Henry Emeleus Award, which is a bursary for fieldwork set up in memory of Henry Emeleus (University of Durham, UK) in recognition of Henry's substantial contributions to igneous petrology and the mapping of the British Palaeogene Igneous Province.

### VMSG Bursaries

The VMSG annually provides between four and eight student travel bursaries to offset the cost of attendance at conferences, workshops and fieldtrips. Students provide a short report on their activities for inclusion in the regular VMSG newsletter.

### VMSG Communications

The VMSG communicates with its members via a mailing list and sends out a quarterly newsletter, information on awards, meetings and fieldtrips, ad-hoc news and other information relevant to our members' interests. We are also on Twitter (@vmsg\_uk) and have a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/vmsg.uk/>).

### REFERENCE

Rowland SK, Sparks RSJ (2009) A pictorial summary of the life and work of George Patrick Leonard Walker. In: Thordarson T, Self S, Larsen G, Rowland SK, Hoskuldsson A (eds) *Studies in Volcanology: The Legacy of George Walker*. Special Publications of IAVCEI, volume 2. Geological Society, London, pp 371-400

**Sally A. Gibson** (Chair)  
**Richard J. Brown** (Honorary Secretary)