



The
Geological
Society

-serving science, profession & society

LIBRARY STRATEGY 2017-2026

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Background

'Le projet de la Société Géologique de Londres, la première qui ait été établie sous ce titre, est de travailler à l'acquisition des connaissances propres à établir la théorie de la Terre.'

[The project of the Geological Society of London, the first to have been established under that name, is to work towards acquiring sound knowledge to establish a theory of the Earth].

Extract from 'Mémoire' (1808) by Jacques-Louis, Comte de Bournon, founding member of the Geological Society.

The Museum and Library of the Geological Society were created in 1809, two years after the foundation of the Society, to collect practical knowledge of geological information.

In 1911, as a consequence of the Fellowship's growing interest for printed and up-to-date research, the Museum closed to give more room to what had become the largest collection of geological literature in the world.

With over 300,000 volumes of books and serials and 40,000 maps, the Geological Society Library is still today one of the finest Earth Science libraries in the world. The information needs of the Society's 12,000 Fellows however have changed and so have the library environment and resources. Appendix A summarises Library progress since 2012.

Purpose of the Library

The Geological Society Library is a research library which offers its Fellows the best of both worlds: rich historical and archive collections as well as the most up-to-date information resources in print and electronic formats.

Its primary role is to support Fellows with their continuing professional development, research and practice needs. It also provides services to employees of the Society's Corporate Patrons and, as part of a charitable organisation, has a commitment to public engagement.

Values

A library of hard-to-find and unique material

As the first Geological Society in the world, the Society has acquired over the last 209 years a large number of unique and rare items. The Library is a back-up library for the British Library and a key resource for many UK and overseas libraries.

High customer care standards

The Library provides a first class customised service to its Fellows, Corporate Patrons and visitors and prides itself in having enthusiastic and committed staff with expert knowledge in the subject area and the collections.

Best kept secret in London

The Library offers an exclusive and peaceful environment for research and study in an elegant 18th c. grade II* listed building in W1, Piccadilly.

Strategic objectives

In 2017, Council approved the Geological Society Strategy:

- **A home for geoscience:** We will promote and support the geosciences and act as the scientific and professional home for an engaged, diverse and inclusive geoscience community
- **Serving and supporting geoscientists:** We will provide services and support for our Fellows and other geoscientists throughout their careers
- **Maintaining standards:** We will assure high professional standards in geoscience, for the public benefit
- **Trusted voice:** We will be the trusted voice of the geoscience community
- **Education and outreach:** We will promote geoscience education and share our science widely, to inform public debate and to inspire future geoscientists to address the challenges facing humanity
- **Strengthening our organisation:** We will ensure that the Geological Society remains a sustainable, resilient and thriving organisation over a generational timescale, in order to deliver our strategic aims and objectives

The Library Strategy incorporates the recommendations from the 2010 Library Review and complies with the Geological Society's new strategic objectives.

1. Improving the Library experience

Objective	Action	Date
Use the Library space more effectively	We will review the use, content, layout and signage of Library space to adapt to changing users' needs and expectations.	2018
	We will complete the Library inventory and identify suitable material for off-site storage and disposal to increase the accessibility of the Library's collections and create room for growth.	2017
Improve remote access to Library resources	We will keep up-to-date with the latest technology and empower our users by developing further our online user functionalities and information literacy support and training.	2020
	We will acquire printed and electronic academic resources most appropriate to our users' needs and make sure these are visible and easily accessible.	2017-2026
Develop, maintain and promote the Library's collections	We will participate in union catalogues e.g. COPAC, SUNCAT and WorldCat.	2018
	We will address the cataloguing backlog by carefully evaluating donations and adding to stock items of lasting value.	2017-2026

2. Developing user services

Objective	Action	Date
<p>Enhance user services</p>	<p>We will continue to support and adapt to the information needs of Fellows and Corporate Patrons through free and at-a-cost services such as document delivery, literature searching, Geofacets, books & map prints sales, Library tours and enquiries.</p>	<p>2017-2026</p>
	<p>We will engage further with Corporate Patrons to develop customised products such as expert search and current awareness services and prices.</p>	<p>2017-2026</p>
	<p>We will investigate the delivery of an information skills programme online and/or face-to-face to Fellows, Corporate Patrons and non-members using the latest technology.</p>	<p>2018</p>
	<p>We will carefully select and digitise material from our archive and special collections to widen the range of images and prints available for purchase.</p>	<p>2017-2026</p>
<p>Improve communication and marketing of value-added services</p>	<p>We will continue to use social media, the Society's website, newsletters and Geoscientist to raise awareness and promote Library services and collections.</p>	<p>2017-2026</p>
	<p>We will commission professionally produced literature to market our services to Corporate Patrons and offer Library inductions to their employees.</p>	<p>2018</p>

3. Preserving, developing and promoting special collections & archives

Objective	Action	Date
<p>Preserve and conserve the Library's special collections and archives</p>	<p>We will seek to improve the environmental conditions in which the Library's rare books, historical maps and archives are kept.</p>	<p>2017-2026</p>
	<p>We will raise awareness amongst staff and Fellows through fundraising campaigns and conservation training and events.</p>	<p>2017-2026</p>
	<p>We will identify material suitable for digitisation and promote these on the Society's website, via social networks and on professionally produced printed literature e.g. bookmarks and postcards.</p>	<p>2017-2026</p>
	<p>We will properly evaluate and insure the Library collection.</p>	<p>2017</p>
	<p>We will provide humidity and temperature-controlled space for its historical books, journals and maps.</p>	<p>2017-2026</p>
	<p>We will develop a preservation/conservation programme, involve NADFAS volunteers and apply for grants and Arts Council designation status to ensure the integrity of our collection for the future.</p>	<p>2017-2026</p>
<p>Enhance and promote the Library's special collections and archives</p>	<p>We will develop the Library's collections by attracting donations and bequests of significant importance to the history of Earth sciences.</p>	<p>2017-2026</p>
	<p>We will create a Plate Tectonics archive (incorporating, with commentaries, the papers of Dan McKenzie and other participants of the drift controversy and birth of plate tectonics) and make it freely available online to all.</p>	<p>2017</p>

4. Engaging with members of the public and external partners

Objective	Action	Date
Engage with a wider audience	We will fulfil our commitment to public engagement through a variety of events and services aimed at members of the public e.g. exhibitions, talks, bookshop, Open House and map & image prints.	2017-2026
Work in partnerships	We will continue working with external partners on specific projects (e.g. Geofacets, GeoRef and library consortia) and maintain our relationships with London library groups, the British Library and our international network of inter-library loan and geosciences libraries.	2017-2026

5. Supporting Library staff's professional development

Objective	Action	Date
Support current awareness and encourage best practice	We will maintain and improve our level of service by investing in staff development and regarding Library staff as our best information resource whilst making sure they have access to the most relevant and up-to-date technology.	2017-2026
Ensure effective succession planning	We will have in place written procedures, support and training to ensure effective knowledge sharing within the Library team.	2017-2026

SWOT analysis

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Library collections of international importance• Library staff's expertise and customer care skills consistently valued by Fellows• A currently small but growing collection of e-resources• Prestigious London location• Taking advantage of new technological advances for library services• Effective working partnerships with the British Library, the Natural History Museum, the Royal Geographical Society, the British Geological Survey, Elsevier, American Geosciences Institute and a worldwide network of geosciences libraries.	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finite financial and staff resources• Under-developed/under-promoted remote Library services• Space constraints in Burlington House
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Close working relationship between the Publishing House and the Library• Partnerships with Elsevier (Geofacets) and the Natural History Museum (library consortia)• Potential savings from the development of Open Access publishing• Greater exposure and use from the digitisation of maps and archive material	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ambitious plans need to be supported by adequate financial and IT resources• Increased expectations from Fellows (75% of our Fellowship lives and works outside London)• Increasing costs of journal subscriptions• Deterioration of materials through inadequate storage• Uninsured collection

GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY

SUMMARY OF LIBRARY PROGRESS SINCE 2012

In 2010, the Library Review Group was formed to specifically explore the changing needs of the Fellowship, Library space, acquisitions, affordability of the Library and relationships with external partners. It made a number of recommendations and this paper aims to summarise progress made since Neal Marriott became Director of Publishing, Library and Information Services (January 2012-March 2017) and Fabienne Michaud was appointed as the Geological Society's Librarian (October 2012). It is important to note that, with the exception of the Library audit, what follows has been achieved without an increase in headcount.

2013 – Progress and achievements*Library statistics*

By January 2013, robust usage data gathering mechanisms were in place providing a better picture of the use of the Library's collection and services and enabling the Society to make decisions (e.g. on journal subscriptions) based on factual evidence. For an overview of the data collected each month/year, please see Annex A.

Exhibitions

In February 2013, a display cabinet of museum standard was purchased and installed in the Lower Library to securely exhibit material from our historical collection allowing us to develop an exhibition programme (Annex B) and work in partnership with the Natural History Museum, the Society of Antiquaries and the British Geological Survey.

Bookshop

In April 2013, the Burlington House Bookshop opened in the Library selling the Society's publications as well as material from other organisations such as Wiley, the Geologists' Association and the British Geological Survey generating an average income of £12,000 per year. Books are now also sold by Library staff at London Lectures, key conferences and Library events (~30 events attended since February 2014)

Collection Development Policy

In June 2013, the Collection Development Policy Working Group was formed to provide an agreed framework for the future development of the Library's collection, which now informs decision-making on both acquisition and disposal.

Dan McKenzie Archive

In August 2013, the Geological Society was privileged to receive the archive of Dan McKenzie, which has now been fully catalogued and key material digitised. A Plate Tectonics Archive Working Group was established in March 2014. Detailed plans for 2017 to develop a free online resource telling the story of Dan McKenzie's and his contribution to science, a three-day conference 'Plate tectonics at 50: evolution of the paradigm and its future direction' and an exhibition are now firmly in place and will coincide with the 50th anniversary of McKenzie's publication of his Nature paper: *The North Pacific: An Example of Tectonics on a Sphere*.

Off-site storage

The Society's modern records were collated (and are actively managed to ensure a complete record), catalogued and 60 archive boxes were sent off-site to Deepstore in October 2013. We currently have 330 archive boxes stored with Deepstore and material located off-site now ranges from Committee papers to archive and map material.

Library Users Group

The Library Users Group, which reports to the Publications and Information Committee, was created in October 2013 to support the development of Library and Information Services and public engagement activities, to encourage the conservation and preservation of the archive, map and historical collections.

Operating costs

By the end of 2013, Council agreed the Library had met the three-year net operating cost reduction requirements of £99K for the 2014 budget and that enough had been done to provide a sound financial basis for the future of the Library.

2014 – Progress and achievements

Library newsletter

The first Library newsletter was launched in January 2014 and aims to increase the visibility of the Library's collection and free and at-a-cost services. Emailed every two months to all Fellows and Library users, it has on average a 32% open rate.

E-journals

The move to e-only journals began in early 2014 allowing us to spend less on journals whilst maximising the space previously dedicated to print journal subscriptions. 103 journals are now available online to Fellows including, most recently the popular title, *Tectonics*.

Library strategy

In April 2014, Council approved the Library's 5-year plan which focuses on improving the Library experience; developing user services; preserving, developing and promoting special collections & archives; engaging with members of the public and external partners; supporting Library staff's professional development. The Library strategy was updated in March 2017 to comply with the Society's new ten-year strategy.

Picture Library

In May 2014, the Picture Library was launched using the Flickr platform making around 750 of images from the rare book, archive and map collection (including the newly rediscovered William Smith map) available online to members of the public increasing our visibility and our income through document delivery and permissions.

Public engagement events

Our first public engagement event took place in July 2014 with 'Geology at the Western front' and welcomed Fellows, Friends of the Society and members of the public. All our events are developed around an item or a group of items in our collection and have sold out within days. The Library has organised so far ten public engagement events (see Annex C) and has a leading role each year during Open House when the Society opens its doors to the public (1312 visitors in 2016) in partnership with other Courtyard societies.

Corporate Patrons

In October 2014, the Library organised its first Corporate Patron Open Day (now running yearly) for employees of Corporate Patrons providing a range of activities to familiarise them with the Library's staff, services and resources. A pilot information literacy workshop for employees of one Corporate Patron was organised in the same year and was also very well received.

2015 – Progress and achievements

Library space

A Library Space Review Working Group was set up in January 2015 at Council's request to use the Library space more effectively and improve signage throughout the building. Recommendations from the Working Group and a focus group of young Fellows led to the improvement of the Fellows' Room's layout, the purchase of journal racks for the Main Library, the development of the Lower Library into a more welcoming and engaging space and the systematic inventory of the Library collection. Further work on this area is ongoing.

E-books

In March 2015, the Library's first e-book collection was launched. 45+ titles are now available remotely to Fellows.

African maps

In June 2015, 3,372 maps from our map collection, covering 44 countries, were digitised in partnership with Elsevier. Discussions regarding the launch of an African map module within the map searching database Geofacets and financial model are in progress.

William Smith

In March 2014, as part of a systematic inventory of the archive collection, a pristine and early copy of William Smith's 1815 map of England and Wales, which we had thought lost or stolen, was rediscovered. Thanks to the support and generosity of four of our Fellows, the map was conserved and digitised in time for the William Smith bicentenary events held throughout 2015 and generated a lot media attention, most notably from the BBC.

2016 – Progress and achievements

Library audit

From October 2015-February 2016, two temporary Library Assistants audited the Lower Library, the Lyell Room, the Basement Journal Store and the Work Room to give Library staff a better understanding of material held in Burlington House and inform their decision-making. As a result, 43 linear metres of shelving was freed up, 1,000 journals issues were preserved, a small income from the duplicate and out of scope material sale was generated and the appearance of our shelves, particularly in the Lower Library, was improved.

Online Library catalogue

In January 2016, the new online Library catalogue was launched replacing an out of date and no longer supported system improving the findability of our titles and consequently usage. In addition, Fellows and Corporate Patron companies can now renew and reserve items online, save their searches and create bibliographies. Plans to join union catalogues and increase further the visibility of our holdings are underway.

2017 – Progress and achievements

Plate Tectonics Archive project

The plate tectonics archive project with its three components, a new standalone website, a 3-day conference and an exhibition, has successfully been completed and attracted significant media attention. The William Smith meeting: Plate Tectonics at 50 (3-5 October) was attended by over 200 people in Burlington House and watched online by 612 individuals/organisations from 36 different countries around the globe. The new Plate Tectonics: The Dan McKenzie archive website was launched on the first day of the conference and has received over 37,000 hits (16/02/18). A Burlington House exhibition which included audio extracts from Dan McKenzie's

interview focused on Dan McKenzie's early work in plate tectonics and was available to Fellows and visitors from October-December.

Online archive catalogue

The Archive catalogue was launched in October as part of the Plate Tectonics Archive project and, like the Library catalogue, is hosted remotely. The Archive collections, which cover the history of the Society and its Fellows from our foundation in 1807 through to the present day, can now be searched by Fellows and non-Fellows on and off-site for the first time.

Picture Library

The Library has worked with Max Communications to develop a new Picture Library using WordPress, which includes a print-on-demand service.

Library audit

Two Library Assistants were appointed for a year to complete the Library audit and collect further data to help withdrawals, preservation & stock moves and inform the Burlington House Space Review. Between October 2015 and January 2018, the Work Room, Lower Library, Lower Library Gallery, Basement Journal Store, Lyell Room, 1st Gallery, 2nd Gallery, Periodical stacks and Basement Book Store were inventoried. During this time; ~8,144 items were preserved; 14 broken shelves were repaired on the first Gallery; ~120 linear meters have been made available overall; material equivalent to ~104 standard archive boxes was withdrawn.

2018 – Progress and achievements

SUNCAT

In March, the Library joined SUNCAT, its first union catalogue.

Library audit

1,500 items withdrawn during the Library audit were sold via our online duplicate book sale, to an antique book dealer or disposed of this year, generating an income of ~£4,000.

Fabienne Michaud

31 January 2019