



## Editorial 2018

An anomaly of the end-of-year handover of the role of Chief Scientific Editor of QJEGH is that the task of writing the year's editorial falls on the incoming Editor. In the light of this, I am very grateful to the outgoing CSE, Eddie Bromhead (Fig. 1), for his generous offer to write most of the 2018 editorial. In addition, Nick Koor, the outgoing Assistant Scientific Editor, organized last year's highly successful celebration of 50 years of QJEGH at Portsmouth University and I have also asked him to contribute.

Before we considering the future, we must of course consider the immediate past, and the excellent EG50 conference held at Portsmouth University, commemorating the university's own 50 years of running Engineering Geology courses, as well as the first 50 volumes of QJEGH and a day devoted to Rock Mechanics. The technical content was fascinating and of a very high standard, both oral presentations and posters. The conference participants included a wide range of experience, academics and practitioners, and technical disciplines. It was my pleasure to chair the 50 years of QJEGH day, listening to the invited reviews, covering all the journal's topics. Many of the review papers have already been published and the remainder will appear in Volume 51. The social events were very enjoyable, especially dinner on the gun deck of the ironclad warship HMS Warrior 1860, and the whole event was rounded off by an interesting fieldtrip.

In 2017, QJEGH published two Glossop Lectures: the somewhat delayed 15th, by Mike Sweeney (Sweeney 2017), and the 17th, by Dave Norbury (Norbury 2017), and the coming year will no doubt see publication of the lecture by Jackie Skipper from the prominent and respected Geotechnical Consulting Group on the subject of:

“Variability and ground hazards: how does the ground get to be ‘unexpected’?”

The answer to that lies partly in the nature of the ground itself, and in the deficiencies in the geotechnical practitioners' training, experience and imagination, combined in some cases with the fact that they were never used at all! The lecture was delivered with verve, and, as expected, included a treatment of some of the fascinating,



**Fig. 1.** Eddie Bromhead the outgoing chief scientific editor (CSE) with Jane Dottridge the incoming CSE for *QJEGH*.

and sometimes hazardous, features found in underground work in London. A paper by Berry, in this journal as far back as 1979 drew attention to the anomalous drift-filled deep depressions in London; Hutchinson (4th Glossop lecturer) responded to this with a letter to Nature (Hutchinson 1980) expressing the view that they could well be fossil pingo roots. Recent work in London on this topic includes the papers by Newman *et al.* (2013), Banks *et al.* (2015) and Toms *et al.* (2016). As the deoxygenated air in these depressions poses severe health hazards to workers engaged in underground construction, this is an important safety issue covered by the prestigious lecture. Equally fascinating was the discussion of sea level change at the time of deposition of the Lambeth Group, and how that had affected the properties experienced today. Naturally, we expect the written version of the paper to reinforce the messages delivered so forcefully in the presentation.

Of course, the journal is more than simply the written versions of the Glossop Lectures, it has a very varied content reflecting the range of topics within its titular fields. Hydrogeology papers have been present since the first issue, predating the incorporation of its name in the journal title, or even as a strapline ‘incorporating Hydrogeology’ (Winter & Bromhead 2016). The launch in 2017 of the Geological Society's newest specialist group on Contaminated Land provides another theme for the journal as QJEGH is the obvious home for contaminated land papers. Although the role of Chief Scientific Editor is to remain impartial, as a hydrogeologist and one of the founders of the Contaminated Land group, I hope that the journal will be able to publish more hydrogeology and contaminated land papers, including the hydrogeology group's annual prestigious Ineson lectures.

In recent years, the impact factor of QJEGH has risen slightly, despite the Editorial Board rejecting the unethical methods adopted elsewhere to ‘game’ the system, but the two-year sampling period inevitably affects the result, especially with an established journal where the online version of landmark papers from the 1970s are frequently downloaded from the Lyell Collection. Like all incoming editors, I also aim optimistically to reduce the time from submission to publication. Although this will be facilitated by the recent upgrade in editorial management software, both speed and quality rely entirely on the assistant scientific editors, editorial board members and the large number of reviewers, all volunteers.

I must also congratulate this year's winner of the William Dearman Award, Alister Smith for his contribution to the paper titled ‘Current and future role of instrumentation and monitoring in the performance of transport infrastructure slopes’, authored by J. A. Smethurst, A. Smith, S. Uhlemann, C. Wooff, J. Chambers, P. Hughes, S. Lenart, H. Saroglou, S. M. Springman, H. Löfroth and D. Hughes (Smethurst *et al.* 2017). As two of the authors were eligible for the young author award for this paper, the award has been given to the youngest and more senior author. The QJEGH board recognize the importance of attracting younger authors to the journal and we therefore seek every opportunity to encourage them.

2018 is the Year of Resources more information can be found here <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/resources18> and a custom collection of themed papers will be forthcoming of which several will be from QJEGH.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the reviewers, editorial board, production editor and most importantly the

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outgoing chief scientific editor Eddie Bromhead. Eddie has put a great deal of time, professionalism and enthusiasm into the role over the past 5 years (as editor, but member of the board for over 10 years), while maintaining an unfailing sense of humour. He's certainly a hard act to follow and we wish him well for the future.

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Jane Dottridge\* & Eddie Bromhead

\*Correspondence: [Jane.Dottridge@mottmac.com](mailto:Jane.Dottridge@mottmac.com)