Editorial 2022

It is a pleasure to continue working with the QJEGH as the new Chief Editor (Fig. 1), taking over from Jane Dottridge (Fig. 2), and I would like to thank Jane for her assistance in ensuring a smooth transition – not least in sharing the writing of this first editorial. Over the last four years Jane has ensured that the journal continues to act as a showcase for issues, best practice and innovation across our professions while opening it up to a greater global market of both authors and readers. Having served on the Editorial Board since 2015 and as an Assistant Editor from 2018 to present, I also benefited from working alongside Eddie Bromhead, the previous Chief Editor. In line with the journal’s development plan, I have seen the Editorial Board diversify, grow in size and international reach, and the impact factor (IF) improve. I look forward to working with the Assistant Editors, Editorial Board Members and Geological Society Publishing House to continue to grow the reputation of the journal as a key outlet for industry – academia knowledge exchange, addressing global challenges through world leading research and practice in engineering geology and hydrogeology. We welcome Colin Serridge to the role of Assistant Editor (engineering geology). Colin is a Chartered Geologist with over 30 years’ experience in design, project management, training, mentoring and technical managerial roles, within the specialist ground improvement and geotechnical contracting industry, both within the UK and overseas, and has served on the Editorial Board since 2015.

Despite the impact of the global pandemic over the last year, the journal Editorial Board has continued to meet online and 2021 has seen the Editorial Board diversify, grow in size and international reach, and the impact factor (IF) improve. I look forward to working with the Assistant Editors, Editorial Board Members and Geological Society Publishing House to continue to grow the reputation of the journal as a key outlet for industry – academia knowledge exchange, addressing global challenges through world leading research and practice in engineering geology and hydrogeology. We welcome Colin Serridge to the role of Assistant Editor (engineering geology). Colin is a Chartered Geologist with over 30 years’ experience in design, project management, training, mentoring and technical managerial roles, within the specialist ground improvement and geotechnical contracting industry, both within the UK and overseas, and has served on the Editorial Board since 2015.

Despite the impact of the global pandemic over the last year, the journal Editorial Board has continued to meet online and 2021 has seen the publication of a series of high-quality thematic collections as well as research papers, case studies, review articles, technical notes, photographic features, discussion papers, editorial opinion and book reviews. This first issue of 2022 highlights the use of new digital technologies, data analyses and numerical modelling approaches alongside more traditional engineering geology and hydrogeology research, technical and case studies. The photographic feature throws new light on the origin and characteristics of the spectacular toppling failure, Southwell Topple, on the southeastern coastline of the Isle of Portland, on the south coast of England (Dykes and Bromhead 2021). I am particularly pleased, having worked alongside him in my first academic post almost thirty years ago, to see Rory Mortimore’s article ‘Chalk: all we need is a fracture log!’ appear in this issue. This review of Chalk fracture logging, in the context of the broader geology needed to build conceptual ground models, provides guidance on the use of fracture log reports to highlight and illustrate special features and issues requiring discussion (Mortimore 2021).

In November 2021 the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow highlighted the important role of geologists and hydrogeologists in helping to deliver the goals of the Paris Agreement – not only in decarbonization but also in adaption to and mitigation of the impacts of climate change. QJEGH supports these important agendas: through the publication of thematic collections of papers focusing, for example, on energy transition and informing adaptation such as the recently completed Thermal Hydrogeology and Impact of Climate Change on Engineered Slopes for Infrastructure; and more broadly through the publication of a range of types of papers that highlight important current research and practice. The current call for the Sustainability in Engineering Geology and Hydrogeology thematic collection supports the Geological Society’s Year of Sustainability, 2022. The QJEGH addresses the Geological Society’s new scientific theme, Geohazards, Geoengineering and Georesilience, as reflected in the journal’s 50th anniversary review papers e.g. Bromhead and Winter (2019) and Glossop Lecture collection e.g. Privett (2019). Current and future thematic collections focus on a variety of key aspects including the Role of Water in Destabilizing Slopes, Hydrogeology of Sandstone, Climate Change and Resilience in Engineering Geology and Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology and Hydrogeology in the Anthropocene.

Whilst engineering geology and hydrogeology research and practice focuses predominantly on terrestrial and subterranean environments, there is a growing interest in the submarine environment. Increasing use of the seabed for transport and communications infrastructure as well as offshore renewable energy, together with technological advancements in marine survey, has focused work on submarine terrain analysis for engineering projects (Griffiths 2002, 2017, 2019) and...
EMODnet Geology data for seafloor geology, coastal behaviour and mineral occurrences. The thematic collection focuses on the use of submerged landscapes of the European continental shelf, geological products include seabed substrates, sedimentation rates, seafloor infrastructure (EGDI) portal (https://www.emodnet-geology.eu/). Products include seabed substrates, sedimentation rates, seafloor geology, Quaternary geology, geomorphology, coastal behaviour, submerged landscapes of the European continental shelf, geological events such as submarine landslides and earthquakes and marine mineral occurrences. The thematic collection focuses on the use of EMODnet Geology data for seafloor geology, coastal behaviour and geological events and probabilities (Moses and Vallius 2021). It is complemented by the Geological Society’s Special Publication 505, ‘From Continental Shelf to Slope: Mapping the Oceanic Realm’, which presents the latest development of processes to map, harmonize and integrate marine data across exclusive economic zone boundaries (Asch et al. 2021).

Many of the papers in these two publications highlight the importance of Cenozoic, and particularly Quaternary, sediments and geomorphology. Knowledge of both Quaternary and Anthropocene deposits is critical to many civil engineering projects as noted recently by the Chair of the Engineering Group of the Geological Society (Lawrence 2021). Addressing this need, the Quaternary Research Association has recently established the Quaternary Engineering Research Group whose aim is to strengthen Quaternary research much of which has direct engineering applications. The QJEGH welcomes submissions and proposals for thematic collections on current research and practice across geology, hydrogeology, Quaternary science and geomorphology as applied in an engineering context. Please consider submitting your work to our two current calls Climate Change and Resilience in Engineering Geology and Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology and Hydrogeology in the Anthropocene or suggesting a new theme.

The thematic collections provide high-quality papers on topical issues, which result in a wider readership and increased discussion. Together with a series of invited review papers, this helps to increase the IF. In 2020/21, the IF was 1.364, slightly lower than the high of 1.897 in 2019/20, and with a 5-year IF of 1.349. Although an increase in IF is one of the aims of the journal development plan, it is only a partial measure of influence of applied journals because the papers are widely used by the professional community and cited in ‘grey literature’, such as consultants’ reports. The journal is a platform for knowledge exchange, ensuring that research and good practice impacts on the work of the professional community and policy makers.

The move to continuous publication and online only has gone smoothly thanks to the capable staff of the Geological Society Publishing House, especially the Journal Manager, Helen Floyd-Walker. In 2021, 190 papers were submitted, but the rejection rate remains high at 66%. One of the aims of the journal is to reduce the time taken from submission to online publication, which is gradually improving but remains similar to 2020.

Another aim of the journal development plan is to increase diversity, for published papers, authors, reviewers and editors. The geographical diversity of authors and reviewers is similar to 2020, with papers by authors from 24 countries published in 2021 and reviewers from 27 countries. The diversity of the Editorial Board is also improving steadily, with members from 13 countries, although the majority are still from the UK, and an increase in female editors from 13% in 2019 to 24% in 2021.

For 2021, as in 2020, we have two awards but three winners. The Reviewers of the Year are Dr Gebo and Yamini and Dr Qingyu Zhang for their speedy, high quality reviews. The winner of the QJEGH William Dearman Early Career Author award for 2021 is Madeleine Groves (Groves et al. 2021) for her paper entitled ‘Development of the ground model in an area of significant faulting and periglacial legacy: case study from Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent’. The competition was stiff this year, with early career geologists as first authors on several excellent papers. So special mention also goes to Richard Gill (Gill et al. 2021), Davide Cerra (Cerra et al. 2021) and Gholamreza Fazeli (Fazeli et al. 2021). Congratulations to all the winners, who have been invited to join the Editorial Board.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the ongoing success of QJEGH: authors, reviewers, Editorial Board Members and particularly the four Assistant Editors, whose role is crucial to maintaining the output of high quality published papers.

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