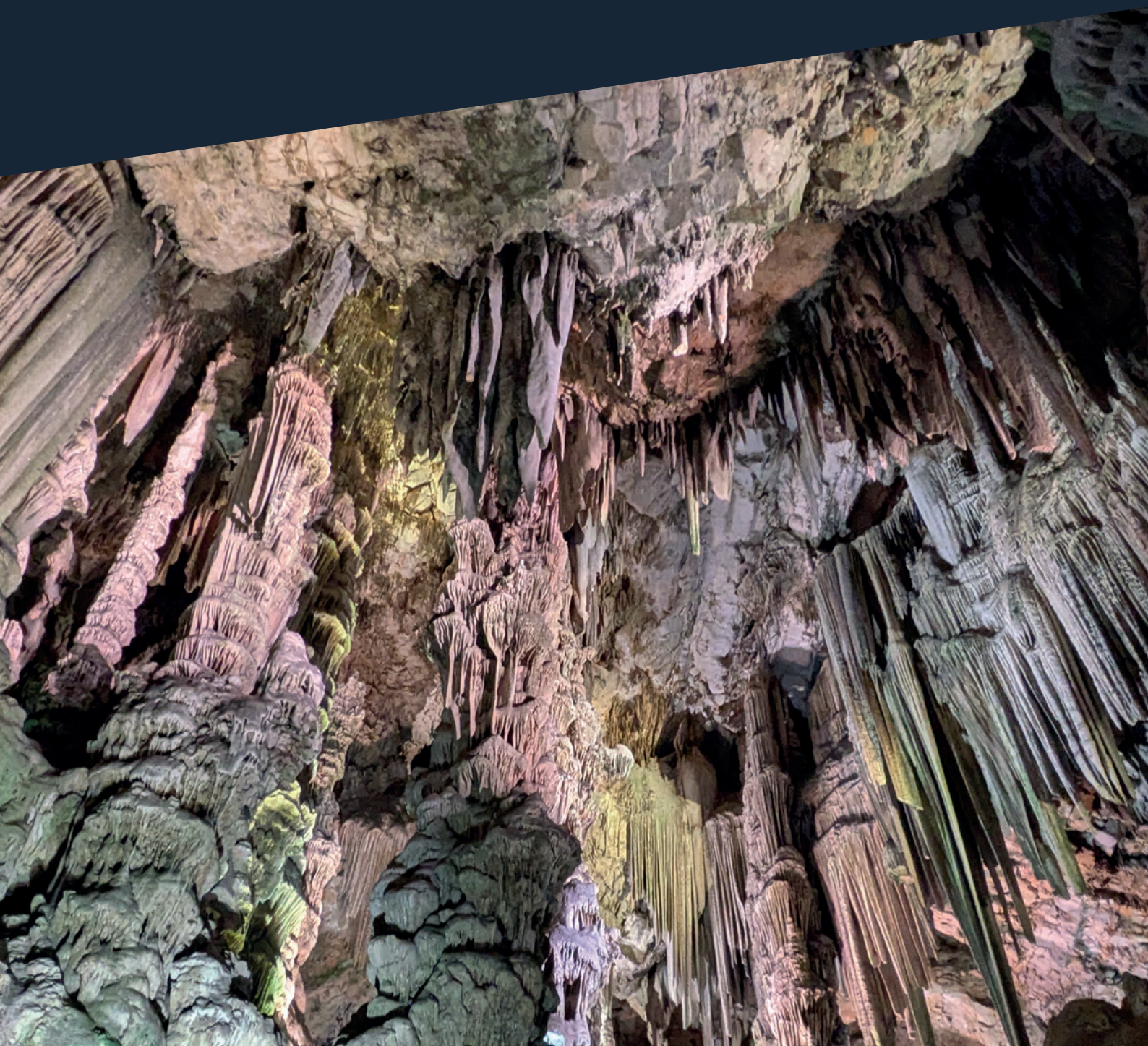




The  
Geological  
Society

# Annual Review

## 2024





# Chief Executive's report



Our President, Jon Gluyas, will discuss our vision for geoscience and the steps taken in 2024 to bring it about. Our Treasurer, Keith Myers, will set out our financial performance and explain how we are stewarding the Society's resources and deploying them to achieve our goals. I will report on major initiatives that reached fruition in 2024, and helped to secure our future and provide the infrastructure needed for a dynamic, growing, and outward-looking organisation.

Digital transformation, one of the four pillars of our 2020 Strategic Review, became reality with the launch of the new

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and Portal in 2024 and the production of our beautiful and functional new website. This builds on the successful migration of our Lyell Collection publications to the Atypon platform, the roll-out of online training and the adoption of a hybrid model for conferences and meetings.

Our governance infrastructure was also long due for modernisation, and we are proud that so many Fellows played an active part in drafting the new Royal Charter and Byelaws that will help us function more efficiently. We received our Royal Charter in 1825, and this treasured but archaic document remains our governing instrument to this day. It will continue to hang on the walls of the Society, but the new Supplemental Charter will be our framework for governance. It has now been approved by the Privy Council, who oversee Royal Charters, and the next step will be a ballot of Fellows prior to royal assent. This will be done in 2025. Thank you to the Byelaws and Charter Working Group that has worked so diligently and skilfully.

Our physical location had been the subject of uncertainty since the late 1980s and in recent years it became clear we would soon be unable to afford the steeply escalating rent for our London HQ at Burlington House, the home for dozens of scientific events every year as well as our libraries, collections, educational and outreach activities. Excellent work was done by the Relocation Working Group to make alternative plans should they be needed. At the same time, we worked with neighbouring learned societies to encourage our landlord, the government, to agree a solution for our current premises. After nearly two years of negotiation, we effectively acquired the premises outright in October 2024, purchasing a 999-year lease for an affordable lump sum which can be spread over ten years.

The Treasurer's report confirms that our finances remain in good shape, having made substantial investments in digital infrastructure and premises to support the Society's future. Our non-financial measures also represent progress. Membership and Chartership both grew for a second year. Registered usage for our major collection of scientific publications, the Lyell Collection, grew by 28% to over a million articles, library downloads grew by 8% and in-person library visits grew by 300%. Views of Geoscientist magazine grew by 52%. Our President's report provides more detail on the initiatives now underway to inform and inspire the next generation of geoscientists.

These achievements have been the work of many people working together and as individuals, with batons passed from person to person over many years. That is the magic of a membership society. It was thrilling to be recognised by Memcom, the membership organisation for membership organisations, as 'Best Professional or Learned Society 2024' and this recognition should be shared by those who originated and developed important work along with those who brought it to successful completion ready for our next phase of growth.

**Simon Thompson,**  
Chief Executive

“ These achievements have been the work of many people working together and as individuals, with batons passed from person to person over many years.



# President's report

Ever since early humans knocked flints together to make tools and used pyrite to create fire, geoscience has been fundamental to human progress, security, safety and wellbeing. It's not hyperbole to say that future geoscientists will play a major part in the success of our species and perhaps even our survival but only if that future is one in which geoscience and geoscientists are valued.

The Geological Society has been doing important work behind the scenes; work which we will reveal to the public in the coming year. The Society supports all levels of education to help engage young people with geoscience. In 2024 our educational resources were accessed online 95,000 times, we distributed 30,000 resources digitally and 700 resources physically and met 4,000 people under the age of 18. The Schools Geology Challenge returned (congratulations to Tiffin Girls' School for your win) and our Careers Day in Manchester attracted more than 300 students.

We supported 65 Earth Science Week events around the UK including two family-friendly events at our London HQ. We screened popular 'geo'-films and used them, alongside displays, materials and our expert volunteers and staff, to bring geoscience ideas to life. February saw us open our doors to school children, families, members of the public, and Society Fellows, for Megalosaurus Month. It featured life-sized replica dinosaur bones and attracted over 3,200 visitors.

The Society submitted a detailed response to the *Department for Education's Call for Evidence on National Curriculum and Assessment Review (England and Wales)*. In it we made the case for retaining and expanding access to GCSE and A-Level Geology, strengthening the visibility of geoscience in the curriculum, improving teacher training and support, reintroducing geoscience topics into subjects including physics, chemistry, biology, and science, experiential learning including fieldwork, real-world problem-solving, and hands-on science. The response addressed barriers to participation, and promoted vocational pathways such as the Geoscience Degree Apprenticeship (GDA) and BTEC-style qualifications to diversify entry routes into the profession.

Our University Accreditation Scheme provides a benchmark of quality to university qualifications. In 2024 we also supplemented the small grants we offer to researchers with comparatively larger grants through the new Fermor Seed-Corn Fund, which provides initial funding to such individuals who are unable to apply for other, more traditional research funding awards.

2024 also laid the foundations for a major public engagement campaign due to launch in the coming year. *'This is Geoscience'* will inform and engage young people to inspire the next generation of geoscientists. It will involve young people themselves, their teachers, careers services, parents and carers with a particular focus on digital channels and reaching people at the moments most relevant to career decisions. We will be partnering with other organisations in the UK and beyond to amplify these messages as widely and with as much impact as possible. It will be followed by a further campaign, *'Geoscience for All'* aimed at widening participation and reducing barriers to entry.

We conduct these activities alongside the essential core mission of the Society to support professional excellence. During 2024 we hosted 134 conferences and special events, ran 45 training course modules, welcomed 138 new Chartered Geologists, published 621 articles, and made available a vast library of scientific content, published by ourselves and others. We also engaged with the UK parliament and government, industry and academia to communicate the importance of Earth science and support informed and evidence-based decision making and policy.

I would like to thank our hundreds of hard-working volunteers, staff, and Fellows who make phenomenal efforts to positively impact society through geoscience and upon whose work so much depends.



**Jon Gluyas,**  
President



“The Society provides support for all levels of education to help engage young people with geoscience.”



# Treasurer's report

## From the Treasurer

2024 was a landmark year for the Society, with the successful negotiation and purchase of a 999-year lease for Burlington House from our UK Government landlord, ensuring a permanent home for the Society. The transaction ended many years of uncertainty and involved many officers and staff of the Society past and present whose efforts are greatly appreciated.

The total cost of the lease was agreed at £5.5m, payable over a 10-year period with any outstanding balance subject to an interest rate of 5.8% payable to the UK Government. Thanks to the prudent financial management of the Society over the years, sufficient unrestricted reserves had been set aside to allow the first instalment of 25%

(£1.4m) to be made upon completion of the transaction and a second instalment of the same amount was paid in early 2025. As of the publication of these accounts, the Society has successfully met 50% of its total obligation. Going forward, senior management and the Finance Committee will monitor closely the pace of repayment of the remaining £2.75m loan balance taking into account the interest payable, investment performance, the Society's financial performance and need for financial flexibility.

This acquisition is reflected in the financial statements, with the value of the lease recorded under fixed assets and a corresponding liability of the loan balance in long-term creditors.

“ The successful purchase of the Burlington House lease represents a landmark achievement, securing the Society's future while maintaining a strong financial foundation.





“ The Society maintains a prudent approach to reserves, ensuring financial flexibility while fulfilling its strategic priorities.

## Income and Expenditure

Income for the year was £5.54m. Whilst this didn't match the record-breaking income of £5.97m in 2023, which benefitted from around £400k of one-off, extraordinary items, legacies and donations, it compares well with the years prior to that of £4.87m in 2021 and £5.12m in 2022.

Membership and Publishing account for 80% of the Society's income. Membership increased in 2024 to 12,017 (2023: 11,874), with more younger members joining, encouragingly. Membership income was flat at £2.3m (2023: £2.3m) due to the higher proportion of younger, lower fee-paying members.

The Publishing House income was down on the previous year at £2.43m (2023: £2.72m) with income impacted by the loss of a small number of large Lyell Collection subscriptions, and fewer one-off archive sales and fully open access books than in 2023. Publishing House expenditure was £2.7m (2023: £2.72m) including its allocation of central overheads.

Income from CPD training was £0.12m (2023: £0.16m) due to staff turnover, but the Society continues to plan for this to be a future source of income growth. Investment income increased to £0.27m (2023: £0.19m) on higher dividend yields and interest rates.

Expenditure for the year was £5.87m (2023: £5.75m) which was lower than budgeted and an increase of just 2% on 2023. When including the unrealised gain in investments in the year of £0.5m, the Society ended 2024 with a net surplus of £0.17m (2023: £0.63m).

## Use of Restricted and Endowment Funds

A review of the Society's restricted and endowment funds was commissioned by Council and undertaken in 2024. After taking legal advice the Society took steps to use these under used funds more effectively. This approach, reviewed and approved by both Council and our auditors, allowed for an increase in expenditure from restricted and endowment funds to £0.67m (2023: £0.09m), thereby preserving unrestricted resources. Further details can be found in notes 28 and 29 of the statutory accounts.

## Investment and Reserves

The Society's investment portfolio was closely monitored throughout the year, with Quilter Cheviot continuing in their role as investment managers. Market conditions resulted in strong gains, maintaining the portfolio's overall value despite withdrawals to fund the Burlington House lease payments. Investment income exceeded expectations, supporting operational activities.

The Society maintains a prudent approach to reserves, ensuring financial flexibility while fulfilling its strategic priorities. At the end of 2024, free reserves were £4.5m (2023: £4.6m). This is comfortably above the minimum free reserves target of £2.1m, after accounting for the initial payments towards Burlington House. These solid financial foundations provide the confidence for the Society to fulfil its charitable objectives in the long term.

The second payment towards the Burlington House long lease, mentioned previously, of £1.4m made in early 2025 will reduce the Society's free reserves offset by the resulting reduction in loan interest. Following the second Burlington House payment made in 2025, the Society's free reserves are currently £1.4m above the minimum free reserves target.

## Prior Year Adjustment

As part of the 2024 audit, it was identified that certain historic Library-related costs had been capitalised and depreciated in prior years. Our new auditors have taken a different view to our previous auditors and advised that the appropriate accounting treatment would have been to expense these costs as incurred. The accumulated capitalised costs will be written off as a prior year adjustment in the income statement. This adjustment reflects a change in accounting policy only and has no impact on the Society's cash position or free reserves.

## Future Outlook

Looking ahead, the Society remains focused on financial sustainability and strategic investment. The roll-out of the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system in September 2024 will improve efficiency and facilitate better engagement with members. This, combined with the release of the new website in March 2025 is a major step in fulfilling the strategic objective first set out in 2020 to become a *dynamic and responsive organisation with a strong digital identity*.

Council has approved a 2025 breakeven budget targeting a 2% increase on the 2024 operating income to around £5.6m and an increase in budgeted operating expenditure to around £5.6m. This includes income growth in conferences and training, book sales, the Lyell Collection and membership. Costs are commensurate with output, together with increased employers National Insurance contributions due to the rate rise coming into effect.

In summary, 2024 was a transformational year with the landmark purchase of the Burlington House securing the Society's future while maintaining a strong financial foundation. The Society is well prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Keith Myers

Keith Myers,  
Treasurer





# A year of successes & celebrations

## With a permanent home and winning 'Society of the Year', 2024 was one of great achievements for the Society

2024 saw the Geological Society finally secure its Burlington House home with a 999-year leasehold purchase from the UK Government. This security of tenure in our London home allows us to look to the future, focus on developing the premises to better suit our purposes and community, and widening the range of events and activities that we can offer to better support our members and guests, both at home and around the UK and abroad. We also won the highly competitive 'Society of the Year' award at the prestigious Memcom Awards, naming us the Best Professional Body or Learned Society for 2024, recognising the efforts of all our trustees, volunteers, and staff across all areas of our work.

## Strategic Science Themes

Our GeoFutures conference series, focusing on geological solutions to 21st century global challenges, moved to Planetary Science this year with our inaugural Planetary Geoscience meeting hosted in partnership with the Royal Astronomical Society and supported by the Geological Society of America. With contributions from geoscientists across five continents as well as both the European Space Agency (ESA) and NASA, the meeting discussed the exploration of other worlds in our Solar System via missions such as EnVision and BepiColombo, via samples from previous missions (Apollo), or meteorites from planets, the Moon, and asteroids. The meeting also brought together the analytical community responsible for these samples, discussing how best to support the next generation of planetary geoscience research, with funders such as UKRI's STFC and UKSA in the room.

Back down to Earth, the Society also launched its Climate: Off the Rails series under our Climate & Ecology theme, a rail-show of regional presentations from scientists across the UK over the course of six months, to culminate in a two-day event in Burlington House in 2025. Off the Rails saw presentations in Plymouth and Liverpool in 2024 (with Aberystwyth postponed owing to winter storms), and will reach Glasgow, Durham, and Birmingham in 2025. In other themes, we saw our annual Geothermal Symposium reach its 11th year, and the new Radioactive Waste meeting held at the University of Manchester was a sell-out success. Digital Geoscience returned for 2024 focusing on Intelligent Solutions in Geoscience, and we also launched our new research workshops, bringing together researchers around a gap in the literature to develop new studies and publish their results in our books and journals.





## Supporting Professional Development

Building upon our success last year, 2024 saw another increase in our membership numbers to 12,017. We welcomed 138 new Chartered Geologists, bringing the total number of Chartered Fellows to 2,836, a continued sign of professional excellence within the geoscience community. This marks the third consecutive year of growth in Student members, as well as Postgraduate and Early Career Fellows, a positive trend that reflects the Society's commitment to supporting the next generation of geoscientists and strengthening the future of the profession.

Training courses continued to run successfully in 2024, with a total of 12 courses delivered comprising 45 separate modules. Courses such as CRIRSCO, Groundwater, and Sinkholes, Potholes and Washouts have remained popular throughout the programme. The 2025 courses programme was launched in summer 2024, introducing early-bird rates that have already led to an encouraging uptake from delegates keen to take advantage of the discount. This offer, which also applies to group bookings, continues to attract strong interest from both industry companies and government agencies, a trend we hope will carry through into 2025.

Our annual Careers Day, aimed at students 16+, left Burlington House for the first time since before the pandemic in 2024, this time co-hosted by the University of Manchester. We saw more than 300 students on the day attending talks from those in industry and across academia, sessions on careers advice, and interacting with our seven sponsors. The hybrid event returns to Burlington House for 2025, before a further regional event in 2026 to follow.







## Education & Outreach

The Society marked the 200th anniversary of the first scientific description of a dinosaur by William Buckland, the *Megalosaurus*, in February 2024 with a whole month of activity across the Society focusing on dinosaur-related events and bringing a life-sized replica of a *Megalosaurus* skeleton into our Upper Library. More than 3,200 people visited Burlington House to see our dinosaur and engage with the various activities, which included Schools Workshops, Family Fun Days, Life (Dead) Drawing Classes, a Dino-Lino printmaking workshop, and our most popular public lecture ever; 552 tickets booked to see Professor Mike Benton discuss the changing views of dinosaurs across the last 200 years.

Outreach activities took centre stage again later in 2024 during the international Earth Science Week, with the Society supporting more than 65 events around the UK, and hosting two family-friendly events in Burlington House to celebrate; a Lord of the Rings themed 'Geology of Middle Earth' event complete with a screening of the Fellowship of the Ring, and an Ice-Age themed family fun day bringing together scientific activities on climate change and ice cores, ice age animals with real fossils courtesy of the Natural History Museum, London, and the icy worlds that still exist today orbiting around Jupiter and Saturn thanks to AstrobiologyOU. We also brought the famous Rock Map of Scotland into Burlington House on loan from Harry Young, the Scottish grandfather who spent 30 years collecting rocks from his travels around Scotland, which proudly hung in the Society's Upper Library from Summer 2024 through to the close of Earth Science Week and was viewed by hundreds of people.



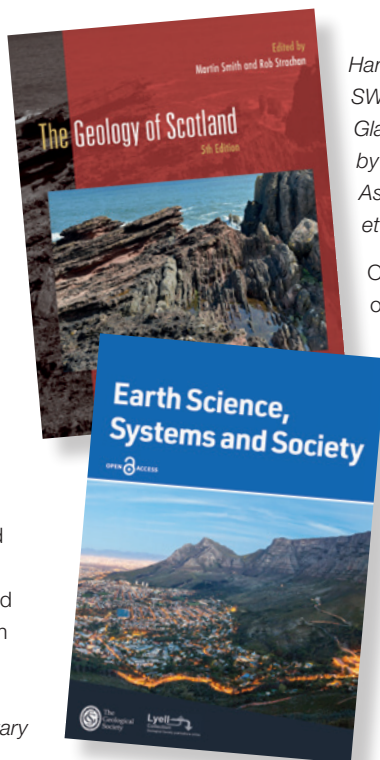
Schools Geology Challenge returned once again in 2024, with Tiffin Girls' School proclaimed winners and awarded the coveted SGC trophy along with £500 for their school and a year's membership for each member of their team. The Sixth Form College, Farnborough, and Runshaw College were both runners-up. We also launched our 'Geoscience Education and Outreach Network', or GEON, in 2024, a free, online community via Discord for anyone aged 13+ to share ideas, opportunities, or to just ask questions about the geosciences to a friendly community of scientists, researchers, teachers, and other interested parties.





## Library & Publishing

The Society published 621 articles in 2024 from researchers in 646 institutions and across 75 countries, continuing to demonstrate our global reputation as a high-quality, community-led publisher. *Earth Science, Systems and Society (ES3)* became the eighth journal to be published on the Lyell Collection by our in-house team and now benefits from inclusion in our open access Read and Publish Agreements with almost 100 institutions around the world. We also published 14 new books, including the much-anticipated 5th edition of the *Geology of Scotland*. Our 2024 content has already been cited more than 900 times, and more than a third of all journal content was published open access and available to all, globally. Four articles attracted significant media attention in 2024, including from BBC News, the Guardian, Forbes, and Scientific American. These included *Earth's earliest forest: fossilized trees and vegetation-induced sedimentary structures from the Middle Devonian (Eifelian)*



*Hangman Sandstone Formation, Somerset and Devon, SW England* by Davies, McMahon, and Berry (2024), and *Glacially influenced provenance and Sturtian affinity revealed by detrital zircon U-Pb ages from sandstones in the Port Askaig Formation, Dalradian Supergroup* by Rugen et al. (2024).

Our 'Written in History' campaign, to fund the conservation of 12 volumes of letters sent into the Assistant Secretary's office of the Geological Society between 1834 and 1880, reached its fundraising target in the summer of 2024 meaning that all volumes of our letter books could be successfully conserved. Not only does this conservation process clean and stabilise the collections for future generations, but it also makes them accessible again to researchers who wish to interrogate the various stories hidden within these previously unseen pages. Our Library team encourage everyone to interact with our building and our collections, including across the now annual Open House Festival, with a special Saturday opening each September allowing almost 1,000 people in to see our home, and learn a little more about the geosciences.

“ The Society published **621** articles in 2024 from researchers in **646** institutions and across **75** countries.





# Megalosaurus Month!

**700+**  
tickets for  
evening events

**62**  
artists visited  
to sketch our  
dinosaur

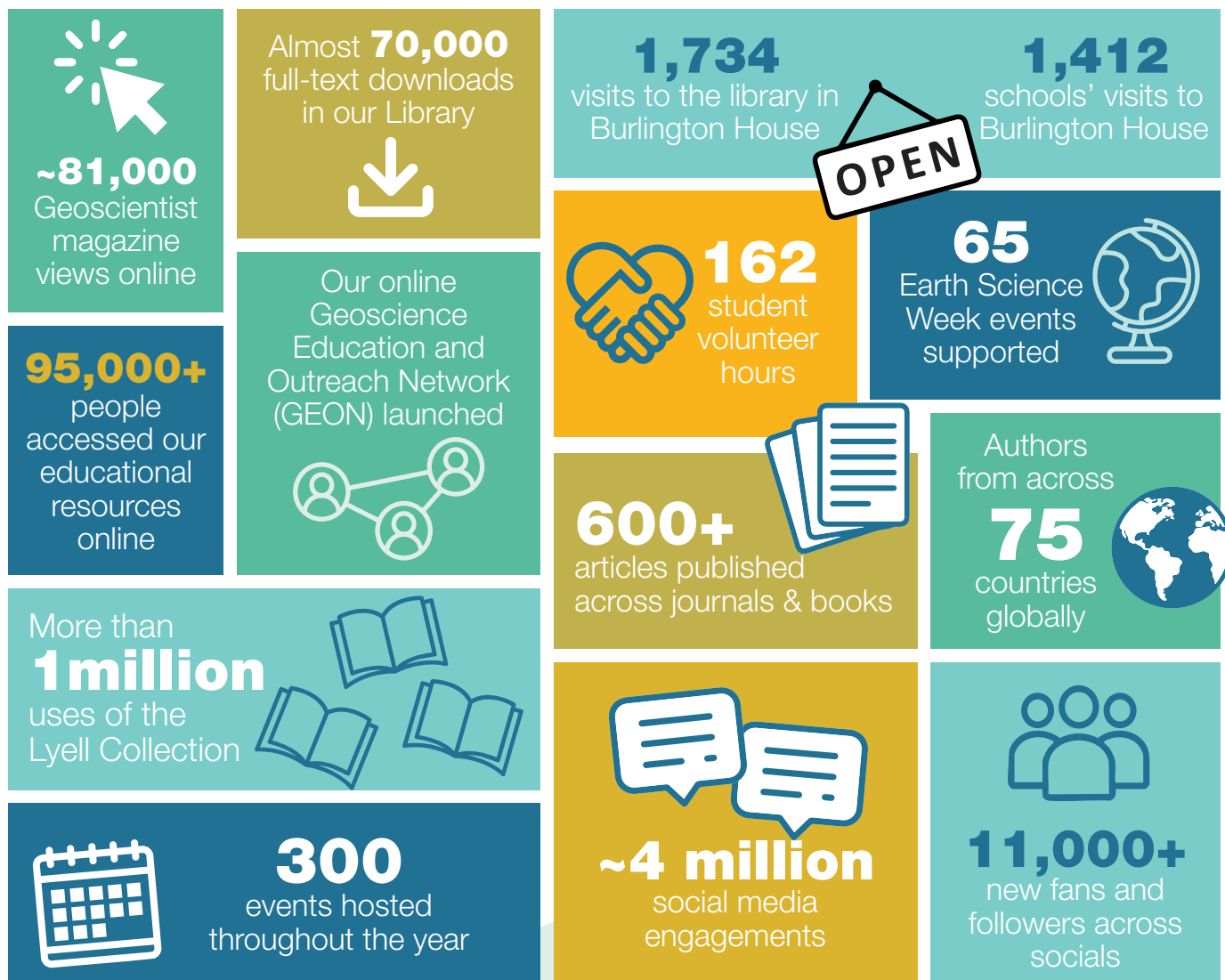
**500+**  
kids visited  
Burlington  
House

**3,200+**  
saw our dinosaur  
& Megalosaurus  
events

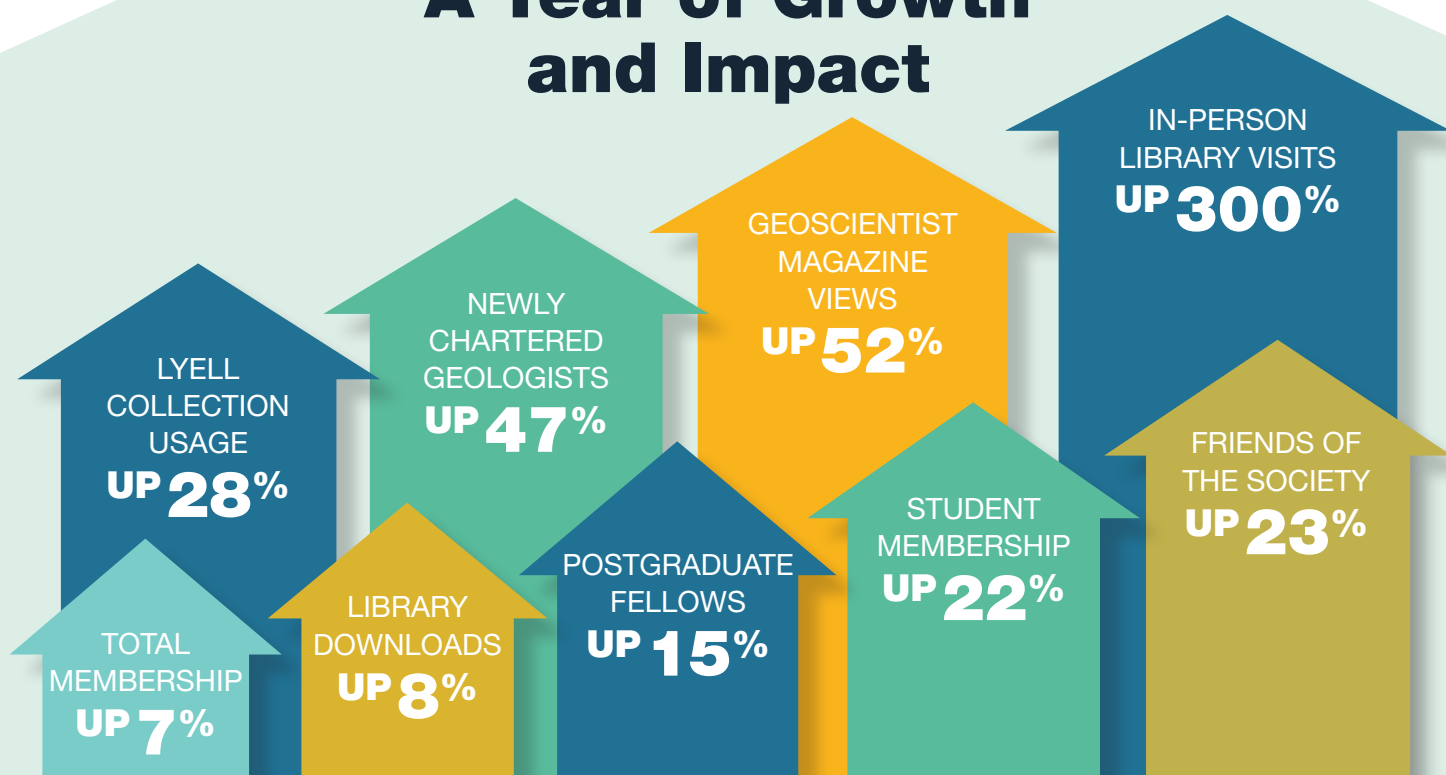
**522**

tickets for the dinosaurs'  
public lecture –  
most popular ever!





## 2024: A Year of Growth and Impact





# Thank you to our supporters

We are deeply grateful to our Fellows, friends and supporters whose generosity enables us to deliver our charitable work. Your contributions help us advance education, outreach, conservation and other vital activities that serve both the geoscience community and the public.

In addition to the companies and organisations listed below, we warmly acknowledge the many individuals who have chosen to support the Society with personal donations. Every gift, large or small, makes a meaningful difference.

Anglo American
BP
Central Asia Metals
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Dana Petroleum
Eni UK
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Halliburton - Landmark
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RPS
SLR
SRK
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The de Laszlo Foundation

The Dolan Charitable Trust
The Geological Society of America
The Royal Society
TotalEnergies
UK Research & Innovation (Science & Technology Facilities Council)
UK Space Agency
University of Plymouth
Viridien
Wood Mackenzie

## Gifts in Wills

Legacy gifts play a vital role in advancing the Society's long-term ambitions. We are honoured by the trust placed in us by those who choose to remember the Society in their will, and we pay tribute to the individuals whose legacies have already helped shape our work.

If you would like to explore ways to support our activities, including leaving a gift in your will, please contact us at:

**[development@geolsoc.org.uk](mailto:development@geolsoc.org.uk)**



The  
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## Contact Us

If you would like to contact the Society please use our online enquiries form at **[geolsoc.org.uk/contact-us](https://geolsoc.org.uk/contact-us)** which will direct your enquiry to the relevant department. Alternatively you can call us on **+44 (0)20 7434 9944** between 9.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

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