Our corporate history. Key events affecting the British Geological Survey 1967–1998 (report)

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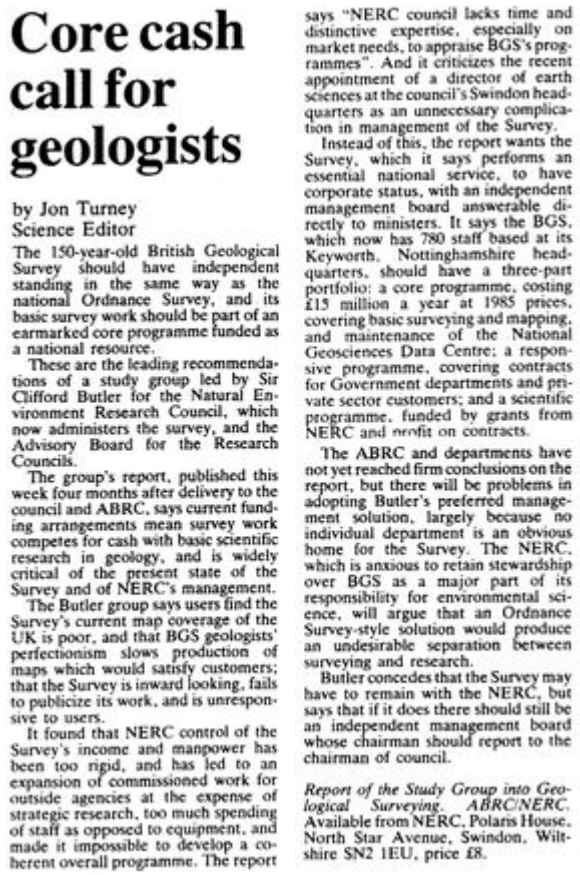

Core cash call for geologists

by Jon Turney
Science Editor

The 150-year-old British Geological Survey should have independent standing in the same way as the national Ordnance Survey, and its basic survey work should be part of an earmarked core programme funded as a national resource.

These are the leading recommendations of a study group led by Sir Clifford Butler for the Natural Environment Research Council, which now administers the survey, and the Advisory Board for the Research Councils.

The group's report, published this week four months after delivery to the council and ABRC, says current funding arrangements mean survey work competes for cash with basic scientific research in geology, and is widely critical of the present state of the Survey and of NERC's management.

The Butler group says users find the Survey's current map coverage of the UK is poor, and that BGS geologists' perfectionism slows production of maps which would satisfy customers; that the Survey is inward looking, fails to publicize its work, and is unresponsive to users.

It found that NERC control of the Survey's income and manpower has been too rigid, and has led to an expansion of commissioned work for outside agencies at the expense of strategic research, too much spending of staff as opposed to equipment, and made it impossible to develop a coherent overall programme. The report says "NERC council lacks time and distinctive expertise, especially on market needs, to appraise BGS's programmes". And it criticizes the recent appointment of a director of earth sciences at the council's Swindon headquarters as an unnecessary complication in management of the Survey.

Instead of this, the report wants the Survey, which it says performs an essential national service, to have corporate status, with an independent management board answerable directly to ministers. It says the BGS, which now has 780 staff based at its Keyworth, Nottinghamshire headquarters, should have a three-part portfolio: a core programme, costing £15 million a year at 1985 prices, covering basic surveying and mapping, and maintenance of the National Geosciences Data Centre; a responsive programme, covering contracts for Government departments and private sector customers; and a scientific programme, funded by grants from NERC and profit on contracts.

The ABRC and departments have not yet reached firm conclusions on the report, but there will be problems in adopting Butler's preferred management solution, largely because no individual department is an obvious home for the Survey. The NERC, which is anxious to retain stewardship over BGS as a major part of its responsibility for environmental science, will argue that an Ordnance Survey-style solution would produce an undesirable separation between surveying and research.

Butler concedes that the Survey may have to remain with the NERC, but says that if it does there should still be an independent management board whose chairman should report to the chairman of council.

Report of the Study Group into Geological Surveying. ABRC/NERC. Available from NERC, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1EU, price £8.

Cutting from the Times Higher Education Supplement for 10th January 1987.

Introduction

1 The purpose of this paper is to compile within a single document a set of key events and reference sources to assist with any future review or history of the British Geological Survey. The period 1967–1975 is covered by a previously unpublished report written by Sir Kingsley Dunham on completion of his directorship; this report is attached at Annex A. Also included at Annex B and Annex C are a new structure introduced on 1 August 1967 and a manpower plan produced by Sir Kingsley. The memo with the new structure is interesting in that it illustrates the absence of consultation! The manpower plan at Annex C was ambitious and far-sighted and it was actually achieved. The number of staff destined for the new Midlands office was remarkable forecasting.

2 The undermentioned documents provide more detailed information on specific events and are the

principal sources of information on the development of Government, NERC and BGS policy for the role, funding and management of the Survey.* WILSON, H E. 1985. *Down to Earth*. (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press)

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- BGS submissions to visiting groups and to science and management audits and their subsequent reports on the BGS.
- BGS Business Plans.
- BGS Annual Reports 1967–1998. (Prior to 1982/83 these reports were a valuable reference source as they contained a comprehensive *Report of the Director* outlining events in the previous year.)
- BGS Office Notices.

3 Centralisation of the BGS at Keyworth, taking staff from several offices in London, Leeds and Harwell, but with the opening of new regional offices in Newcastle and Aberystwyth, took place between 1976 and 1989. An account of the relocation to Keyworth and associated events related to BGS offices are contained in Annex D. The key events that follow paragraph 20 should be considered alongside the events set out in Annex D in order to obtain a flavour of the change in the BGS during the period 1967 to the late 1990s. This period must, arguably, have seen the most momentous changes in the history of the BGS.

4 In the 1976 Annual Report of the Institute of Geological Sciences Dr Austin Woodland wrote in a most prophetic way:

‘There is no doubt that the customer/contractor principle as now developed for departmental applied research is a sound one, and since its inception in 1835 as the Geological Survey of Great Britain, the Institute has been wholly motivated by the usefulness of its research efforts and their application to national needs. Most geological research is, however, long-term and strategic in outlook; it is multidisciplinary in concept and multi-customer in application, and it needs to be planned with flexible management as a cohesive whole. In 1976 80 per cent of the Institute’s efforts were financed by the three departments of state, and controlled through various research requirements committees or boards. There is now a real fear that the research carried out for the departments will tend to become increasingly short-term and applied in aspect and that with only one fifth of its efforts to be unreservedly devoted to long-term strategic research, funded by the Science Budget, the Institute will all too soon find itself without an adequate base from which to mount its applied projects. My predecessor, Sir Kingsley Dunham, voiced these fears in his report for 1975, and the year that has elapsed has in no way alleviated them’.

5 These concerns proved to be accurate and were exacerbated by the fact that in the 1980s public expenditure was under very tight rein. In this decade, BGS commissioned income started to fall. In 1981 the collapse of the consortium, Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of the Environment (DOE) and Department of Energy (DEn), supporting funding of the Land Survey mapping programme was a major cause of loss of funding. At the same time, the DOE moved towards a stricter commercial relationship with the BGS and competitive tendering was introduced for much of the work that was previously awarded to the BGS without competition. In partial mitigation the NERC provided a small increase in the BGS’s share of the overall NERC science vote, but eventually the overall trend of resources was downwards. In 1978/79 the value of commissioned income from government departments was £33 million at 1996/97 prices, by 1990/91 it had dropped to £16 million and the level was £6.4 million in 1996/97, following the cessation of much of the work for the former Department of Energy. By the end of 1998/99 it had steadied at £6.6 million, with the Department of International Development (DFID), formerly the Overseas Development Agency (ODA), as the main customer. The nadir in the BGS’s financial position in the 1980s was reached at the start of the 1984/85 financial year when the BGS had less than £100 000 Other Recurrent funds to support over 300 scientists on its Science Budget activities.

6 To worsen the BGS’s problems, the NERC’s first Corporate Plan in February 1985 announced a policy of switching resources from institutes to universities with a consequent reduction in staff. The plan also led to a substantial structural reorganisation in the NERC with the creation of a highly centralised management arrangement. Three ‘super’ directorates were established in the Swindon office. One of these was the Earth Sciences Directorate which was given responsibility for the Survey. The Grade 3 post held by the Director of BGS was transferred to the Swindon office to be occupied by the new Director of Earth Sciences. The Grade 4 Deputy Director position became the post of Director of BGS. There was an unprecedented level of media coverage of the financial difficulties faced by the Survey and the new management arrangements.

7 In September 1985 it was announced that there would be a major review of the BGS. A study group, under the chairmanship of Sir Clifford Butler, was established by Sir David Phillips, Chairman of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils (ABRC) and Mr Hugh Fish, Chairman of the NERC. The study’s terms of reference were:

‘To assess the UK needs for geological surveying over the next 5–10 years –– its scale, nature and quality –– having regard to the longer-term prospects for public expenditure, and in particular:# to determine the geological surveying activities needed to underpin basic and strategic research in the earth sciences and in other related research funded through the Department for Education and Science (DES) Science Vote;

1. to determine the scale, nature and quality of geological surveying activities for which customers, including government departments as proxy customers, recognise a need, and for which they could reasonably be expected to pay;
2. to reach conclusions concerning the total resources accordingly required and to suggest the allocation of responsibility for providing them.'

Early in 1986 the group received evidence from a wide variety of organisations and individuals concerned with geological surveying. Many of these submissions urged the group to carry the study beyond the guidelines originally set by the Chairmen of ABRC and NERC to include the organisational position of the BGS. The group were given this broader focus and Butler reported to Government in July 1987.

8 The publication of the Butler report led to further media coverage (Figure 1). The period July 1987 September 1988 involved consideration by ministers of the future of the Geological Survey. Held on official files (D/BGS/BUT) are minutes of meetings attended by senior Government officials and there is correspondence in August/September 1988 between the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (John Major) about the funding of the BGS. The idea of possible closure of the Survey was put forward by the Chief Secretary; these letters were copied to the Prime Minister, other senior ministers and the Cabinet Secretary.

9 Following these detailed inter-departmental discussions and a Cabinet Office paper, the Secretary of State for Education and Science finally made a statement to the House of Commons on 7 November 1988 in which he 'recognised the importance of the BGS as a national resource, whose primary function is to meet national surveying needs'. The Secretary of State announced that he would be making available £3 million in 1989/90, £4 million in 1990/91 and £5 million in 1991/92 as additions to the BGS budget; the sum of £5 million is part of the BGS Science Budget baseline. This compared with a Public Expenditure Survey (PES) bid of £14 million, £16 million and £18 million to cover the proposed core programme. As recommended in an E(ST) (O) paper, a BGS Programme Board was established in February 1989 to define and monitor the BGS core programme. In addition, a review of the Survey's future funding and financial arrangements, including such matters as charging for goods and services, was carried out in the first part of 1989 by a group drawn from the DES, the NERC (including the BGS), HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office. The charging review concluded that there was a national necessity for a geological information base and that ongoing surveys were needed to maintain the database. It also concluded that the Survey could not be supported solely by levying charges, and that therefore funding through the Science Budget was justified. The progress towards definition of the core programme by the BGS Programme Board and the conclusions of the charging review were acknowledged in November 1989 by the Secretary of State who provided an additional investment to the BGS National Geoscience Information Service (NGIS) amounting to £1 million in 1990/91, £2 million in 1991/92 and £3 million in 1992/93.

10 Ministerial support for the BGS core programme was reconfirmed in 1992 through the agreement of the Secretary of State for Education and Science to incorporate the 1992/93 award of £3 million into the baseline. However, after that time the amount of funding available for the core programme decreased by more than £1 million due to the combination of lack of indexation for the Science Budget, and 'topslicing' (either to meet the cost of central services or as part of cuts to the NERC budget).

11 During the early 1980s manpower decreased from a total complement of 1189 posts in 1980 to under 800 by 1988; 66 of these posts were transferred to the Natural History Museum when the Geological Museum transfer took place in April 1985. These reductions, which led to a detrimental effect on age structure, expertise range and grade structure, were necessary for a variety of reasons, principally the decline in commissioned research from government departments, cessation

of major programmes (e.g. bulk minerals, offshore mapping), policy changes on the need for residential assignments for ODA work and the requirement to achieve the right balance between staff costs and other costs. The reduction of nearly 400 posts was achieved through natural wastage, redundancies of non-scientific staff when buildings closed and several voluntary retirement schemes. The latter commenced in 1980/81 and as at 31 March 2000, a total of 192 staff will have left on early retirement at an approximate up-front cost of £9.5 million at 1998/99 prices. Apart from two years when the BGS made sacrifices on its capital budget, these funds were provided centrally by the NERC. However, for staff losses arising from the Prior Options Review (see paragraph 17) the NERC introduced a clawback arrangement where 50 per cent of savings on salaries were returned to NERC headroom. In April 1999 the number of staff in the BGS was 771 and the forecast is 754 by the end of March 2000. This does not allow for any reductions arising out of decisions taken in the 1999/2000 fincancial year.

12 Several reorganisations have taken place over the last 30 years, some internally necessary, others externally stimulated. The key events that follow include the main changes, but there were also boundary changes in the Land Survey, transfers of units between divisions and other adjustments to the structure. Perhaps the most significant reorganisation took place in December 1996, following the Senior Management Review conducted by the Office of Science and Technology (OST) (see also paragraph 18). The number of Grade 5 positions (Assistant Director) was reduced from six to four and the number of Grade 6 posts (Group Managers) decreased from 23 to 19, within a total staff of 770. It is interesting to draw a comparison with 1978 when the BGS had a Director, a Deputy Director, nine Grade 5s and 35 Grade 6s, from a total complement of about 1160 posts.

13 The 1990s were dominated by reviews, namely:

1990	Price Waterhouse, Business Development Review
1991	Science & Management Audit
1990 & onwards	Various reviews by the BGS Programme Board
1994	Scrutiny of Public Sector Research Establishments
1996-97	Prior Options Review
1996	OST Senior Management Review
1997	Review of Financial Management of BGS
1997	Review of BGS – Institute of Hydrology
1997	Science & Management Audit
1997-8	Programme Review Groups

The paragraphs that follow (14, 16, 17, 18, 19) are adapted from Dr Peter Cook’s history of the BGS 1990–1997, Technical Report WQ/98/1.

14 The consultancy carried out by Price Waterhouse in 1990 led to a major reorganisation in structure and practice. During the mid 1990s the BGS became established as a leading organisation working in a business-like manner, operating on the basis of an annual business plan with well-defined targets, both financial and scientific, and internal markets, and which also carried out first-class science. The BGS was also able to show that core science (funded through the Science Budget) and commissioned science (funded through public and private sector contracts) could effectively co-exist. Indeed, while it is important to emphasise that there was no cross-subsidising of commissions from the Science Budget, these two elements could nevertheless be seen as having a symbiotic relationship. In 1993, following on the Government White Paper into Science and Technology and the identified need further to strengthen links with industry, the BGS Programme Board recognised an *inner core* (the majority of the programme) funded by the Science Budget and an *outer core*

which aimed to develop a funding partnership with industry in order to strengthen the core programme whilst at the same time addressing topics of particular relevance to industry. As such it was also a contribution to the *Foresight* programme of Government and the wish to strengthen government/ industry links.

15 The loss of major contracts with government departments (see paragraph 5), together with the outcome of the Price Waterhouse review, led to a different culture in the BGS with much more emphasis directed towards the winning of externally-funded contracts. The words 'marketing', 'selling' and 'business development' became cornerstones at divisional and group levels, where achieving financial targets became a main priority. During the mid-1990s the BGS's non-governmental income increased by about £3 million over a three year period. A rather negative consequence of this success was that many of the contracts won were of low value and short duration. Also, while the success ensured that the BGS achieved balanced budgets each year and maintained staff numbers, there were some tensions in the system, mainly between those staff who had to 'earn income for the BGS' and those engaged on the funded core programme. This continues to the present day and seems inevitable given the strategic remit of the BGS and the basic fact that no Public Sector Research Establishment (PSRE) can expect to live off Science Budget money alone.

16 The Efficiency Scrutiny in 1994 was undertaken by a team drawn from various government departments. This was in theory a 'light' and speedy review of all PSREs. Its mandate was to consider privatisation as an option, identify areas for rationalisation and consider ownership arrangements. In the event, this scrutiny did not recommend any changes to the BGS. In line with the dogma of the time, it led inexorably to the Prior Options Review (POR). The report of the Efficiency Scrutiny is ISBN 0 11 430105.

17 The 1996-97 Prior Options Review (POR) was the most rigorous, and potentially the most threatening, review of the BGS (and other PSREs) in that the Government of the day was clearly of a mind to transfer as many science functions as possible to the private sector, as part of its aim to minimise public spending. It was a very time-consuming exercise for the BGS in terms of preparation of documents and various related tasks. All members of staff were involved to varying degrees and this did have a positive benefit in terms of defining the BGS ethos and developing the way forward. The document *Future options for the British Geological Survey* was a valuable outcome of the POR and served to convince the review team and Government that there was indeed a need for a national geological survey function, that the BGS should meet that function and that it should be publicly funded.

18 The purpose of the 1996 OST Senior Management Review in August was to de-layer and decrease management costs, something that was a further dogma across government departments. This was, in some ways, a laudable aim and an issue which the Survey always kept under review. But the reality was that the exercise became largely a numbers game for the review team, without examining the need for the functions or drawing comparisons with other national geological surveys. The outcome of the review was a requirement placed on the BGS to further decrease the number of senior management positions and this was done through the 1997 restructuring (see below).

19 One of the ironies is that as a result of being both well organised and successful, the BGS has been subjected to more review and scrutiny than most other PSREs. The Review of Financial Management in 1997 was a case in point where the BGS was one of only four organisations in the Research Councils selected for this comprehensive review (involving 94 very specific and detailed questions to be addressed). Again there were benefits from this process but, as with the other reviews, it did require a significant amount of BGS staff time.

20 In January 1998 the newly-appointed Director, Dr David Falvey, announced his intention to

develop a new Strategic Plan for the BGS. Previous strategic plans had been published in April 1985 and November 1988. The first of these plans had influenced the outcome of the Butler recommendations, (see key events below). The aim of the new plan was to define and shape the BGS of the future, beyond completion of the 15 year geological mapping programme in 2005. The plan would set out the key strategic issues facing the BGS, the BGS's customers, the geoscience community and society as a whole over the next decade. It would make clear the steps which the BGS should take in order to position itself as the premier provider of 'geoscience solutions'. The planning process would be driven by the BGS and would ensure that the organisation established its own agenda. The result would be a long-term framework within which detailed business and programme planning could operate. Drafting of the Strategic Plan would involve wide-ranging consultations with BGS staff, the BGS Directorate, the BGS Board, the NERC, the Survey's customers and representatives of the earth sciences community. A small drafting group, comprising a multidisciplinary team drawn from across the organisation with a range of backgrounds in science, technology and administration would be given responsibility for drafting the plan. It was expected that the plan would be published in Summer 1999.

Key events 1976–1998

January 1967

Sir Kingsley Dunham was appointed to the post of Director (January 1967–January 1976).

January 1967 to December 1975 See Annex A

January 1976

Dr Austin Woodland was appointed to the post of Director (January 1976–May 1979)

August 1976

Mary Ward College was bought for use as the new BGS headquarters to accommodate staff from the London office, Leeds and Harwell (a later decision).

October 1976

The first BGS staff arrived at Keyworth, i.e. the Industrial Minerals Assessment Unit plus some administration and support grades.

October 1976

The Knightsbridge office was closed.

June 1977

The official opening of Murchison House, Edinburgh, took place.

March 1978

The Working Party on BGS Office Location was established (its recommendation was the creation of regional offices at Aberystwyth and Newcastle and retention of the Exeter office). In addition, JOSCK (Joint Official and Staff Side Committee on Keyworth) was set up.

September 1979

Professor, later Sir, Malcolm Brown was appointed to the post of Director (September 1979–October 1985).

October 1981

Offices were opened at Aberystwyth and Newcastle.

December 1981

The Princes Gate office was closed.

March 1982

The creation of integrated, multidisciplinary UK Regional Geological Surveys took place.

April 1982

A Visiting Group (now SMA) was commenced and was completed in 1984.

September 1982

The Special Surveys Division and Geophysics and Hydrogeology Division were replaced by the Geophysics Division and Environmental and the Deep Geology Division (E&DG). Geophysics then comprised Applied Geophysics, Global Seismology and Geomagnetism. E&DG comprised Deep Geology, Engineering Geology, the Environmental Protection Unit (now Fluid Processes) and the Hydrogeology Unit. Other adjustments were made to the structure.

March 1983

The Bashley Road workshops were closed.

April 1983

The Directorate and Central Administration arrived at Keyworth and Keyworth was established as BGS headquarters.

September 1983

Evidence was given to the enquiry led by Sir Ronald Mason on behalf of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils (ABRC) into the effect on Science Budget research of research commissioned by government departments. In addition, a visit was made by the Mason team.

October 1983

The BGS vacated its offices at Harwell.

December 1983

The announcement was made of the revision of the BGS senior management structure based on matrix principles. There would be:# A Head of Programme Management (Deputy Director) advising the Director and assisted by a Programme Planning Team.

1. The creation of four Programme Directors (A, B, C and D):-

PD (A) Chiefly regional land surveys – Scotland, Northern England, and Northern Ireland

PD (B) Chiefly regional land surveys, to include central and southern England and Wales

PD (C) Chiefly marine surveys

PD (D) Overseas programmes# iii Three Chief Scientists posts:

Chief Geochemist Chief Geologist Chief Geophysicist# A Head of Information and Central Services

January 1984

The Institute of Geological Sciences was renamed the British Geological Survey.

June 1984

The Leeds office was closed.

February 1985

The first NERC Corporate Plan was published.

March 1985

The Exhibition Road office was vacated.

April 1985

An internal BGS Strategic Plan was published, probably the first of its kind in BGS and a response to the NERC Corporate Plan. In it, the BGS work programme was presented in two parts, a *core* programme and a *responsive* programme. The essentials of the Strategic Plan were incorporated into the 1985 Forward Look and considered by a study group chaired by Sir Clifford Butler in its report into geological surveying published in July 1987. The study group accepted the sub-division of the programme into core and responsive parts, but added a third, *scientific* programme, comprising basic research projects, 'contributing to the scientific understanding of the core and responsive programmes'.

April 1985

PDA + PDB were organised on a geographical rather than a stratigraphical basis.

April 1985

The Geological Museum was transferred to the British Museum (Natural History). This involved a PES transfer (and 66 staff) from the BGS to the BM(NH).

September 1985

The Butler Study Group was established and reported in March 1987. The report was finally made available in July 1987 (see paragraphs 7 & 8).

October 1985

The official opening of the Keyworth office as BGS headquarters, took place on 8 October. On the following day the BGS celebrated its 150th Anniversary (see p17–20 of the 1985/86 Annual Report). Open days were held.

October 1985

The Deputy Director post (Grade 4) became Director, previously Grade 3. This was the result of the highly centralised management arrangement introduced by the NERC through its first Corporate Plan published in 1985. In effect, the Director Grade 3 post was transferred to NERC HQ to accommodate the NERC Director of Earth Sciences. Mr Innes Lumsden, Deputy Director, was appointed Director in his existing grade (October 1985–August 1987).

December 1985

The Gorst Road store closed with consolidation of borehole material and specimen collections in the new NGDC building at Keyworth.

January 1986

The Engineering Geology and Reservoir Rock Properties, Hydrogeology, Biostratigraphy, and Stratigraphy and Sedimentology groups were transferred to the Information & Central Services Directorate. The Tectonic Evolution Research Group was transferred to PDA.

March 1986

The Kippax (Leeds) store was closed.

March 1986

The Earth Sciences Directorate became operational, following the restructuring announced in first NERC Corporate Plan.

April 1986

Management of the Mineral Reconnaissance Programme was transferred to PDA and PDB. The Southern Uplands and Lake District Programme was integrated into the Southern Scotland and Northern England Programme. The Tectonic Evolution Programme was terminated. Integration of onshore and offshore hydrocarbons work took place.

June 1987

The Clerkenwell Road office was closed.

July 1987

The Butler Report was published (see September 1985).

September 1987

Mr Geoffrey Larminie was appointed to the post of Director (September 1987–March 1990).

September 1987

A core programme for the BGS began to be formulated (extensive discussions took place with DES, Cabinet Office and government departments during the period July 1987 August 1988 –– see paragraphs 8 & 9).

September 1987

The Marine Earth Sciences Research Programme and the Marine Operations Research Programme were renamed the Marine Geology Research Programme and Marine Geophysics and Offshore Sciences Research Programme.

October 1987

The NERC Isotope Geology Centre was created out of units based at Wallingford, Grays Inn Road and the Radiocarbon Laboratory at East Kilbride.

November 1987

The Hydrogeology Group was transferred to the Geochemistry Directorate from the Information and Central Services Directorate.

February 1988

The Geochemistry Directorate was renamed the Geochemistry and Hydrogeology Directorate.

November 1988

A PES award was made of £12 million over three financial years commencing 1989/90; the final year's award, £5 million, became part of the Science Budget baseline (see paragraphs 8 & 9).

November 1988

An internal BGS Strategic Plan was published (17 November), see also the first Strategic Plan April 1985.

January 1989

A Charging Review was commenced (NERC/BGS, DES, Treasury, Cabinet Office) and completed in May 1989. A report was submitted as a private paper to the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

February 1989

The BGS Programme Board was established.

October 1989

New terms of reference for the BGS were issued.

November 1989

A PES award was made of £6 million over three financial years commencing 1990/91. For the conditions attached to award, see Hansard for 22 November 1989; the final year's award of £3 million became part of the BGS Science Budget baseline (see paragraphs 8 & 9).

December 1989

Organisational changes were introduced, removing boundaries between offshore and onshore surveys. A Stratigraphy and Tectonics Group was formed out of Biostratigraphy, Deep Geology and part of the Sedimentology and Stratigraphy groups. The Analytical Geochemistry Group, Mineral Intelligence Group and Information Systems Group were also created. The Geophysics Directorate was renamed the Geophysics and Hydrocarbons Directorate.

December 1989

The Grays Inn Road office was closed.

March 1990

Dr Peter Cook was appointed to the post of Director, (March 1990–January 1998).

May 1990

The Price Waterhouse consultancy took place, May November 1990.

July 1990

The Keyworth site was named the 'Kingsley Dunham Centre' at an official ceremony.

January 1991

Following the Price Waterhouse report, changes in the structure of management of the BGS were announced to become effective on 1 April 1991: four programme divisions and three corporate divisions were established, each headed by an assistant director. The posts of Chief Geologist, Chief Geochemist and Chief Geophysicist and matrix management were abolished.

The four programme divisions:

Thematic Maps and Onshore Surveys (TMOS)

Petroleum Geology, Geophysics and Offshore Surveys (PGGOS)

Minerals and Geochemical Surveys (MGS)

Groundwater and Geotechnical Surveys (GGS)

The three corporate divisions:

International

Marketing

Corporate Coordination and Information

A final corporate division was Administration headed by the BGS Secretary.

January 1991

The Science and Management Audit commenced.

April 1991

The first BGS Business Plan was published.

May 1991

A policy for data co-ordination was announced.

June 1991

The policy of temporary appointments at senior level was extended by advertising seven group manager posts on five year appointments.

November 1991

Elements of the core programme were consolidated so that they more closely reflected the management structure introduced in January 1991.

December 1991

The new BGS in-house magazine *Earthwise* was launched.

January 1992

The Science and Management Audit outcome was advised to staff.

November 1992

The new Publications Distribution Building was completed at Keyworth.

March 1993

Grange Terrace, Edinburgh was closed. The Geological Survey first occupied this building in 1928 and it was the head office of the Survey's activities in Scotland until 1976 when work on Murchison House was completed.

April 1993

Buildings at Peffermill and Newbattle, Edinburgh were closed and a new storage building was opened at Loanhead, Edinburgh on a ten-year lease.

July 1993

The BGS was unsuccessful in winning four out of five competitive tenders for carrying out hydrocarbons work for DTI (previously by DEn). Income dropped to about £200 000 from c. £2 million under the previous arrangement and from £3.5 million in late 1980s.

October 1993

The first comprehensive BGS training strategy was issued.

November 1993

Organisational changes took place, resulting in a loss of one Grade 5 post and three Grade 6 posts,

the decision was taken to close district offices at Aberystwyth and Newcastle (opened in 1981). All petroleum activities were placed in PGGOS. Marketing ceased to exist as a separate division and marketing effort was placed within divisions.

February 1994

The BGS was included in an efficiency scrutiny of public sector research establishments, involving 50 PSREs (see paragraph 16).

March 1994

The first BGS Customer Charter was issued.

March 1994

As a result of restructuring of the NERC, the Science Directorate arrangement was abandoned and the NERC adopted a more streamlined structure involving two surveys, the BGS and the British Antartic Survey (BAS) and two new centres, the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and the Centre for Coastal & Marine Sciences, with the four directors reporting to the NERC Chief Executive.

August 1994

The Newcastle office was closed.

September 1994

The Aberystwyth office closed (one Grade 7 post remained, based at Aberystwyth University).

July 1995

The BGS celebrated its 160th anniversary.

September 1995

EuroGeoSurveys was formed, with the BGS as a founder member and the Director, BGS as its first President.

March 1996

Professional accreditation was introduced for Science Group members of staff.

Spring 1996

The Prior Options Review commenced (see paragraph 17).

August 1996

A Senior Management Review was conducted by the OST leading to a decision to de-layer (see restructuring below, see paragraph 18).

October 1996

The BGS was awarded Investors in People status

December 1996

A new organisational structure with new divisions was introduced to be fully effective from 1 April 1997. Following the outcome of the OST Senior Management Review, the number of Grade 5 positions was reduced from six to four; there was a decrease from 23 to 19 in the number of management Grade 6s and a decrease in the total number of groups from 26 to 19. This was probably the most dramatic reorganisation in the BGS's history in terms of the impact on senior posts. By contrast in 1978, the BGS had a Director at Grade 3, a Deputy Director at Grade 4, nine Grade 5s and 35 at Grade 6 level.

March 1997

The concept of annual Programme Review Groups was introduced by the NERC for the Core Strategic Programme.

April 1997

The 50th anniversary of BGS's overseas work was celebrated (it was started through the Directorate of Colonial Geological Surveys).

April 1997

The full impact of the decision by the Secretary of State for the Environment to refuse planning permission to construct an underground rock characterisation facility at Sellafield, was now felt by the BGS. Income which peaked at £3.2 million in the 1995/96 financial year was expected to decline to zero in 1999/2000, leading to funding problems for the BGS.

July 1997

The NERC Isotope Geosciences Laboratory (NIGL) was transferred to the management of the BGS.

October 1997

It was announced that as an outcome of Prior Options, the BGS would lose 74 staff over the following three years, mainly in the more senior grades. At the same time, it was announced that it was Council's policy to build on its arms length relationship with establishments within the NERC. Council approved the introduction of a Management

Statement with Financial Memorandum defining the relationships between the Swindon office, acting as the executive of Council, and the four centres and surveys. Council also approved the creation of a board for each centre and survey. A Management Statement with Financial Memorandum for the BGS was signed at the end of 1997. In the event, the NERC proceeded with a board for the BGS as the successor to the Programme Board, but withdrew from the arrangement for the BAS and the two centres.

December 1997

A Science and Management Audit was carried out taking only a few days allocated, compared with two years in 1982.

January 1998

Dr David Falvey was appointed to the post of Director.

January 1998

In an address to the staff the Director indicated his intention to develop a new BGS Strategic Plan.

January 1998

The inaugural meeting of the new BGS Board took place on 20 January.

December 1998

The possibility of a new BGS office in Cardiff and a review of the Exeter office, was announced.

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