



**BSG** British Society for  
Geomorphology

**NEWSLETTER**

June 2024



*Edited by Dr Josh Ahmed*



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*David Whitfield, Isle of Kerrera (UK)*

# Message from the Executive Committee

The past year has seen the Executive Committee place a strong focus on the development, consolidation and implementation of various strategies aimed at driving the society towards more success over the coming years. In January 2024 we sent out a draft BSG strategy for you to comment upon. We have received helpful comments and will have the final product ready for the upcoming meeting in Loughborough. This is an important document that will help steer the direction of the BSG for the next 5 years, and we want to thank all the fellows and member for their contribution and inciteful comments on the draft.

We have continued to build and strengthen the societies commitment to EDI. We continue to support of the Fi Wi Road program, in partnership with the Black Geographers network and RGS-IBG. We are looking forward to meeting the new set of interns who will be joining us in AGM in Loughborough this September. We have also joined forces with the QRA and RGS-IBG to develop co-organised EDI events throughout 2024. This included promoting women in science during International Woman's Day, and a well-attended online panel discussion on 'Co-design and co-production of physical geography research'. We will continue to work with the QRA and RGS to produce further EDI events. Underpinning all this activity is our refreshed EDI statement that is now visible on our website.

A priority this year was to improve the visibility, and quality, of communication both internally and externally. Communication is area we know we need to improve upon. This has taken time, but we now have a new and fully functioning Communication and Publication sub-committee with Dr Stuart Grieve doing an excellent job as the sub-committee vice-chair. Moving forward, we will be sending out fortnightly emails to members with updates and announcements. We would welcome community input into these emails. Please do contact Jayesh Mukherjee ([jam169@aber.ac.uk](mailto:jam169@aber.ac.uk)), Erin Harvey ([Erin.L.Harvey@durham.ac.uk](mailto:Erin.L.Harvey@durham.ac.uk)) or Stuart Grieve ([s.grieve@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:s.grieve@qmul.ac.uk)) if you have an announcement to share with the member list.

We have also been busy strengthening links with other organisations. As demonstrated with our EDI activities, we are already working closely with RSG-IBG and QRA. We are also strengthening the link with the Engineering Group of the Geological Society (EGGS), where we hope we will soon have a new representative from EGGS joining the Professional Geomorphology sub-committee. We have made some progress but there is still a more to do and this is an area we will continue to work upon over the coming year.

Finally, we are coming up to a period of change. We will be saying goodbye to Professor Heather Viles, who is stepping down from the role of president this year. Heather has been an outstanding president and an important constant during a period of upheaval caused by Covid. We are very grateful for her contribution not just to the EC, but to the BSG and wider subject. However, it is now time for Heather to step down and we will be opening an online voting system for you to vote for the next BSG president. We have two candidates, Professor Tony Parsons and Professor Steve Rice, who have selflessly put themselves forward. **Please** take part in the voting system, it is a very simple and will not take too much of your time, but it is a significant thing for the BSG. **Voting will close on 16<sup>th</sup> July**, and we will announce the next president at the next AGM in Loughborough. You will find more information on how to vote within this newsletter ([on page 5](#)).

We will also be saying goodbye to several Executive members this year. This includes Matt Westoby (Honorary Treasurer); Lucy Clarke (vice-chair of Research sub-committee); Eleanor Miles and Jez Foster (Secretary of Professional Geomorphology) and Hannah Williams (Secretary of Outreach). We thank all of them for their time and valuable contribution to the BSG – the society could not have functioned without the commitment and dedication these colleagues have shown over the past few years. However, we also need to fill these positions, as well as finding a new Junior Vice-Chair (as the current JVC moves up to Senior Vice-Chair). You will find further detail on these position within this newsletter and we will continue to advertise these roles in the coming weeks. If you are interested in any of these positions or would like further information, please contact the BSG on [bsg@geomorphology.org.uk](mailto:bsg@geomorphology.org.uk).

**Dr Louise Callard** (Newcastle University), **Dr Annie Ockelford** (University of Liverpool) & **Dr Chris Hackney** (Newcastle University)  
**Chair, Senior Vice Chair, and Junior Vice Chair**, 2023-2024

# Annual Conference 2024: Loughborough

This year the British Society for Geomorphology Annual Conference, incorporating the 2nd Cuchlaine King Symposium, will be hosted by Loughborough University.

The BSG Annual Conference is the most important event in the BSG calendar, bringing together geomorphology researchers and professionals to share their work and network with peers. This year's event will have a uniquely Loughborough flavour.

The oral and poster presentation sessions provide an excellent opportunity to share your latest research and practice, while the early career researcher and professional geomorphology workshops will offer a great chance to develop technical and transferable skills alongside new or familiar peers.

We will celebrate the BSG Medal and Award winners through keynote presentations, and look forward to hosting the second ever Cuchlaine King Symposium, supported by Earth Surface Processes and Landforms, which this year has the theme 'Extreme Events in Geomorphology'.

There will be a pre-conference fieldtrip to **Charnwood Forest** which will explore links between geomorphological processes and the special geology in the Loughborough area.

The BSG Annual Conference has long provided a platform for early career researchers to share their work in a collegial and supportive environment, and we particularly welcome contributions from early career researchers and practitioners.

The Conference will have an online element, enabling virtual attendance for those who cannot join in person.

Registration for the British Society for Geomorphology Annual Conference, held at Loughborough University (2-5 Sept 2024) is now open online here: <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/bsg-conference2024/registration-and-payment/>

Registration benefits include:

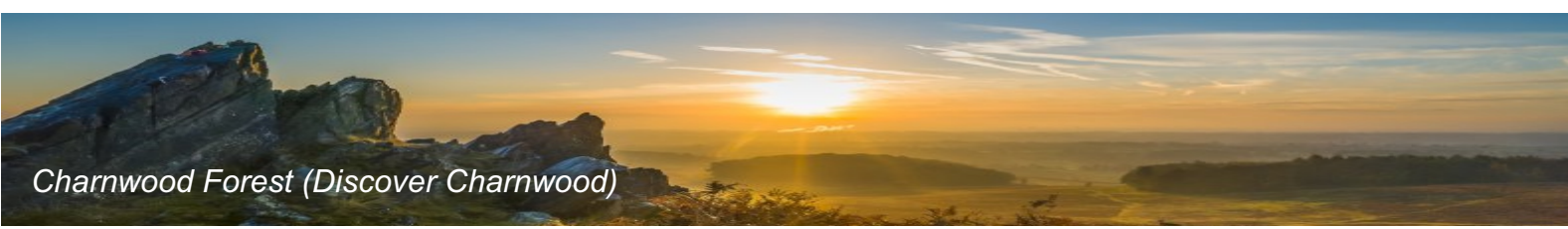
- Affordable registration fee, with 'full package' providing access to all scientific sessions, including the Cuchlaine King Symposium, social events (Icebreaker and Conference Dinner), and pre-conference Early Career and Professional Geomorphologist workshops.
- Early Bird rate available until 31 July 2024.
- Reduced concessionary rate for students, early career researchers, retired and unwaged.
- Day rates for those unable to attend the full conference.
- Discount for BSG members.

To become a member of the BSG and receive a host of other benefits, please visit the BSG website here: <https://www.geomorphology.org.uk/home/about-us/bsg-membership/>

The Call for Abstracts remains open until **1 July** (direct abstract submission link here: <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=wE8mz7iun0SQVILORFQIS2myZM-pafFFuAKV9yonMKdUNTgzNDdLQVNMVTVOVExIN1VCSU5HN0RNTy4u>), and we welcome contributions from all aspects of Geomorphology, and Earth and Planetary Surface Processes.

All conference enquires can be directed to our dedicated inbox: [bsg2024@mailbox.lboro.ac.uk](mailto:bsg2024@mailbox.lboro.ac.uk)

**Dr Ed Baynes**  
**BSG Conference Organisation Committee**  
Loughborough University  
[e.baynes@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:e.baynes@lboro.ac.uk)



*Charnwood Forest (Discover Charnwood)*

# BSG Committee Members Sought

The BSG is run by a volunteer Executive Committee elected from its membership. Most posts are for a three-year period and each year new Committee Members, Officers and co-opted positions, are required. These roles are all critical to the future success of the BSG. We urge you to consider running for one of the four Committee Member positions available below (posts are for all for 3 years, and will start in mid-September 2023). We currently have vacancies for the following posts:

**Junior Deputy Chair of the Society (2023-2024):** This post will lead onto the post of Deputy Chair (2024-2025) and Chair (2025-2026). To succeed Chris Hackney (Newcastle University). It is a great opportunity to get involved with the committee, helping to set the direction for your year as Chair and support the wide range of Geomorphologists we have across the UK and globally.

**Education and Outreach Secretary:** To succeed Hannah Williams (University of Southampton). The main duties are to organise and minute meetings, and to contribute to the effective working of this sub-committee.

**Secretary of Professional Geomorphology:** To succeed Eleanor Miles and Jez Foster. The main duties are to work with the chair to define and review the purpose of the committee, act as a trustee of the society, work collaboratively with committee members to achieve the committee's purpose, and arrange meetings for the committee.

**Vice-chair of Research Sub-committee:** Oversee the development and implementation of the BSG's strategy to promote geomorphological research, ensure processes for awarding are fair and transparent, promote the society's portfolio of grants to the membership and review the portfolio's appropriateness.

**Honorary Treasurer:** Oversee the financial affairs of the BSG. Regularly monitor and forecast the BSG's income and expenditure, review the appropriateness of various budgets, and develop annual financial reports for the Charity Commission and membership. Liaise with the BSG's administrative assistant to ensure prompt payment of invoices and grant monies. Report on financial matters and advise on financial strategy at Finance Committee and Executive Committee meetings, and as required.

**What you get in return:** These roles will allow you to increase your professional profile and to gain valuable experience. You will learn how the BSG operates. You will increase your network. You will be able to gain leadership skills. And you can make a difference to your discipline. You will be in an influential role that will allow you to shape the society and wider science of geomorphology, working alongside other members of the BSG Executive Committee. The Society currently benefits from a good financial position. The BSG is currently investing in a wide range of initiatives intended to promote the discipline and profession of geomorphology, including dispersal of significant research grant funding, development of outreach activities, improvements to our communications, membership management and publications portfolio. All this activity relies on the energy and commitment of BSG Committee Members.

## BSG Presidential Candidate Vote

Following the nomination period, two candidates have been nominated to succeed Professor Heather Viles as President of the BSG. All members of the BSG can now vote to select their preferred candidate. The chosen candidate will serve for 3 years (with an option to extend by an additional 2 years by vote of the Executive Committee). This online election is being conducted following the statutes laid out in the BSG Constitution, and two independent scrutineers will be appointed to count votes and report the election results.

### Election rules:

- Every BSG member is eligible to vote.
- If a member votes multiple times, the last vote submitted will be counted and all others discarded.
- The nominee with the most votes will be announced at the AGM.
- In the event of a tie a further election will be held.

**Voting closes at 12pm on July 16th 2024**

To vote, please click [here](#)

# Postgraduate News

## Your Postgraduate Forum Committee

The start of the new academic year saw a new intake of members to the Postgraduate Forum! This year, we've welcomed Shubham, Jayesh and Adam to the PGR Forum, who have immediately got involved with their new roles in the EDI Working Group and Communication and Publications Committee respectively.

The Postgraduate Forum are always welcoming new members to get involved with representing student voices throughout the BSG, as well as organising and running postgraduate events. If you'd like to get involved, do get in touch!

## Postgraduate Activity

In December, the new cohort of BSG Doctoral Researchers were welcomed to the annual Windsor Workshop. Committee have also been busy attending and supporting various events throughout the UK and beyond, including:

- BSG Annual Meeting (incl. Publication Workshop and Postgraduate Social)
- CryoSkills Workshop, Haugastøl
- British Sedimentological Research Group AGM
- American Geosciences Union
- i-CONN (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Project on Connectivity)

Make sure to follow our socials below to keep up to date on any postgraduate activities, committee updates, and events in the lead up to the next BSG Annual Meeting in Loughborough 2024!

Got any ideas for events/initiatives you'd like to see the PG Forum organise? Drop us an email ([bsgpostgrads@gmail.com](mailto:bsgpostgrads@gmail.com))

### Keep up to date at:

Twitter (X): @BSG\_Postgrads

Instagram: bsgpostgrads

**David Whitfield**, Loughborough University  
Chair, Postgraduate Forum  
[d.whitfield@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:d.whitfield@lboro.ac.uk)

*Publication workshop, Edinburgh*



*Cryoskills workshop, Haugastøl*



*Windsor Workshop 2023*

# Outreach and Education News

The winners of the Geographical Association's Physical Geography Photo competition, sponsored by the BSG, were announced at the recent GA conference at the University of Manchester. Congratulations to all the winners, who succeeded in capturing this year's theme – 'Mobile Earth' – in striking photographs, accompanied by excellent brief descriptions. Head over to the GA's [website to see the winning photos!](#)

The BSG was also in attendance as an exhibitor at this year's GA conference. It was a great opportunity to raise awareness of geomorphological resources for teachers, and to make new links with other societies. For the conference, a new print run of '10 Reasons Why Geomorphology is Important' was produced, as well as a series of four promotional postcards. BSG Fellow, Jamie Woodward, gave a talk on mapping microplastics in rivers and Duncan Hawley, member of the BSG Education and Outreach committee led a workshop that touched on teaching challenging geomorphological concepts.

Dewi Roberts has recently been awarded a Geomorphological Outreach Grant – 'Fluvial geomorphology in action: enhancing geomorphological communication through video'. This project will produce video content from field and laboratory settings to communicate the science of fluvial geomorphology, to be shared with schools, colleges and the wider public via the BSG website and social media channels including YouTube.

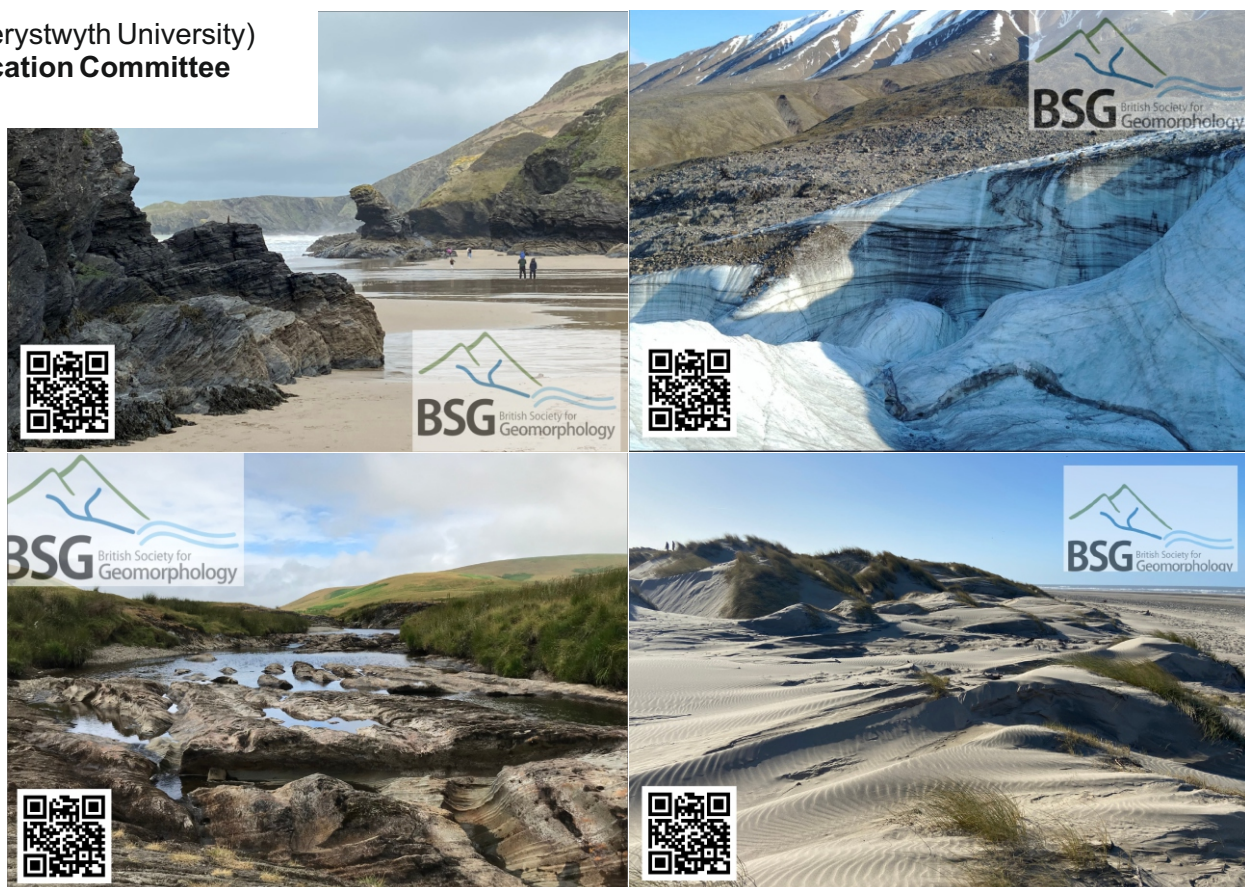
As part of a collaboration with Time for Geography, a new film has been produced to promote the BSG with teachers and students. The film can be viewed on our website and [social media channels](#). We also have an agreement with Time for Geography through which a short message promoting the BSG is placed at the beginning and end of relevant films which are released regularly on social media (e.g. <https://timeforgeography.co.uk/videos-list/plate-tectonics/divergent-constructive-plate-margins/>). Please share these videos widely!

We are planning to produce biographies of geomorphologists for sharing primarily with schools and the wider public. If you'd like to contribute a profile by answering some brief questions, whether you are an established academic, early career researcher, postgraduate or professional geomorphologist, please contact Hywel Griffiths ([hmg@aber.ac.uk](mailto:hmg@aber.ac.uk)).

Thanks very much to David Whitfield for his valued contribution as postgraduate representative to the committee over the past few years and a very warm welcome to the new representative, Aaditya Kapil from Northumbria University.

**Dr Hywel Griffiths** (Aberystwyth University)  
**VC Outreach and Education Committee**  
[hmg@aber.ac.uk](mailto:hmg@aber.ac.uk)

BSG postcards prepared for the Geographical Association (GA) conference



# Committee for Professional Geomorphology

The Committee for Professional Geomorphologists have been busy running a monthly seminar series, which has been hugely successful so far. Thank you to all the speakers and to everyone who has been attending. We are aiming to run these monthly for the foreseeable, but if you would like to give a talk please get in touch and we will try to find a date.

In May we ran a 2-day CPD event in Glasgow, focusing on the challenges of restoring urban rivers. This event was well attended and comprised of a workshop followed by site visits to the outskirts of Glasgow. Further updates on the workshop will be shared in the next workshop - we thank everyone who made the time to join us for the workshop and hope you all felt it was as valuable as we did.

We have a number of committee roles coming up in the next year. If you are interested then please get in touch with Mattie (BSG CPG Chair).

**Dr Matilda Biddulph (Mattie), Chair of the  
BSG Committee for Professional  
Geomorphologists,**  
Geomorphology Specialist, Environment  
Agency

# ESP&L Research Highlight

Maximillian Van Wyk de Vries

Landslides are one of the most damaging natural hazards and have killed tens of thousands of people around the world over the past decade. Slow-moving landslides, with surface velocities on the order of  $10^{-2}$ – $10^2$   $\text{m a}^{-1}$ , can damage buildings and infrastructure and be precursors to catastrophic collapses. The 2021 Chamoli rock-ice avalanche is one example of this, in which the collapse was preceded by more than 5 years of deformation at a rate of a metre or more per year.

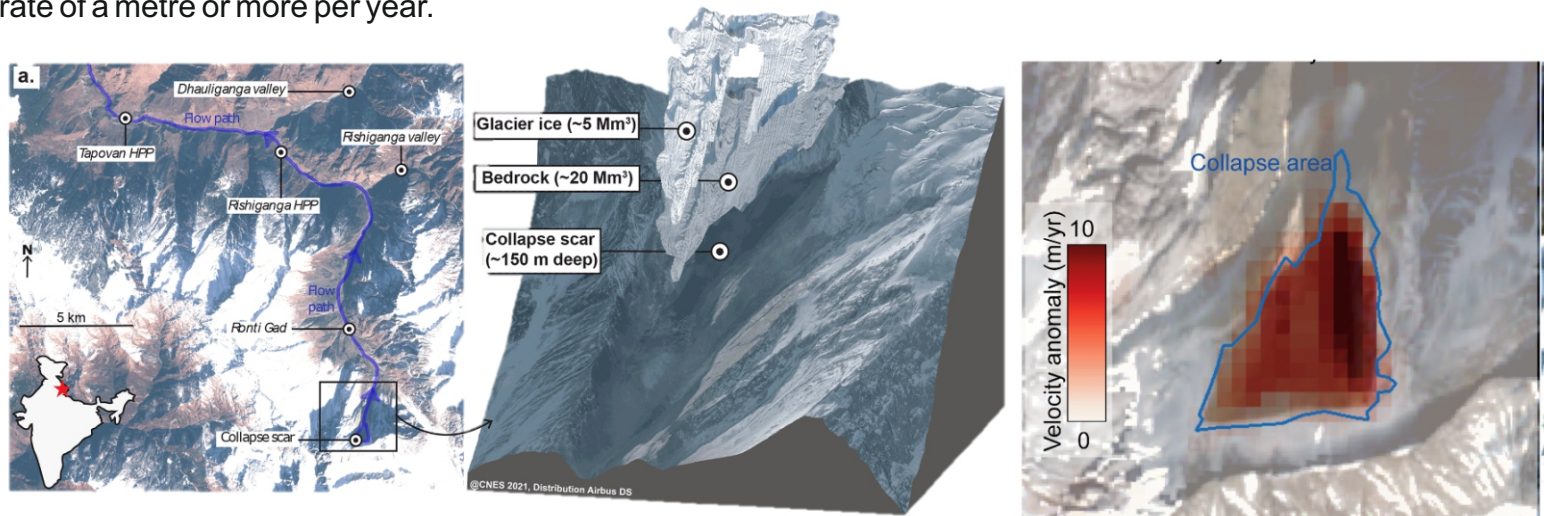


Fig. 1. The Chamoli rock-ice avalanche.

However, due to their slow rates of deformation and at times subtle geomorphic signatures, they are often overlooked in local and large-scale hazard inventories. In order to be useful for hazard reduction, we need to be able to identify these landslides before, and not after they fail. Therefore, we developed a remote-sensing workflow to automatically map slow-moving landslides using feature tracking of freely and globally available optical satellite imagery. We evaluate this proof-of-concept workflow through three case studies from different environments: the Slumgullion earthflow (USA), a lateral moraine Patagonia (Chile) and a high-relief landscape (Nepal). This workflow delineates known landslides and identifies previously unknown areas of hillslope deformation. Improved mapping of the spatial distribution, character and surface displacement rates of slow-moving landslides will improve our understanding of their role in the multi-hazard chain and their sensitivity to climatic changes and can direct future detailed localised investigations into their dynamics.

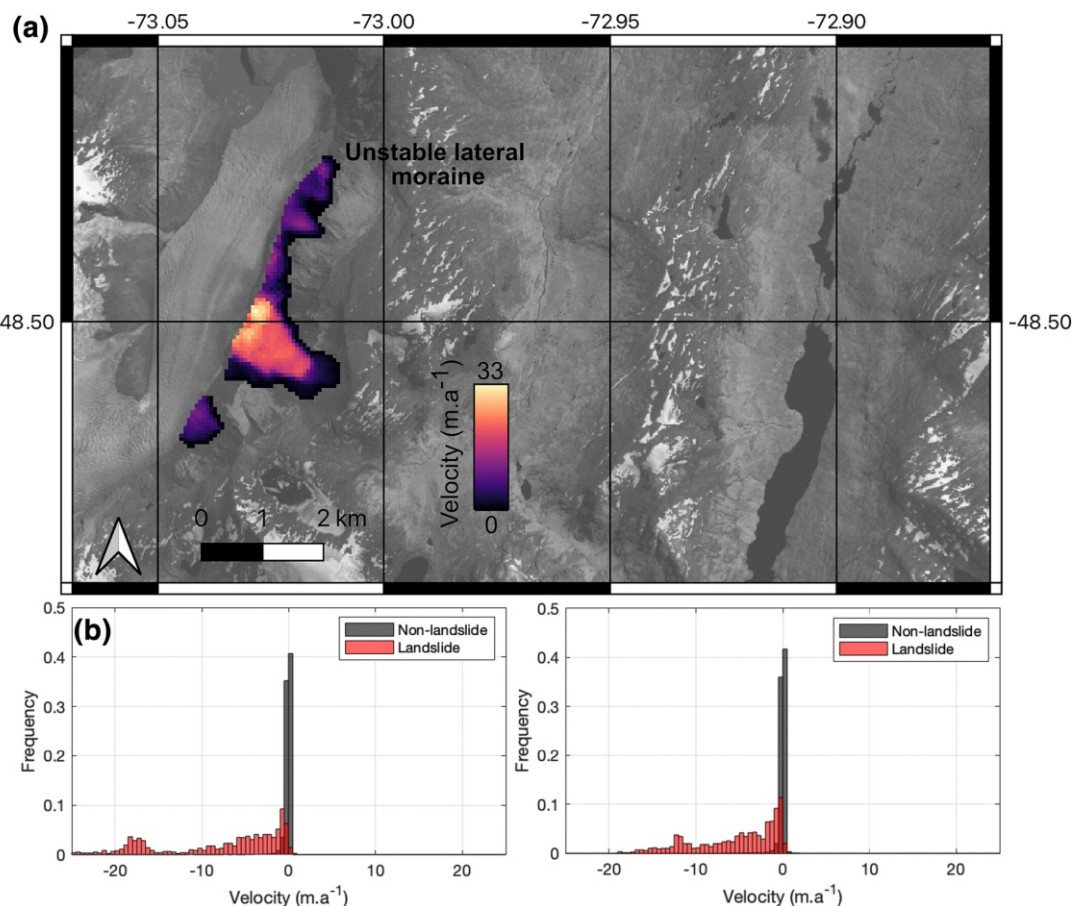


Figure 2. Results of the Glaciar Oriental automated landslide detection. (a) A large portion of the eastern lateral moraine of this glacier is unstable, while the western lateral moraine is stable. (b,c) Pixel frequency histograms of the E–W and N–S velocity components across the entire study area, respectively.

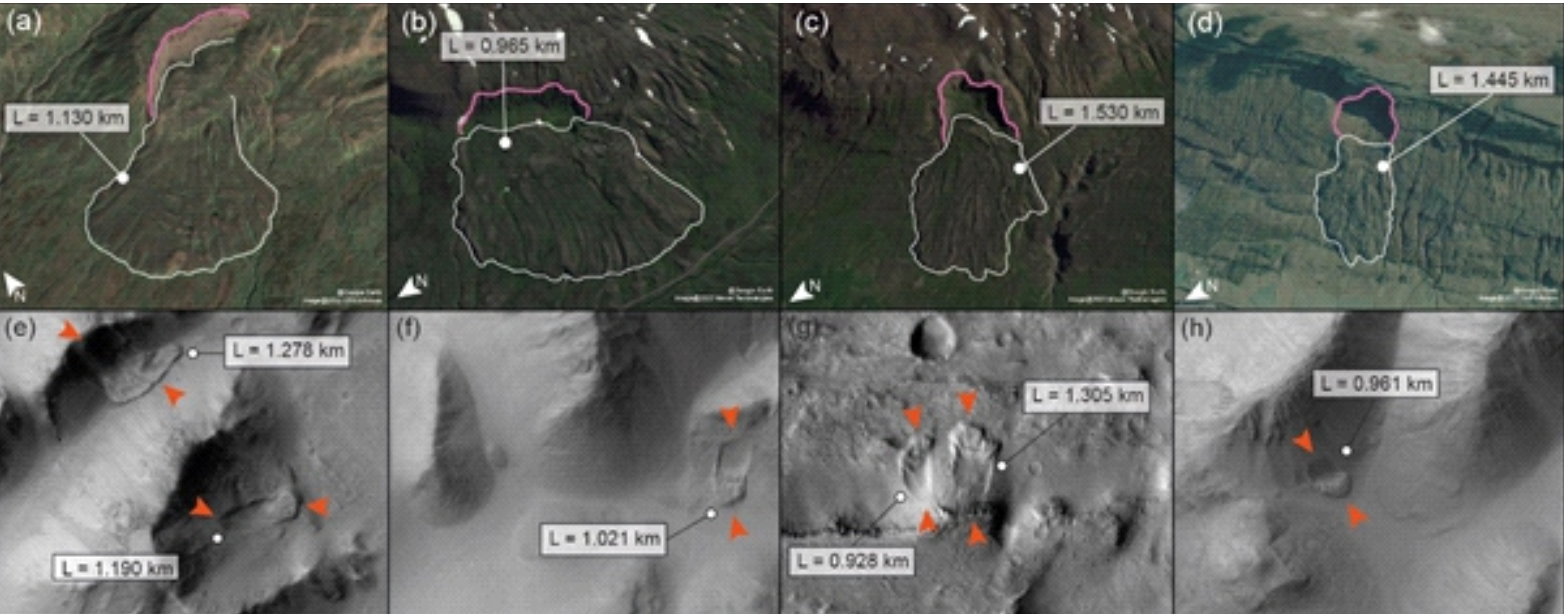
You can check out the full publication in the BSG's journal, *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*, [here](#).

# Long-runout landslides in Iceland and Mars

Giulia Magnarini

As terrestrial long-runout landslides emplaced on glaciers commonly exhibit longitudinal ridges, the presence of landslides with longitudinal ridges has been used to infer the past presence of ice on Mars, where hundreds of well-preserved long-runout landslides with longitudinal ridges are found. However, the presence of the same landforms and associated morphologies in regions where extensive glaciations did not occur, for instance, on the Moon and in the Atacama region on Earth, suggests that ice is not the only factor influencing the formation of long runout landslides with longitudinal ridges.

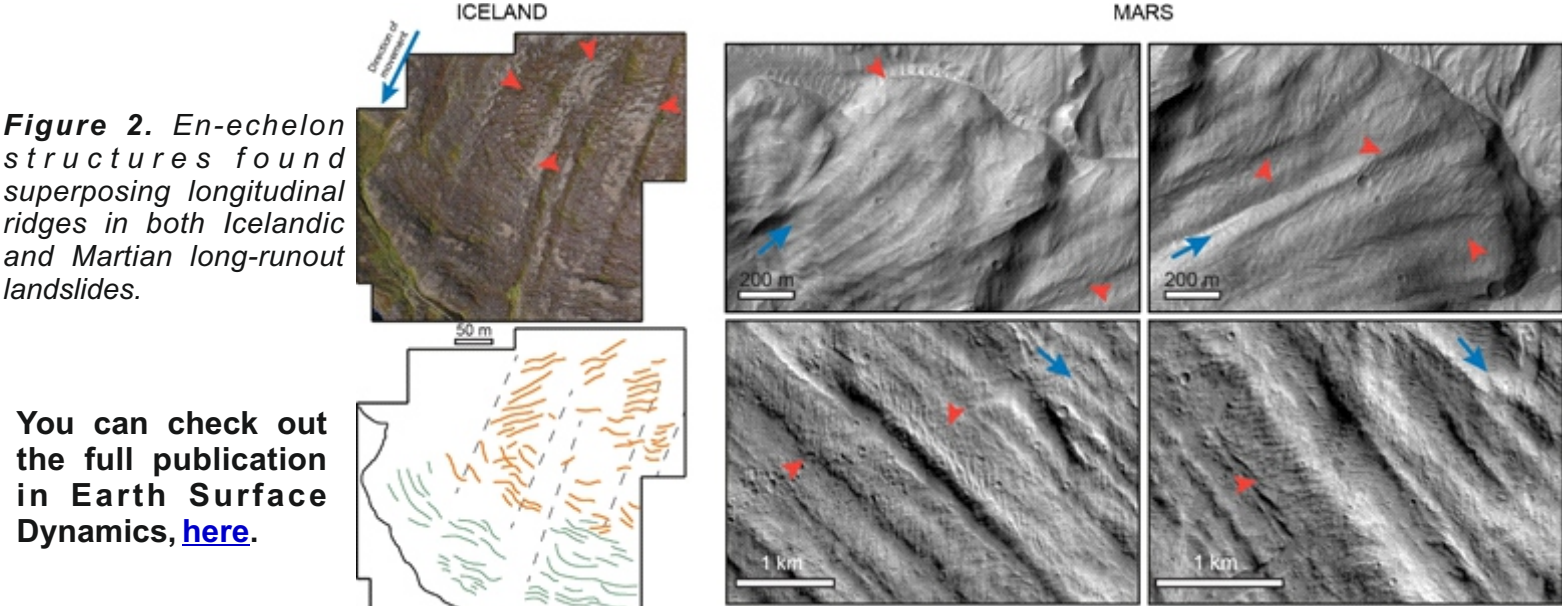
On Earth, there are not as many well-preserved cases of long-runout landslides with associated longitudinal ridges as there are on Mars. Such difference might suggest that longitudinal ridges in long-runout landslides do not commonly form on our planet. However, more than 100 landslides characterised by longitudinal ridges are easily identifiable in Iceland, making it an exceptional region on Earth for its high spatial density of such landforms.



**Fig. 1.** Examples of long runout landslides with longitudinal ridges in Iceland (a-d) and on Mars (e-h).

We compile the first catalogue of long-runout landslides with longitudinal ridges in Iceland and an equivalent catalogue of small-scale (< 5 km long) landslides with longitudinal ridges on Mars. In addition to morphometric comparability, our morphological observations show that longitudinal ridges share similar behaviour in the Icelandic and Martian landslide deposits. Therefore, this supports our hypothesis that Icelandic long-runout landslides with longitudinal ridges represent good morphological analogues of Martian landforms.

The large record of long-runout landslides with longitudinal ridges emplaced after the Last Glacial Maximum in Iceland offers a unique opportunity to study the possible relation between the development of these landforms and glacial/paraglacial conditions. Unlocking this information will both contribute to tackling the challenges that current glaciated regions on Earth will face due to ongoing global warming and to gaining insights into Martian palaeoclimatic and palaeo-environmental conditions.



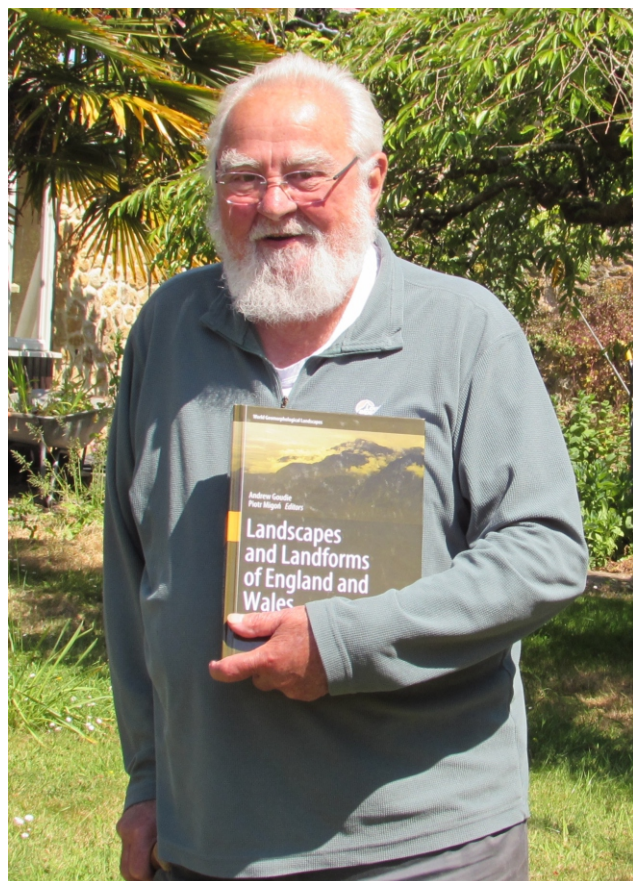
**Figure 2.** En-echelon structures found superposing longitudinal ridges in both Icelandic and Martian long-runout landslides.

You can check out the full publication in *Earth Surface Dynamics*, [here](#).

# Professor Denys Brunsdon OBE, DSc Obituary

Professor Denys Brunsdon, OBE, DSc, Fellow and Emeritus Professor of King's College, London, was, it has been said, a man with a huge frame and a huge intellect. He was an outstandingly influential geomorphologist and teacher who was a long term supporter of the BSG, became President of the Geographical Association, was the first President of the International Association of Geomorphologists, pioneered the use of geomorphology in major engineering projects, and was crucial in the establishment of the first natural World Heritage Site in England and Wales. He was assisted in these endeavours by his wife, Elizabeth, a source of unstinting support, who liked to call his passion for geomorphology 'the obsession'.

Born in Devon in 1936, he played much rugby football at school, and did National Service in the RAF, where he learnt the skill of air photo interpretation, which was to underpin much of his subsequent career. From the RAF he went in 1956 to read Geography at King's College London and remained there until he retired four decades later. He did doctoral research under Professor S.W. Wooldridge, on his native Devon, and became a noted authority on the denudation chronology of Dartmoor and the River Dart. A formative event occurred in 1965, however, when he left the arthritic, sod-covered British landscape for a visit to New Zealand. Here he was exposed to a very different environment, with enormous geomorphological activity, including landslides. He



also gained a great deal from a spell in Louisiana, including his friendship with Jess Walker, a noted coastal geomorphologist. Denys became a major figure in the study of mass movements, and with the likes of J.B. Thornes made significant contributions to the study of such fundamental concepts as landscape sensitivity and change.

He was an institution builder. For example, he was involved with the British Geomorphological Research Group (forerunner of the BSG) from its earliest days and became its Chairman (1984-5). He also helped to establish the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG) and was its first President (1989–1993). It created an award in honour of Denys's career – the Brunsdon Medal - and made him an Honorary Fellow in 1997. He was also President of the Geographical Association in 1986, a post which reflected his great interest in teaching at the school level. He received many awards for his geomorphological achievements, including the BSG's Linton Award in 1993 and was the invited presenter of the prestigious Glossop Lecture for the Engineering Geology group of the Geological Society of London in 2001.

Denys played a major role in the creation of applied geomorphology. He acted widely as a consultant in Engineering Geomorphology/Geology including with BP, Halcrow, Highpoint Rendel, and Atkins. He was a co-founder of Geomorphological Services Ltd. and with various colleagues from geomorphology and engineering geology, including John Doornkamp, Peter Fookes, Ron Cooke, Roger Moore, Mark Lee, Andrew Goudie and David Jones, undertook work in such diverse locations as Nepal, Suez, Bahrain, Turkey, Papua New Guinea, and Ras al Khaimah. He was also a member of the Royal Geographical Society's International Karakoram Project in 1980.

He was the leading light in the creation of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site in East Devon and Dorset. This was inscribed in the World Heritage List in Helsinki on 13th December, 2001. Denys became an active member and then first Patron of the Jurassic Coast Trust. Queen Elizabeth II appointed him OBE for services to geoconservation and geomorphology on 31st December 2003.

His packed funeral in Chideock was attended by many from academia, industry and the local community. Appropriately, his ashes were scattered onto the landslide at Stonebarrow Hill, from whence they will gradually move seaward. After his death, as if in salutation, landslide activity of an unparalleled intensity took place all along the Jurassic Coast.

## 14th March 1936 - 25th January 2024

Obituary by Professor Andrew Goudie

