

Editors' Message: IAH at sixty

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Throughout 2016, the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH; <https://iah.org/>) will be recognising and celebrating its 60th anniversary in a number of ways. The main international focus of the anniversary celebrations will be the Association's 43rd Congress in Montpellier (France) in September, details of which can be seen inside the back cover of the journal and via the IAH website. Many of the IAH national chapters will be holding technical meetings, field visits or social events to acknowledge the anniversary at national level. A comprehensive history of the Association since its establishment in 1956 is being prepared under the guidance of immediate past President Willi Struckmeier and has greatly facilitated the preparation of this message. It is intended that a summary article charting the course of IAH's history over the past six decades will be drawn from this for publication in this journal during the anniversary year. The anniversary logo is displayed here (Fig. 1) and on the front cover of the journal and will be in widespread use on the website and on printed IAH reports, newsletters and other material during the year.

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A modest start to the Association

From small beginnings, IAH has grown into a truly worldwide scientific and professional association which now has just over 4,100 members in 125 countries and 40 national chapters, a high-quality journal, well-established book series and a programme of international scientific congresses, of which the 42nd has just been held successfully in Rome. How then, did it all start? In his account of IAH, published in the first issue of this journal, John Day (Day 1992) reported that past President Stephenson Buchan had initial discussions with Georges Drouhin, the head of the hydraulic service in Algiers (Algeria), as early as 1948, during a hydrogeological excursion at the 18th International Geological Congress (IGC) in London. These and later talks led to the formation of a provisional committee under Drouhin's chairmanship at the next IGC meeting in Algiers in 1952. This committee prepared the way for the formal establishment of IAH on 8th September 1956 at the 20th IGC in Mexico City at which the first Council of the Association, with Paul Fourmarier of Belgium as president, was elected. IAH held its first Congress in Paris in 1957 and in 1964 became affiliated to the International Union of Geological Sciences.

In the early years, officers and membership of the Association were dominantly in Europe, with French, Italian, Belgian and German hydrogeologists most prominent. French and German hydrogeologists in particular played defining roles and the administration of IAH was undertaken in Paris from IAH's foundation until 1979. The principal language of IAH at the time was French, and IAH's information bulletins from 1958 to 1977 were published in French, with the exception of a few short contributions in English. It is entirely fitting, therefore, that having been hosted for the 50th anniversary in Dijon, the Association should celebrate its 60th anniversary by returning to France for its 43rd Congress, co-convened by IAH's French and German chapters.



Fig. 1 The IAH 60th anniversary logo

A period of rapid growth

Between 1980 and 1989, the Association was administered from the Netherlands and since then from the UK. Membership grew slowly during the 1960s and 1970s and then more rapidly, more than doubling during the 1980s as the importance of mapping and investigating groundwater resources and developing new supply sources became more widely recognised and the number of groundwater professionals increased. Congress themes, book titles and IAH commissions during this time largely reflected this emphasis. One of the earliest (established in 1959), longest running and most productive of IAH's commissions was that devoted to hydrogeological maps, and the International Legend (Struckmeier and Margat 1995) marked an important contribution which still serves as a model throughout the world. Other long-established IAH commissions were those on mineral and thermal waters and on karst, both of which date from 1968 and, like the Commission on Maps, have been major contributors to IAH's congresses and book publications.

It had long been the ambition of IAH to produce its own journal to complement the well-established book series. This came to fruition in 1992 when *Applied Hydrogeology*, with four modest issues per year, began publication with Heise. The title was changed to *Hydrogeology Journal* in 1995 and its publication was moved to Springer in 1997, since which time it has grown into the present *Hydrogeology Journal* published in eight issues per year containing around 130 articles and nearly 2,000 pages and a steadily increasing impact factor (<http://www.springeronline.com/hydrogeologyjournal>). The journal is distributed to all IAH members as part of the benefits of the subscription fee, either on-line or in print copy.

Adapting to change

More recently, the increasing importance of managing groundwater resources and protecting aquifers from pollution have produced evolving scientific directions within

hydrogeology which are naturally reflected in the titles of IAH's congresses and books. Commissions for groundwater protection, urban hydrogeology, managing aquifer recharge and transboundary aquifer management were established in response (<https://iah.org/groups/commissions-networks>). Newer commissions on groundwater and climate change and on groundwater and ecosystems also reflect the changing directions of hydrogeological science.

The changing emphasis has also become embedded in the IAH mission to further the understanding, wise use and protection of groundwater resources throughout the world. It is seen in the growing need for a responsible professional association to advocate for better awareness of groundwater amongst policy makers, the general public and professionals in other disciplines. Although not forgetting that IAH's roots are firmly in the geological sciences, the Association now attracts a broader range of professionals working in groundwater.

It is not only the evolving science and growing importance of hydrogeology to which IAH has needed to respond, but also the changing management and administrative requirements. What was essentially a club of some 250 members has grown into an organisation of over 4,000 spread throughout the world, and the structure and governance of the association needed to evolve accordingly. Thus, in 2000 the council and secretariat of the time put in considerable effort so that IAH could become incorporated as a company and registered as a charity in the UK. The Memorandum and Articles of Association and the accompanying rules set the governance and management of IAH on a foundation that was more appropriate to its growing size and complexity.

IAH has also needed to recognise the changing ways in which professional societies provide benefits and services to its members. Examples of this include provision for on-line access to the journal and more recently for open access publication, and the gradual development of web-based news, information and communication, and social media fora to replace conventional mail. A much-appreciated sponsored membership scheme now supports 265 colleagues and helps IAH towards meeting its charitable objectives. The Hydrogeologist Time Capsule project (<http://timecapsule.iah.org/>) provides a substantial collection of video interviews of eminent hydrogeologists who have made a material difference to our profession, many of which are augmented by profiles published in this journal. Strategic planning meetings to review IAH activities took place in 1992, 2002 and 2006. More recently, a Forward Look strategy was developed at a meeting in the UK in 2010, and this has resulted in many new activities, one of the most successful of which has been the establishment of a very active IAH Early Career Hydrogeologists' Network.

Looking forward to 2016 and beyond

It is hoped that as many as possible of IAH members and friends reading this will join in the anniversary celebrations, either in Montpellier (<http://www.60iah2016.org/index.php/en/>) or nationally closer to home. A major anniversary such as this provides an opportunity to meet and reflect on past experiences but also to look forward; there is always much more to be done. The Association must ensure that its complement of commissions and networks remains productive and adapts to changing priorities and issues. The new Commission on Groundwater and Energy, approved in September 2015, is a good example of this.

IAH also needs to redouble its efforts both by itself and with appropriate partners to promote the wise use, sound management and proper protection of groundwater resources. This can be achieved by participating in major international water events and by the chapters taking opportunities at a national level. To support such initiatives and as part of the anniversary programme, IAH has embarked on a series of strategic

overviews of current groundwater issues, the first two of which, on groundwater and energy and on groundwater and food security, are already available (IAH 2015). More are planned during 2016. Finally, but certainly not least, the Association must also work hard to develop benefits that attract into membership the younger professionals whose active participation in all of IAH's activities is essential for the continuing health and strength of the Association.

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