

# President's Perspective

*Time is a sort of river of passing events, and strong is its current; no sooner is a thing brought to sight than it is swept by and another takes its place, and this too will be swept away*

*(translated from Meditations, book IV-43 by Marcus Aurelius)*

## Essential workers

Water company staff are working hard to ensure we have clean tap water and effective sewerage systems in this time of national crisis, when hand-washing and hygiene are so important. They are true stoical heroes, achieving this despite considerable pressures on them as individuals and on the sector ([iwa-network.org/learn/a-utility-leaders-response-to-covid-19/](http://iwa-network.org/learn/a-utility-leaders-response-to-covid-19/)). Those members not familiar with water company activities might be interested to watch this mini-video on raw water treatment by Wessex Water ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdN3g85zfm](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdN3g85zfm)). Let's also appreciate those keeping our environment monitoring operational, constructing engineering schemes or increasing the capability of our computer modelling.

For university staff and students, the immediate challenge has been how to engage with research, teaching and learning activities when limited to our home computer screens. The expected longer-term financial shocks to academia, the business sector and our environmental charities are likely to be more difficult to accommodate.

## Supporting the BHS community

Thanks to your support, BHS has been able to re-introduce the concessionary membership fee for our highly experienced and valued retired members ([www.hydrology.org.uk/join\\_bhs\\_rev.php](http://www.hydrology.org.uk/join_bhs_rev.php)). The electronic ballot to change our Statutes to allow this, and other small changes, had

overwhelming (96%) support from the membership that voted.

The current crisis underlines the need to train up the next generation of engineers, scientists and economists for a career in the water sector. Later this month we will advertise our competitive MSc scholarship programme, thanks to joint funding by BHS, the JBA Trust and the Environment Agency. Please promote this opportunity to your students or mentees. The BHS website now has direct links to the diverse range of MSc training programmes available across the UK ([www.hydrology.org.uk/education\\_training.php](http://www.hydrology.org.uk/education_training.php)).

## Networking opportunities

Social distancing has temporarily stopped all BHS meetings in-person. I therefore feel fortunate to have been able to join an evening meeting of the vibrant BHS South East Section shortly before distancing was introduced (see meeting summary by Joe Pearce later in this issue).

The Fourteenth BHS National Symposium has been postponed from the summer to 7-9 Sep 2021, but there are lots of opportunities in the meantime to connect with other hydrologists online. The BHS Main Committee is investigating the possibility of a free online conference this summer to provide some networking opportunities for members. Before then, the

European Geophysical Union General Assembly (EGU2020) will be delivered free online from 5-8 May 2020 (meetingorganizer.copernicus.org/EGU2020/meetingprogramme), allowing members to connect with BHS colleagues and international researchers. There are free webinars organised by our Institution of Civil Engineers partner - the one on 7 May will cover 'Totnes Flood Defence Improvements' (www.ice.org.uk/events/totnes-flood-defence-improvements-webinar) and ICE's 2020 Gerald Lacey Lecture on 18 May will address 'Flooding in England - Past, Present and Future' (www.ice.org.uk/events/gerald-lacey-lecture-2020-england-flooding-online).

### Opportunities for online learning

The severe restrictions on many of our professional activities gives us the opportunity to learn from the varied resources available online. All articles published in our journal *Hydrology Research* are now freely accessible online ([iwaponline.com/hr/issue/1/1](http://iwaponline.com/hr/issue/1/1)), with articles going back to 1 Feb 1970 when the journal was known as Nordic Hydrology. There is a plethora of videos of potential interest to hydrologists on the internet. My recent favourites include a presentation on novel stream gauging methods by USGS (www.usgs.gov/media/videos/reach-scale-monitoring-advances-stream-gaging), and an informative talk by Dr Julian Klaus on novel monitoring for hydrological modelling (www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yiVTFRDm\_w), part of a successful virtual conference organised by the University of Birmingham for World Water

Day 2020. Another favourite asks how tall trees lift water to their crown (www.youtube.com/tch?v=BickMFHAZR0&feature=emb\_logo) - fascinating if a bit tangential to our discipline. More practically, our research student members may find Prof Jeff McDonnell's presentation on 'How to write a journal paper' instructive (water.usask.ca/hillslope/teaching/forest-hydrology-course.php#VideoLecture17).

### Looking forward

While many of us have been fully occupied with immediate professional and family matters, our partner UKCEH has been looking ahead. On 22 Apr 2020, they published their five-year strategy for research and innovation to target major global challenges (www.ceh.ac.uk/news-and-media/news/ukceh-targets-major-global-challenges-new-strategy). One such challenge is ensuring good Water Quality and Resources for all, with those people most at risk from poor water quality living in unplanned settlements ('slums') in developing countries. Last month, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme stressed that covid-19 is likely to hit these vulnerable communities the most (unhabitat.org/un-habitat-covid-19-response-plan). Targeting WASH (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene) in slums has to be a new priority for hydrologists and related researchers (www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water/brief/wash-water-sanitation-hygiene-and-covid-19).

While thinking of the future, please do keep yourselves, family and colleagues safe.

*Nick Chappell*  
President BHS



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