

Historical Perspective of the Geological Society of Malaysia



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The Geological Society of Malaysia was formally established on 31/01/1967 and has grown in strength and numbers over the past 50 years to become one of the most active and successful geological societies in the Asian region. During its first decade (31/01/1967-25/03/1977), the General Meeting, often with a Presidential Address was the premier annual event and organized together with a Discussion Meeting and Society Dinner. A Newsletter was issued regularly every two months, whilst 7 Bulletins and the book on the “Geology of the Malay Peninsula” were published. The second decade (26/03/1977-13/04/1985) started with introduction of the Petroleum Geology Seminar (first held on 16/12/1977) which together with the General Meeting (organized with a two-day Discussion Meeting) became the premier annual events of the Society. The Newsletter (renamed *Warta Geologi* in January 1975) continued to be issued regularly every two to three months, while 10 Bulletins were published.

The third decade (14/04/1985-30/04/1994) started with introduction of a two day Annual Geology Conference (on 28-29/04/1986) that replaced the Discussion Meeting earlier held with the General Meeting. This Annual Conference was introduced to provide the locale and opportunity for geoscientists to meet and discuss ideas, experience and knowledge on topics relevant to Malaysian geology, and together with the General Meeting and Petroleum Geology Conference became the premier annual events. During the third decade, the *Warta Geologi* was regularly issued at intervals of two to three months and 19 Bulletins published. Working Groups on Engineering Geology & Hydrogeology, Economic Geology, Stratigraphy & Sedimentology, Petroleum Geology and Structural Geology & Tectonics were also appointed in March 1987 to encourage research and provide forums for discussion and exchange of ideas and knowledge. The third decade also saw establishment of the Institute of Geology Malaysia and preparatory work on drafting the Professional Geologists Act.

The fourth decade (01/05/1994-24/04/2005) was marked by rebranding of the Petroleum Geology Seminar in 1995 as the Petroleum Geology Conference (renamed Petroleum Geology Conference and Exhibition from 15/12/2002). This Petroleum Conference with the General Meeting, and Annual Conference, then became the premier

annual events. During the fourth decade, the *Warta Geologi* was issued at variable intervals of between two and four months, while a total of 12 Bulletins were published. Five additional Working Groups were also appointed on Environmental Geology & Hydrology, Promotion of Geosciences, Geophysics, Young Geoscientists and Society Website. A most commendable project during the second decade involved the “Redefinition of GSM” and culminated in the setting-up of the Society’s official website (www.gsm.org.my) in 2004. During the fourth decade, there were formal representations of the Institute of Geology to the Government of Malaysia for gazetting the Professional Geologist’s Act.

The fifth decade (25/04/2005 - present) started with rebranding the Annual Geology Conference as the National Geology Conference in 2016; this National Conference, General Meeting and Petroleum Geology Conference and Exhibition then becoming the premier annual events. The Petroleum Geology Conference and Exhibition was rebranded the Petroleum Geoscience Conference and Exhibition in 2011 and held twice (7-8/03/2011) and (18-19/03/2013); the cooperative framework for organizing the Conference ending after 3 years in 2014. The Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia furthermore, granted GSM sole ownership of the name “Petroleum Geoscience Conference and Exhibition” in 2012. During the fifth decade, a marked improvement in the editorial process resulted in the Bulletin becoming a Scopus indexed publication. The 2014/2015 Council also took the initiative to upload all Society publications onto its website; a decision that will make the publications widely available. The Society together with the University of Malaya published in 2009 the book on “Geology of Peninsular Malaysia”. During the fifth decade, the then 10 Working Groups were streamlined into 5 groups and a Joint GSM-IGM Committee set-up on 05/04/2013. The 2014/2015 Council also arrived at a general understanding with the Department of Geology University of Malaya regarding a more permanent Society Secretariat. The fifth decade finally saw the passing of the Geologists Act 2008 (Act 689) on 15/07/2008 by the Malaysian Parliament.

In the early years, the Society received donations from several companies and they helped to put the Society on a sound financial footing. The Petroleum

Geology Seminar also became accepted as a premier annual seminar and started to generate the much-needed funds for the Society's publications and activities. At the 47th AGM (05/04/2013), it was announced that a new cooperative framework had been agreed on the running of the Petroleum Geoscience Conference and Exhibition (PGCE) with funds transferred to a newly created GSM Endowment Fund. The Society would administer this fund as a separate account, to ensure that the principal sum is maintained in perpetuity, while the interest it generates is used to conduct capacity building activities.

With its main annual events, i.e. National Geoscience Conference, and Petroleum Geoscience Conference & Exhibition, as well as regularly organized technical talks, fieldtrips, Seminars and Conferences, sound financial position, and timely publication of the *Warta Geologi* and *Bulletin*, the Society can look forward to continue being one of the most successful geological societies in Asia. There is, however, a need for caution as the number (595 on 08/09/2017) of GSM members is not in tandem with the number (1,815 on 31/07/2017) of

“registered geologists” in Malaysia. This discrepancy in numbers, as well as declining attendance at Society organized events and activities, raises questions on the quality of the “Registered Professional Geologists” as many of them do not appear to be interested in keeping their knowledge and skills current and up-to-date. In my opinion, it is imperative that “CPD” (Continuous Professional Development) be an essential prerequisite for initial, and extension of, registration, of members of the Institute of Geology Malaysia, as well as recognition by the Board of Geologists Malaysia. The GSM will directly benefit from such a requirement as participation in Society activities and events can be used as evidence of “CPD”.

In closing, I wish the Society all good wishes for a bright future with the hope that all geologists in the country will be members of the Society and seek continuously to improve their knowledge and skill by attending and participating in technical talks, training courses, Workshops, field trips, Seminars, Conferences and Symposia organized by the Society.