

## PRESS STATEMENT

Thursday, 2 July 2020

The British Geological Survey (BGS) supports and endorses the [UKRI statement](#) on Black Lives Matter.

The tragic deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, and the subsequent dialogue around institutionalised racism has sharpened our focus on the British Geological Survey's own attitudes, history and impact on the wider geoscience community.

On June 2, 2020 we shared this tweet:

“BGS was founded in 1835 when colonialism was widespread. We carry & acknowledge that legacy. We're working hard with our global partners to decolonise geology & ensure our past doesn't define our future. Racism in any form is never OK. We are listening. We strive to be better.”

BGS TWEET, JUNE 2 2020

On June 2 we pledged to be better: something we are committed to, as we transform our pledge into a strategy which will ensure a lasting change at all levels.

One of the steps we've already taken on our journey is to remove the name De la Beche from conference suite and library. This change will happen on 2nd July 2020. Henry De la Beche was the founder of the British Geological Survey but he was also a slave owner. Any future renaming of BGS estates and facilities will also form the

basis of our work to focus on supporting the geological accomplishments of historic geologists, but not the people themselves. This means BGS will be celebrating key historical achievements, rather than birth dates as we have done previously. By bringing our focus back to nature, we ensure that we're not inadvertently perpetuating racism and are instead celebrating the subject that we are all passionate and committed to.

This is just one of the many ways we hope to ensure our past doesn't define our future. We have provided equality awareness training to our staff and we will ensure a priority focus in the future is anti-racism training. Our organisational Athena SWAN EDI action plan reflects our commitment to continuously improve in developing a fair, diverse and inclusive working environment.

We are listening. We strive to be better. BGS wants Geology to be seen as a discipline that is open and welcoming, and for our staff to feel confident and supported throughout their career journey.

We will continue with this important dialogue within and beyond BGS and will work towards a more united, inclusive, and therefore better future for the discipline in which we work.

**\*Ends\***