

# INFORMATION RELEASE

22nd January 2015

## **Breaking Ground on the new Scottish Headquarters of the British Geological Survey**

**On the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015 a ground breaking ceremony heralded the start of the £20m Lyell Centre at Heriot-Watt University's Edinburgh Campus. The Centre will be the Scottish headquarters for the British Geological Survey (BGS) as well as a major joint BGS/Heriot-Watt University research centre for geological, petroleum and marine sciences.**

John Ludden, Executive Director BGS, said, "It is a pleasure to see work begin on the British Geological Survey's new home in Scotland. Our facilities and our staff, currently at several sites across Edinburgh, will be united here at The Lyell Centre alongside research teams from Heriot-Watt University."

"This tremendous opportunity will broaden our science base and create an innovative hub of world-leading research in the geosciences in Scotland."



Breaking ground at the new site for the Lyell Centre, from left to right:  
Heriot-Watt University Principal Prof Steve Chapman, BGS Executive Director Prof John Ludden

Scheduled for completion in early 2016, the Centre will establish in Scotland a global centre of excellence based on research synergies and collaboration. It will bring together key expertise from both institutions as well as an £8.5m investment in top-level academic recruitment from around the world, providing a huge opportunity for earth and marine science in general and for Scotland in particular.

The emphasis of the Centre's work will be at the intersection of the earth and marine sciences. Research in the Lyell Centre will play a key role in finding pragmatic solutions and providing evidence-based informed and reliable opinions in areas of energy supply, environmental impact and global climate change, where inputs have traditionally been polarised. Its work will be both socially and industrially relevant at national and international scales.

Professor Steve Chapman, Principal of Heriot-Watt University, said, "This is the physical start of a tremendous project, and is the result of many months of dedicated work behind the scenes. The Lyell Centre will provide a huge opportunity for earth and marine science in Scotland and globally, commensurate with Heriot-Watt's international standing and global reach."



Architects impression of the Lyell Centre which is expected to be ready early 2016

The Lyell Centre is funded by the British Geological Survey (BGS), the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), Heriot-Watt University and Scottish Funding Council (SFC). Additional funding of £8.5m will also underpin investment in top-level academic staff recruitment and student research positions. The global recruitment campaign for the Lyell Centre was launched in December 2014.

The Centre will house the British Geological Survey (Scotland) and staff from the University's Schools of Energy, Geoscience, Infrastructure & Society and Life Sciences. As well as providing new office and laboratory facilities the Lyell Centre will incorporate a new 50,000 litre climate change research aquarium, the UK NERC Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) in Oil and Gas, a high level industry engagement and training initiative for the oil and gas sector, and the Shell Centre for Exploration Geoscience.

More information and links to past announcements can be found on our newly published Lyell Centre webpages. <http://bgs.ac.uk/contacts/sites/edinburgh/lyellCentre/home.html>

**\*Ends\***



**For further details and images from the ceremony please contact:**

Lauren Noakes, BGS Press Officer, Murchison House, West Mains Road, Edinburgh

Office +44 (0)131 650 0230

Mobile: + 44 (0)7772 043180

Email: [lnoakes@bgs.ac.uk](mailto:lnoakes@bgs.ac.uk)

Caroline Dempster, Heriot-Watt University Press Officer, Edinburgh Campus, Riccarton

Office: +44 (0)131 451 3443

Email: [C.M.L.Dempster@hw.ac.uk](mailto:C.M.L.Dempster@hw.ac.uk)

**The British Geological Survey**

The British Geological Survey (BGS), a component body of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), is the nation's principal supplier of objective, impartial and up-to-date geological expertise and information for decision making for governmental, commercial and individual users. The BGS maintains and develops the nation's understanding of its geology to improve policy making, enhance national wealth and reduce risk. It also collaborates with the national and international scientific community in carrying out research in strategic areas, including energy and natural resources, our vulnerability to environmental change and hazards, and our general knowledge of the Earth system. More about the BGS can be found at [www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk).

**The Natural Environment Research Council**

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is the UK's main agency for funding and managing world-class research, training and knowledge exchange in the environmental sciences. It coordinates some of the world's most exciting research projects, tackling major issues such as climate change, food security, environmental influences on human health, the genetic make-up of life on earth, and much more. NERC receives around £300 million a year from the government's science budget, which it uses to fund research and training in universities and its own research centres. [www.nerc.ac.uk](http://www.nerc.ac.uk)