

GeoconservationUK Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 1

25th March 2010



North Staffordshire's Gorsty Quarry's Arty Makeover

For over two centuries North Staffordshire, due to its mineral wealth of especially coal and clay, was the world's major ceramic manufacturing centre. As 18th and 19th century taste dictated using clays imported from Devon and Dorset, the local coal and clay were used largely for brick and tile production. Today, this industry's prominent features are its 'marl holes'. Recently several ideas for their artistic usage, with an eye on urban renewal and regeneration, have been proposed. In 2009, four artists (see below) whose work with clay is internationally acclaimed, created, as part of the *British Ceramic Biennial*, a series of site-specific artworks at Ibstock Brick's Gorsty Quarry.

Away from the familiar comfort zone of the studio, each artist



faced unpredictable factors, partly due to the weather and the limitations of the clays in their unprocessed state, and also by eliminating the common tools of the trade - they only employed a spade, or whatever else was to hand (including the site's earth movers and diggers) in the immediate vicinity, to extract their material. So, the artists moved, moulded, removed, smeared and poured an inexhaustible abundance of material in its varied states to produce a range of tem-

porary artworks (see below).



EDITORIAL

The rebranding exercise from UKRIGS to GeoconservationUK has allowed me to trial a more printer-friendly format for the *Newsletter*, enabling faster internet downloads - I do appreciate that not everybody has access to high-speed broadband. It should also remove those little gremlins that affected the last *Newsletter*'s pdf file with shifted type and missing images - we'll see on that one!! By now, hard-working fellow Committee members have hopefully sourced a high resolution version of my roughed-out design for the new corporate logo that was agreed at last December's Executive Meeting; member groups may begin to use this with immediate effect. I suspect that some groups will also be looking at their identity as we all come to terms with the changing geoconservation landscape; please do use the *Newsletter* to keep everybody informed of such changes and your activities. This issue has a range of short articles showing the diversity of geoconservation endeavour; the lead story is a point in case. I have also been fortunate enough to attend several 'geology' meetings at which geoconservation issues were addressed for the first time, and accounts of some of these will feature in later issues of the *Newsletter*.

TOM HOSE

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ENGLAND — Norfolk RIGS

Great Hockham's residents are now guardians of Norfolk's newest RIGS; a fine glacial erratic. The pretty village lies between Thetford and Watton. Villagers have put great store



on this boulder since it was dragged in from a nearby field, onto the village green, in the 1800s. Ever after, it has been rolled over to celebrate special occasions.

The first recorded turning was for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887, the latest was to celebrate a reprieve from

a proposed extensive quarry in 2008. The next scheduled turn is for the Queen's Jubilee in June 2012.

Graham Lott has given a description and likely provenance for the stone as: "A large, fossiliferous sandstone boulder, presumed glacial erratic. The sandstone is quartzose, sparsely glauconitic and bioclastic with a carbonate cement. It is likely to be derived from the Spilsby Sandstone of the Lower Cretaceous." The green is open access and can be visited at any time; it is suitable for educational visits of all ages. More information can be found on the village's website:

http://greathockham.org/village_stone.aspx



"Plans are well in hand for the joint AGM and "Rock & Fossil Day" at Aylesbury Museum on 24th April"

ENGLAND — Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group

The Group's worth is clearly seen by its some 50 members, who from this year pay a modest annual membership fee. Since January, High Wycombe library has had 8 themed cases (such as, "Discovering Wycombe's Geology", "Fossils from the Chalk" and "Buckinghamshire's Sea Monsters") of geological specimens, maps and fossils, and all due to the efforts of Group members Jill Eyres, Mike Palmer and Julia Carey.

In February the Group completed the Northmoor Hill conservation project;

this involved clearing scrub and improving (see right) access. Plans are well in hand for the joint AGM and

"Rock & Fossil Day" at Aylesbury Museum on 24th April. The latest BEHG Newsletter has an interesting Q&A section. A full range of spring field and indoor meetings can be found on the Group's website: www.bucksgeology.org.uk



ENGLAND — The Black Country Geological Society

As usual the Society has a good range of field trips planned for this spring and early summer, including:

- * 27th March - Lilleshall Village, Shropshire, led by David C. Smith (of the Shropshire Geological Society) looking at the Pre-Cambrian and Cambrian of the area, and Carboniferous deposits from the North Shropshire shelf.
- * 24th April - the Cotswolds to view the Jurassic, led by Dave Owen (of the Gloucestershire Geological Trust)

looking at the Aston Limestone Formation (Mid Jurassic); deeply incised Cotswold - post Ice-Age; the Cleeve Cloud Member (Birdlip Limestone Formation, Lower Inferior Oolite), and great views (on a clear day!) across the Severn Vale to the Malverns.

There are also the usual high-quality indoor meetings, including one on 26th April at the Lapworth Museum, Birmingham University with a talk by Jon Clatworthy on the collections' contribution to the then developing science of geology from the 18th century onwards.

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ENGLAND — Dorset RIGS

Dorset RIGS had a very successful clearance session in mid-March at the Rock Pit Farm site that lies near village of Maiden Newton. The site's small quarry exposes a 2 to 4 metre high section, some 50 metres long, in the Lower Chalk; this is unusual in consisting of 1 metre of sandy glauconite-rich Chalk and 3 metres of phosphatic, fossil-rich and rubbly Chalk Marl. During the Second World War the site was used as a gun emplacement, employing the guns off an old battleship. It was developed in the late 1980s as a car-park and picnic area for walkers on the path along the nearby old railway line. In the 1990s an interpretation panel was placed at the site.

Five members of the group cut and cleared away the vegetation covering a 40 m. face;



they cleared away lots of discarded debris such as glass and plastic bottles, drinks cans, and builders debris, etc. But, fortunately they also had just a little enough time to find some interesting

fossils, including an echinoid, a fairly complete *Scaphites*, a nice terebratulid and other fragmentary remains. The work is not yet finished so they will be looking for more volunteers and another day before the summer to complete the work!

ENGLAND — Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group

Members of the Group had a couple of opportunities in 2009 to go on out-county field-trips. In May, Watchet in Somerset was the venue for a chance to look at the Old Red Sandstone rocks at Woolston Quarry on the first day. On other days, the coastal sections near the town were explored and further afield the New Red Sandstone around St. Audrey's Bay. In late August, Colonsay was the venue with opportunities

to examine ancient metamorphic and igneous rocks.

Members had the chance to attend a range of autumn and winter lectures; for example, on the Ediacaran fauna and Australian ice ages and Quaternary diatoms. The Group also produced a new leaflet, written by John Crossing, on the building stones of Royal Leamington Spa; prior to its formal launch by the Mayor of Leamington in October 2009 it was actually first used by members of a GA field trip to the town in September.

ENGLAND — East Yorkshire RIGS Group

The area around Hull lacks *in situ* igneous and metamorphic rocks, although they are found in some abundance in the local Quaternary deposits. Ten years ago the East Yorkshire RIGS Group turned its attention to urban sites. It decided to give a small selection of the sites RIGS status for their educational value and submitted them to Hull City Council. These sites included the facing stones on a church, a bank, and a police station; granite pillars, a statue and a Victorian urinal. Each rock chosen has an inter-

esting story to tell, as well as enhancing the urban landscape. Trying to keep to the same criteria used for the selection of 'normal' RIGS - the rock types are unique in the area; although they do not have research potential, they are very useful for geological education and some are of interest in local history studies.

The City Council has been sympathetic, including details of the geology on the records of buildings that already have 'listed' status. It has also promised to consult the Group about any changes to these 'sites'. But so far they have not been able to find a way of recognising the other RIGS that would lead to automatic consultation.

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SCOTLAND — *Strathclyde Geoconservation Group*

We have decided to change our name from Strathclyde RIGS. Geoconservation more clearly describes what we do and what we stand for and should help understanding by the general public. The need to improve awareness of and responsibility for geoconservation by decision-making bodies continues to occupy us.

Following a meeting last summer of Scottish RIGS Groups and Geoparks, a Petition to the Scottish Parliament was raised which attracted over 300 signatories. This requested that a geodiversity duty statement be included in all Scottish planning policies and advice notes. The main petitioner, Mike Browne and representatives from Strathclyde have attended two hearings of the Petitions Committee, at both of which they had cross party political support. The Government have undertaken to give geodiversity explicit expression in policy for Local Nature Conservation Sites but have not yet included a geodiversity duty in statute. The Petition has been suspended to await the outcome of a study by SNH and BGS on the development of a 'Scottish geodiversity framework' which is due in the summer.

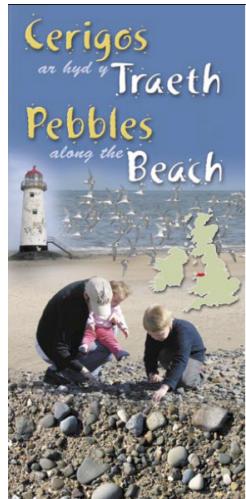
In the meantime the Group continues to in-

terpret and promote the great variety of geology around Glasgow. We arranged a workshop for Countryside Rangers of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park based on our leaflet. The trail at Balmaha was lead by Dr Chris Burton of Glasgow University with activities provided by Angus Miller of SESEF (Scottish Earth Science Education Forum). This was just before the snow arrived!

We have been in conversation with one of our local Councils, East Renfrewshire, over the neglected state of a SSSI in Rouken Glen Park. This has resulted in the Group producing a leaflet based on text by Dr John Faithfull, Curator at the Hunterian Museum. The Council are applying for funding for the park and have printed the leaflet. This will now be promoted by Group members when taking guided walks in the Park and by the Friends of Rouken Glen. Fossil Grove will open at Easter until end September. Information on days and times will be on the websites of two Glasgow City departments – Land & Environmental Services and Culture and Sport. Strathclyde Geoconservation are represented on the Steering Group responsible for monitoring condition and preparing the brief for a major development. In addition, we are enabling a Fossil Grove Group which will give local communities an opportunity to input ideas and apply for grants. This has the support of local City Councillors and Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Many other sites are in need of our attention – we just have to find the time, and some more, equally enthusiastic Group members!

WALES — *NEWRIGS & Central Wales RIGS*

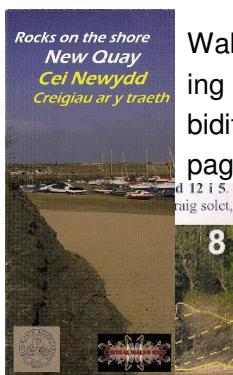


The Welsh RIGS groups continue to innovate in their interpretation of Welsh geosites. NEWRIGS has uploaded its leaflets and publications onto its web-site; they can now be downloaded and printed on demand as pdf files - an excellent idea and great for educational establishments. NEWRIGS also updated (see far left) its successful "Pebbles on the Beach" leaflet in 2009 with "Pebbles along the Beach" (see immediate left). On a similar seaside theme, Central Wales RIGS produced the leaflet "Rocks on the shore New Quay" (see page 5). Meanwhile, the Anglesey Walking Festival (23rd May - 7th June) has some geological walks included - details on the Anglesey Geopark web-site.



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PUBLICATIONS — Rocks on the shore New Quay

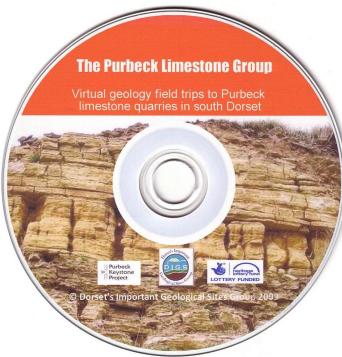


This addition to the populist literature on the coastal geology of Wales by the Central Wales RIGS Group is to be warmly welcomed. The illustrations, their labelling and captioning are excellent. The inside of the leaflet describes the structure and rocks of a coastal turbidite section (part shown below) with succinct but detailed locality information. The cover pages describe the place's Silurian palaeogeography and later geological history.

yd 12 i 5. Tywodleini a cherrig llaid tenau sydd yn flurio'r creigiau solet, mewn cyferbyniad a'r tywodfeini trwchus wrth Safleoedd 1 i 3. Mae'r clogwyni clog-glai yn llawer llai gwrtiannol i aig solet, ac yn tueddu i ffurfio pileri o bridd; fel yn Safle 11. I'r dwyrrain o Safle 12, ceir llithriadau o laid, yn cario coed i lawr at y traeth.

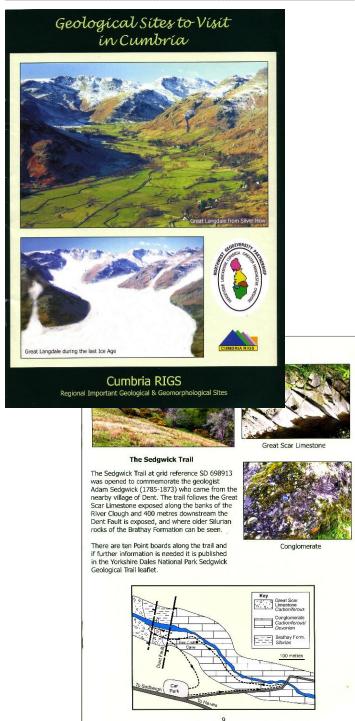


PUBLICATIONS — Purbeck Limestone Virtual Field Geology Field Trips CD



This innovative approach to encouraging field geology has seven virtual field-trips accompanied by an introduction and an account of the Purbeck palaeoenvironment. Each is presented as a separate PowerPoint show with superb quality images and well-written commentary; this means that they can be run on computers that do not have the full programme installed. The CD's development and production was undertaken by DIGS (Dorset's Important Geological Sites Group) as part of the Purbeck Keystone Project supported by Purbeck District Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund; through the Project it has been made available for free to all Dorset schools. It can also be purchased for a mere £5.00 from the DIGS chairman (contact: alanholiday@btinternet.com).

PUBLICATIONS — Geological Sites to Visit in Cumbria



Cumbria RIGS have produced a full-colour 14-page guide to their region's geology. Its provide brief descriptions of some classic and readily accessible sites, including Force Crag lead mine, the haematite 'mines' of Millom, and the St Bees Sandstone quarries of Dufton Ghyll Woods. Users are also guided to the good fossil sites in the Carboniferous Limestone along the shore at Far Arnside and the Sedgwick Trail.

The texts accompanying each of the thirteen site's photographs are pleasingly short and each has an OS grid reference to pre-

cisely guide users to them; some effort has clearly gone into making these as non-technical and interesting for non-specialists as possible. The inside cover and back cover have useful maps and a geological column. Quite naturally the covers are adorned with the various funding agencies that form the Northwest GeoDiversity Partnership and Cumbria RIGS rightly have a small promotional text. The booklet can be collected for free from tourist information centres in the region. Judging by the quality of this booklet, the partners are working well together and it is to be hoped that other publications will soon follow.



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MEETINGS and CONFERENCES



GeoconservationUK acknowledges the financial and practical support of Bucks New University's Faculty of Design, Media & Management in the production of this Newsletter.



GEODIVERSITY & GEOCONSERVATION: an introduction for non-specialist audiences to community geosciences

20th May 2010, (10.00 - 17.30) at Liverpool Hope University

A workshop sponsored by **GeoConservationUK**

Tutors:

Prof. Cynthia Burek Dr. Kevin Crawford
Dr. Murray Gray Dr. Tom Hose

Programme:

*What is Geodiversity?
What is Geoconservation?
Interpretation of concepts
Legislative issues
Geodiversity in planning
Geodiversity Walk*

Audience:

Planners, Local Authority officers, environmental geoscientists, environmental consultants, nature conservation personnel, EIA consultants, ecologists, engineers, environmental lawyers, and conservation volunteers.

GEOTRENDS - June 2010 - Novi Sad, Serbia

The **GEOTRENDS** programme is intended to meet the needs of a wide range of attendees, such as:

- Members of professional societies and the general public with an interest in natural heritage.
- Government officials, statutory bodies and protected area managers from the relevant departments and who are concerned with the management of these areas.
- Individuals and organisations responsible for conducting and marketing of geotourism - Natural area interpretation staff, tour-operators, tourism professionals.
- Anyone who should be involved in the development of a strategy for ensuring the continued security and sustainability of national heritage.

Further details are available from the conference web-site: www.dgt.uns.ac.rs/geotrends



It is always interesting and enjoyable to read about Groups' activities and their work, together with other geoconservation meetings and events. To share your news and views, please contact:

*Dr Thomas A. Hose,
GeoConservationUK Newsletter Editor,
tom.hose@bucks.ac.uk*

UKRIGS Geoconservation Association Executive Committee

Chair: Mike Browne - Lothian & Borders
Treasurer: Alan Cutler - Black Country GS
Newsletter Editor: Tom Hose - Bucks EHG

Committee Members:

Prof Cynthia Burek - NEWRIGS
Dr Ken Addison - Gwynedd & Mon RIGS
Keith Ambrose - Leicester & Rutland RIGS
Kevin Crawford - Cheshire RIGS
Rick Ramsdale - Sheffield Area Geology Trust
John Reynolds - Staffordshire RIGS

Co-opted

Secretary: Dr. Cheryl Jones
Webmaster: Craig Slawson

Address for Newsletter correspondence:

Dr. Thomas A. Hose,
Buckinghamshire New University,
Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe,
Buckinghamshire, HP11 2JZ

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- Vol 1 Nos 1 (spring 2010) 15th March 2010
- Vol 1 Nos 2 (summer 2010) 14th June 2010
- Vol 1 Nos 3 (autumn 2010) 6th September 2010
- Vol 1 Nos 4 (winter 2010) 6th December 2010