

GeoConservationUK Newsletter



Volume 1, Number 2

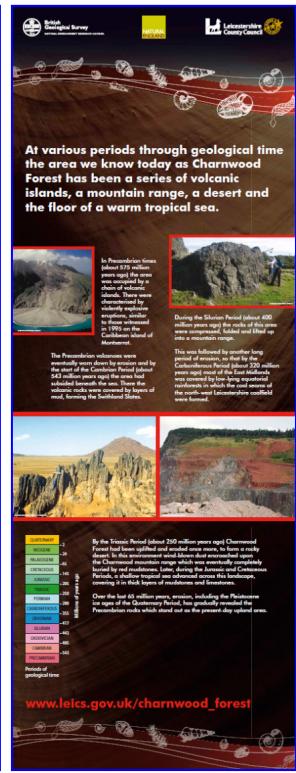
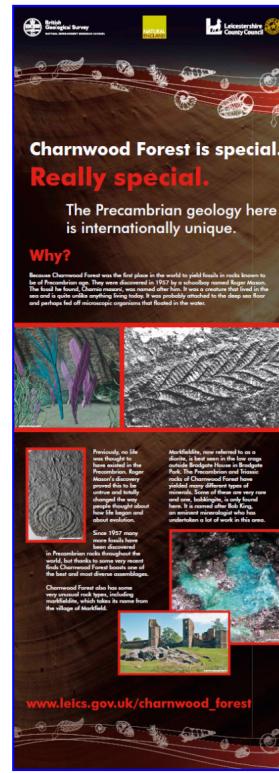
23rd July 2010

Charnwood Forest — *putting up the banners*

Charnwood Forest is one of those many locations in the UK significant because of its role in the development and history of geology. The historical element is actually only just over fifty years old, which was when the world's earliest macro-fossils were recognised as such by a schoolboy who went on to become a distinguished geologist.

A Travelling display has recently been created about Charnwood Forest by Leslie Eddlestone of Leicestershire County Council, Keith Ambrose of the British Geological Survey and GeoConservationUK and Karen Devenport of Natural England; it has been funded by Natural England through the East Midlands Geodiversity Partnership. It consists of six banners (see right for the first two) that highlight the unique geology and landscape of the area.

A series of postcards on which the general public are invited to say what is special about Charnwood Forest for them is also available. The banners are currently touring around the Charnwood Forest area, mainly in libraries (see left) and other public places.



EDITORIAL

It seems to be a year of rather unexpected events and changes. Geologically we had that volcano in Iceland and all those grounded aircraft and stranded tourists. Then, we had that election outcome and just about every public agency is beginning to feel the impact of the coalition's claw-back of funding; a possible noted casualty might well be the Geoconservation Review and this just as it is about to complete its major work. You might also notice that the Newsletter has a new sponsor and that is partly related to the changing employment environment in the UK's universities! Setting aside those doom and gloom indicators, what can the geoconservation world look forward to this year? Well, there are some interesting meetings, conferences and courses in the UK and Europe. GeoConservationUK has its first (Geological Society) accredited CPD course, put together by four of our Executive Committee members, running in Liverpool in November. I have been fortunate to attend a conference in Serbia in June and hope to be in Scotland in December for yet another; yet I've also been unable to get to at least another two! Of course, we can all look forward to our November AGM. Meanwhile, there are those summer field trips organised by member groups to enjoy; just send me a report or story for the Newsletter - please! **TOM HOSE**

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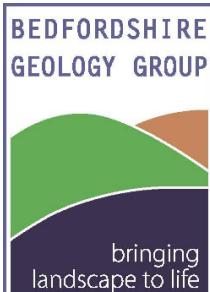
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ENGLAND — *Bedfordshire Geology Group*



... Members 'test drive' the Group's first 'geotrail' ...

The Group has re-named itself from Bedfordshire & Luton Geology Group to the Bedfordshire Geology Group. A new logo has been designed that reflects the county's rolling scarp and vale landscape.

May 9th saw members 'test driving' the Group's first 'geotrail'. The Group's Chair and author of the trail, Peter Lally, led a small group along the 6.5 mile Bromham to Stevington circular walk. The landscape of gentle rolling hills is one that has been sculpted by glaciation and is covered with boulder clay, in varying depths of 3 to 30 metres, overlying the Jurassic limestone bedrock. Both Bromham and Stevington are beautiful north Bedfordshire villages with many buildings built from the local



stone. Stevington Church is a particularly interesting mix including local oolitic limestone and some Tottleshoe stone (from the Chalk) thrown in for good measure.

A bonus to the walk, which ended back at Bromham Mill for refreshments, was a stop at Stevington Windmill (see above) which was open to view inside. Further details of the Group's activities can be found on its website.



ENGLAND — *The Black Country Geological Society*

The Society has a good range of field trips planned for the spring and summer. On 21st March Graham Worton led 25 members on a trip to explore the Wolverhampton area; at West Park they viewed several standing stones (see top far right) placed their from across the Black Country and labelled as part of 1881 and 1884 science and technology exhibitions that had geology galleries. Rocks of the Coal Measures and Triassic sandstones were seen and their economic significance was considered. At Wightwick Manor labelled Lake District and Scottish glacial erratics were seen (see top near right).

On March 23rd David Smith (Shropshire Geological Society) led a trip to the Lilleshall area, with its dominant monument (see below) visible from some distance, to initially examine Precambrian volcanic rocks and Cambrian sand-



stones. Then Lower Carboniferous limestones unconformably overlain by Coal Measures were seen, before Permian sandstones and brecias. Evidence was also seen for several periods of marine transgression and uplift and erosion. The volcanic rocks represent violent activity including lava eruptions and huge ash falls.

On June 19th Chris Arkwright led a trip to look at the Lower Carboniferous volcanic rocks around Buxton, starting at Miller's Dale and then looking at Litton Mill, Tideswell Dale and Calton Hill.

The next trip (jointly with the *Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club*) on July 24th will be led by Dr. Paul Oliver. The Precambrian and Cambrian basement in Martley Pit, and the complex folding and faulting of the Silurian will be seen, as well as the Triassic sandstone quarries in Martley village. A popular aspect of the trip is bound to be the chance of a pub lunch!



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ENGLAND — *Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group*

“... the sad loss of Mike Henty ... A larger than life character with an enthusiasm for geology that was contagious.”

“... a well attended AGM followed by a lecture ...”

“... members assisted in the Museum’s ‘Rock and Fossil Day’”

The Group suffered the sad loss in April of an outstanding and popular member, Mike Henty (left), who succumbed to cancer after a long and bravely met illness. Mike was well known for his numerous contributions to field trips and public activities. Members of BEHG will also remember him for his talks on rock and minerals and for his retail business selling rocks and minerals. Mike was a larger than life character with an enthusiasm for geology that was contagious. Mike was a devoted father of five, grandfather, and just before his death becoming a great grandfather. Mike will be greatly missed by family, friends and the local geoconservation community.

The Group had a well attended AGM on 24th April followed by a lecture, *‘Past environmental changes in tropical South America’*, by Dr. Will Gosling at the Aylesbury Museum. His lecture was an account of how ancient pollen preserved in the layers of lake sediment in the Amazon basin could be used to interpret the past climate of the region. He explained how the study of pollen was performed and even showed how to make a home-made pollen collecting device using a plastic funnel. He stressed the importance of understanding the present distribution of pollen and how that relates to present day flora and climate before applying interpretations to the fossil pollen record. Following the lecture the Group members assisted in the Museum’s ‘Rock and Fossil Day’; this was a great success as the Group was able to fill both of the Museum’s Learning Centre with displays and activities. The displays included Ice Age fossils, plesiosaurs, volcanic rocks, and fluorescent minerals. Activities included fossil identification, a micro-



scope demonstration (see right), fossil plaster casting, fossil rubbings, a fossil dig, and a Jurassic seascape colouring wall. This mix of displays and activities was well received by many visitors.

The weekend before the AGM saw the Group, in brilliant weather, at Stowe (see below) led by Susan Le from the National Trust and Jill Eyers; together they were able to combine their expertise and describe the history of the estate’s gardens, buildings and geology. The May Bank Holiday walk from West Wycombe to Bradenham, led by Jill Eyers, was well attended despite the cold winds.

Stops were made to look at various geological features, including the sarsen stones at Bradenham (see right). At the walk’s end the walls of St. Botolph’s church were examined and the various different stones in it were recognised.

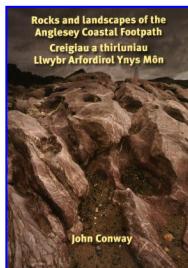
On 19th June the Group visited Burnham Beeches on a joint event with the Corporation of London; around twenty members were led by Graham Hickman and Helen Reid, the site’s ecologist, added to everyone’s understanding with explanations of the special habitats which the surface water sustains. The hydrology was explained by tracing the streams from their sources; an insight into the Hidden groundwater was gained by opening up a couple of water observation boreholes and using the Corporation’s well-dipper to measure the water level. Finally the Group enjoyed afternoon tea in the cafe after visiting the old quarry.

A full range of summer field and indoor meetings can be found on the Group’s website: www.bucksgeology.org.uk



PUBLICATIONS — Rocks and Landscapes of the Anglesey Coastal Footpath

(John Conway for GeoMon Anglesey Geopark)

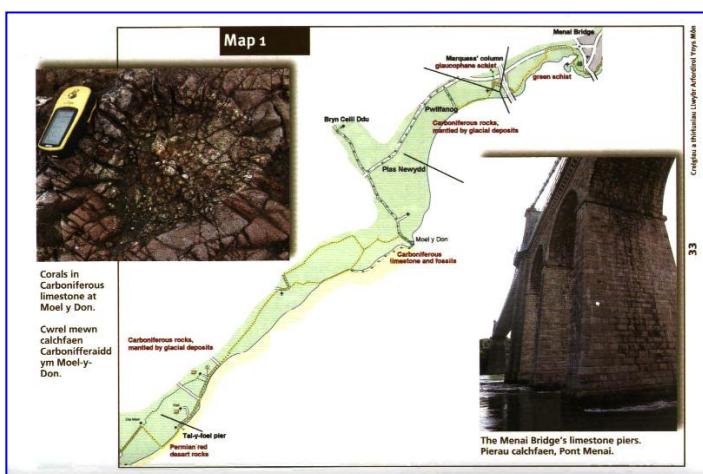
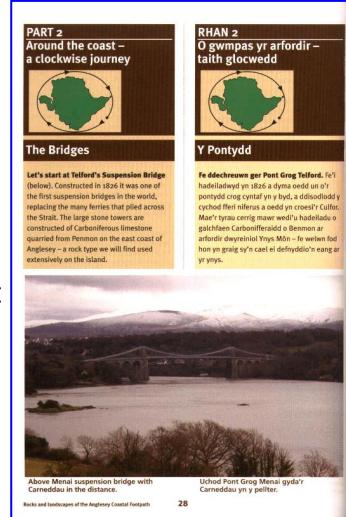


This addition to the populist literature on the coastal geology of Wales is to be warmly welcomed. The initial impression that this well produced A5 soft-cover book is a text-rich and thick tome is very misleading; it is due to the challenges of producing a text suitable for both native Welsh and English readers with the text on each page split into a left-hand English and a right-hand Welsh column printed in differently tinted text boxes. The guide's quality of reproduction on semi-gloss art paper is excellent. The opening pages have the GA's fieldwork code of conduct and safety and access advice - it is always a good idea to reinforce the geoconservation message in a field-guide!

An opening section outlines the geological history of the area; it is just a pity that a summary diagram or timeline, together with some palaeoenvironmental sketches could not have been included; but these would have bulked up the publication and most users would probably be familiar with populist texts containing such information. The next section details specific locations on a route around the island. A particularly good point here is that the index and pages edges are coloured coded so finding specific locations is relatively easy. Apart from dealing with the expected solid geology, some consideration is also given over to soils; this is something to be encouraged since far too many geologists see soils and superficial deposits as something that masks the interesting stuff!

The text is well written in a very accessible style with sufficient but succinct explanation to meet the needs of the vast bulk of likely readers. The few suggestions for lunch stops are very welcome. The numerous photo-illustrations have excellent captioning (see upper right), although in just a few cases some sketch drawing on them would help highlight key features for the novice user. Of course, the real test of any field-guide is how does it actually perform in the field; can the locations and features be found and the descriptions followed with ease? The answer is overall a resounding 'yes', especially because the route-finding (which includes well labelled sketch maps - see below) is in **em-boldened** typeface

and the site descriptions in regular typeface (see lower right). The author's assertion that *"I believe that the rocks are interesting in their own right, for the story they tell of the history of Anglesey over hundreds of millions of years, a journey from around 60° south of the equator to its present position."* is well founded. Hopefully, this field-guide will sell in sufficient numbers to suggest further similar ventures along the adjacent North Wales coast.





GeoConservationUK Newsletter

MEETINGS and CONFERENCES

GEOTRENDS - June 2010 - Novi Sad, Serbia



The GEOTRENDS'10 programme was 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, members of statutory bodies, and protected area managers from the relevant departments 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, and tourism professionals.
- Anyone involved in the development of a strategy for ensuring the continued security and sustainability of natural heritage.

Around 60 delegates from as far afield as the USA braved the unseasonal weather at the end of June to participate in the GEOTRENDS'10 conference. This followed the LOESSFEST'09 conference held in the preceding September. Both were organised by the Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management of Novi Sad University. Novi Sad is Serbia's second city and lies on the banks of the Danube. It was just a pity the packed programme gave too little time to explore the fine old town.

Organised over two days was a comprehensive programme, starting at 9.00 am and finishing around 7.30 pm just to make the point how much hard but rewarding work such conferences actually are, of presentations split into various themed sessions; these included: Geotourism and Geoheritage of Serbia; Sustainability and Destination Management; and Education and Interpretation. The conference opening keynote address, '*Geotourism, a European Perspective on a Global Phenomenon*', was delivered by Tom Hose; several other UK speakers included Chris Cleal (National Museum of Wales), John Conway (Royal Agricultural College), John Gordon (Scottish Natural Heritage), and Professor Ian Smalley (Leicester University). Dusan Mijovic (Nature Conservation Institute of Serbia) and was amongst the able 'local' speakers. The various contributions revealed something of the divergence between the geological and geographical basis of geotourism,

although the geologists did their best to reinforce the former.

The last day of the conference was given over to the obligatory and enjoyable, despite the developing inclement weather, field trip attended by about a third of the delegates (see below). This focussed on the



Titel loess plateau and its spectacular and globally significant thick sections of loess and palaeosols. A visit to a monastery with an interpreted geosite was also included. The day started with an examination of the new visitor centre and some geo-interpretation in the Fruska Gora National Park. The closing BBQ at the Petrovaradin Fortress had to be moved indoors to the University as the clouds released a torrential downpour, a truly British summer then in Serbia!

Congratulations on the conference's success, and enjoyable hospitality programme, go to the principal organiser Slobodon Markovic and his very able post-graduate student Dordje Vasiljevic who carried much of the burden of the day-to-day running; of course, there were many who worked behind the scenes and on the hospitality — a big 'thank you' to them all and perhaps next year we can look forward to ...



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MEETINGS and CONFERENCES



GeoConservationUK acknowledges the financial and practical support of **Rockhounds Welcome!** in the production of this Newsletter

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

17th November, 2010, (10.00 - 17.30) at Liverpool Hope University

A workshop sponsored by **GeoConservationUK** and accredited by the **Geological Society**

Tutors:

Prof. Cynthia Burek Dr. Kevin Crawford [who can be contacted for further details: crawfok@hope.ac.uk]
Dr. Murray Gray Dr. Tom Hose

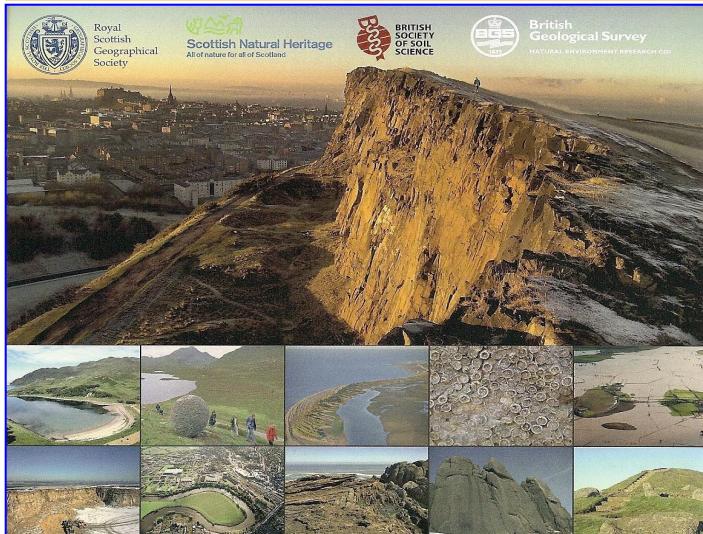
Programme:

*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.

(Recognised by the Geological Society for CPD purposes)



Engaging with geodiversity —why it matters

Speakers include:

Iain Stewart
Plymouth University

Stuart Monro OBE
Our Dynamic Earth

An exploration of the concept, its relationship to biodiversity, and its integration in environmental management, planning, tourism and education.

Supported by



1 December 2010
Our Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh

For further information see www.rsgs.org

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