

# GeoConservationUK Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 3

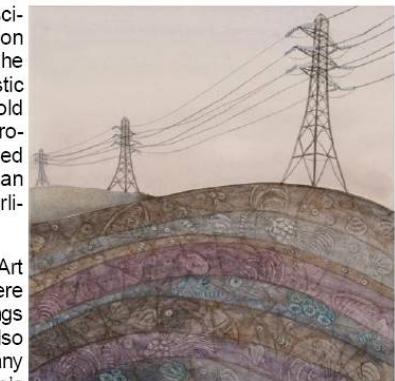
15<sup>th</sup> October 2010



## 'Land lines' under Dudley — *interpreting strata*

In geoconservation it's possible to get so involved with the science and the practicalities of site designation, conservation and management that just how geology's study, especially the places it takes geologists to, can inspire spiritual and artistic expression is easily neglected. Perhaps it was easier in the old days, before the advent of digital imaging and GPS, when professional geologists recorded their observations in detailed sketches and watercolours. It's therefore interesting when an artist's interpretations recall in their own way some of the earliest geological sections from her native Peak District.

However, the works on display, in Dudley Museum and Art Gallery over the spring and summer, by Sue Halstead were inspired by visits to the Wren's Nest. The *Land lines* paintings (see example, left) are the result. Her interpretations have also been influenced by geological maps and diagrams. Many show cross-sections of the ground beneath Dudley. Sue's paintings, underpinned by her training as a textiles' designer reflect her interest in the subtle colours, patterns and textures of the rocks.



## EDITORIAL

Geology indirectly has been much in the recent news, although the underlying human interest element has rather obscured it. The unfolding events in Chile surrounding the trapped copper miners, might for some of us have brought to mind historic events in Cornwall. Then there was the completion after 14 years of tunneling in the Alps that probably recalled a similar event under the English Channel. All of which rather ties in with my last editorial on grounded planes and this time stuck trains due to reported smoke and CO<sub>2</sub> sensor problems. Just seems that events really are conspiring to keep us holidaying at home this year. Mind you, with our magnificent geology who really needs exotic travel?

Anyway, I and my good lady were tempted to take our first (and last?!) UK coach holiday, to the Scottish Highlands, historically an exotic geotourism region, to photograph splendid rocks and the sunsets over Skye; we hadn't reckoned on persistent low cloud! The much anticipated Skye trip was marred when the tour coach twice drove straight past the roadside viewpoint for the Black Cuillins volcanic centre on its way to yet another set of hosteries and shops. Yes, I've complained to the coach tour company, but I have to wonder about just what more we have to do to raise geology's and geotourism's profile with the domestic tourism industry! TOM HOSE

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## ENGLAND — The Berkshire Geoconservation Group

“...recently renamed itself...”

The *Berkshire RIGS* Group has recently re-named itself to *The Berkshire Geoconservation Group* to reflect its developing approach to conserving and promoting geosites. Its forthcoming activities include two fieldtrips:

Sunday 31st October. This is entitled 'Curridge - Slips, Sloughs & Swallowholes'. Starting at 1.00pm Lesley Dunlop and Dick Greenaway will lead a 4.5 mile walk to look at the geology, wildlife & history around Curridge.

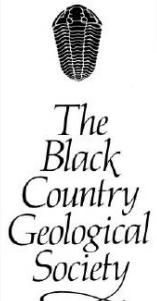
And:

Sunday 28th November. This is

entitled 'A Winter walk at Winter Hill'. Starting at 11.00am, a short walk of about 2.5 miles from Winter Hill to Cookham Dean Quarry (both Local Geological Sites) and Bisham Woods. Cookham Dean Quarry is a lovely chalk quarry with good flint bands. They are hoping for a clear day to look at the views, and the advice is to wrap up warm!

Any GCUK affiliated Group members interested should email Lesley Dunlop:

[lesley.dunlop@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.dunlop@oxfordshire.gov.uk)



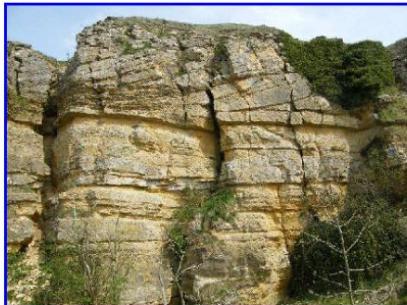
## ENGLAND — The Black Country Geological Society

As always the Society has organised a good range of indoor and field meetings over the past few months. Amongst the latter was the April visit to Cleeve Hill and Cleeve Common; this was led by Dave Owen of the Gloucestershire Geoconservation Trust. It followed the 'Rural Geology Trail Guide for Cleeve Common' visiting numerous quarries and exposures of the Middle Jurassic Aston and Birdlip Limestone Formations.

Wickfield Quarry was visited first to look at the Lower Freestone or Cleeve Cloud Member (Birdlip Limestone Formation) - a yellow, orange, white and grey oolitic limestone deposited under tropical shallow marine/shelf conditions. The Lower Freestone, so named because of an absence of fossils, is easily cut and has been extracted from Roman times, reaching its height in the mid 19th Century; it was commonly used as a building and ornamental stone across Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, and was used to build much of Cheltenham.

Other localities visited included Grass Grown Quarries, Sand Mine Quarry, Rolling Bank Quarry, Castle Rock and

Cleeve Cloud; at the latter the Lower Freestone is exposed overlying Pea Grit (Upper Crickley Member), with cross beds of submarine oolitic dunes (see below) indicating shallow shelf conditions with associated tidal



and wave activity. Geomorphological interest on the trip was provided by the rotational landslips on Cleeve Common.

Upcoming indoor events include the lecture 'Is Man's role in Climate Change Significant?' (25th October) and the usual and much enjoyed BCGS Members' evening (29th November) with refreshments provided in the convivial atmosphere of the festive season.

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## ENGLAND — Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group



The Group continues to flourish with several events and activities already held and more in the pipeline (well, actually posted on its website). Some 30 people attended a joint evening with the Natural History Society Milton Keynes. Julia Carey led the group on a gentle stroll through the community woodland (see below)



“... Tea, coffee and cakes were enjoyed thanks to the WI.”

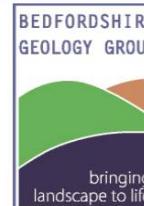
aquatic habitat. The hydrology of the area is quite complex as springs are fed from local aquifers in the more permeable Jurassic limestones and Quaternary river gravels. Jurassic clays and glacial till provide impermeable layers that support a number of meandering streams and ponds.

Whilst no bats or owls were seen during the evening meeting, plenty of other things held the group's interest. As darkness fell they retraced their steps to the Bucks County Council Depot building where tea, coffee and cakes were enjoyed thanks to the WI.



to look at its fauna and flora. Jill Eyers then led them through Coombs quarry (see right) to look at the Jurassic White Limestone Group. Of particular interest was the pond, fed from springs, that provides a good

## ENGLAND — Bedfordshire Geology Group



During August, the Group carried out a site clearance at Kensworth Nature Reserve, where members cleared two-thirds of the Chalk face (see below) of the quarry; this made it more



“... a public event... to celebrate the completion of its re-branding...”

useful for visiting educational parties.

September saw the Group's AGM which was very well supported and

the old committee was re-instated. There was also a joint presentation on 'Climate Change in the Geological Past' by Frances Maynard and Bev Fowlston.

On Sunday 3rd October, the Group held a public open event at the Marston Vale Forestry Centre, near Bedford, to celebrate the completion of its re-branding exercise; it was also used to launch the Group's new website, posters and range of leaflets. This was all made possible thanks to a grant generously given by the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Grassroots Grants Fund Foundation. The event was happily a great success with members of the public, many of whom showed a really keen interest in all the fine geological specimens the Group had on display. The event was also very well supported in various capacities by the Group's own members.



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## ENGLAND — Dorset's Important Geological Sites Group

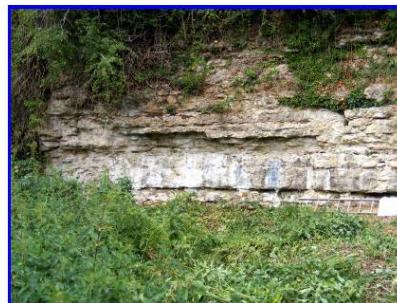
As we all probably appreciate, owning and / or managing geosites doesn't end with their designation. A lot of, and continuing and demanding, hard work is needed to both maintain access and keep rock faces clean enough to show their geological interest. It's all those shears, axes, hand saws and petrol strimmers (see below) — enough to



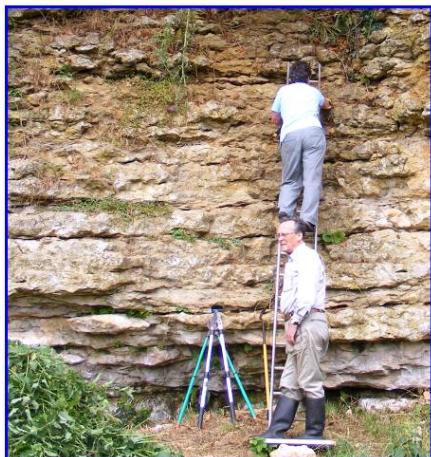
worry any health and safety officer enough to check all those certifications of competence to use ...

Then, of course, there are the health and safety issues over public access, with the inevitable fencing and notices. Then, just occasionally there is the opportunity to develop some interpretation and showcase a geosite to the public, especially children. Bearing in mind all these issues, Dorset's Important Geological Sites Group is to be commended for some sterling work this year, such as ...

The Group has been very active during



the spring and summer months with geosite clearance work. They have twice cleared vegetation at Sherborne (Quarr Lane), noticing its rapid growth between their first work in April and their second in mid-July; stinging nettles in particular seemed to be doing too well! A ladder was used to access (see below) and clean the quarry face, with



"It's all those shears, axes, hand saws and petrol strimmers ..."

... to be commended for some sterling work ..."

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## ENGLAND — Dorset's Important Geological Sites Group (cont.)

Mid July also saw the Group working at Portesham Quarry (below). Luckily, despite a



poor weather forecast, there was no rain at all! The lime kiln was cleared of vegetation (see right), although some of the plants were left to flower. The nature and success of the work involved, requiring some agility, can be

In early July, Crack Lane, at Langton Matravers, was inspected. On the plus side the access path (see below) was quite clear (and



looked as if it had been mechanically mown), and new fencing and gates had been erected. However, on the rather negative side someone had dumped a motor scooter right outside the gate to the site!

The actual 'RIGS' site's condition (see top right) was not too bad considering it had not been cleared by the Group since summer 2008. However, the opportunity was taken to cut back some ferns, gorse and brambles, but the orchids were (see bottom right) untouched.



This left the site accessible for the July Rockwatch event. More maintenance work is planned for the autumn.

One of the Group's promotional activities has included setting up a display in Dorchester Library; this seems to have been successful in inspiring some interest from the public and over 30 leaflets were distributed.



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## ENGLAND — Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group

In 2009 the Group was offered the opportunity to re-expose the Kenilworth Sandstone in a cutting on the old Kenilworth to Berkswell branch line which was closed in the 1960s. The ferruginous sandstone has been extensively used in Kenilworth's old buildings, from the castle to small cottages; it provides much of the 'character' in old Kenilworth. However, virtually no accessible exposures remain so the re-opening of the former railway as a Sustrans cycle route provided a wonderful opportunity to remedy this situation.

*... after slave driving ... a real rock outcrop*



The trackbed, since its closure, had become almost completely overgrown with trees and shrubs. In spring 2010 the County Council cleared the worst of the growth on the trackbed so that by May the Group was able to start work. For the most of a day a group of 16 volunteers tackled a stretch some 30m x 3m, removing not only shrubs but also considerable amounts of talus which had accumulated since the line was constructed in 1884. After slave-driving from the 'leader', what had been an area of scrub with a few lumps of rock poking through, looked much more like a real rock outcrop (see left). The Group is now awaiting the arrival of a JCB to remove talus that was too much for manual clearance, after which it is hoped that its volunteers will be willing once again to manicure the section. On completion, the plan is to provide interpretation panels for the public; unfortunately the first bid for funding has been rejected, but the Group is actively seeking other avenues to finance this vital element of the

few lumps of rock poking through, looked much more like a real rock outcrop (see left). The Group is now awaiting the arrival of a JCB to remove talus that was too much for manual clearance, after which it is hoped that its volunteers will be willing once again to manicure the section. On completion, the plan is to provide interpretation panels for the public; unfortunately the first bid for funding has been rejected, but the Group is actively seeking other avenues to finance this vital element of the

## SCOTLAND — Lothian and Borders Geoconservation

Lothian and Borders GeoConservation (LaBGC) - formerly LaBRIGS - met at the beginning of October to formally designate 15 more Local Geodiversity Sites, bringing the total to 43 in its area. This success results from the work of the Edinburgh Geodiversity Sites Working Group (GSWG) chaired by an officer of the City Council. These and other pre-existing Edinburgh Sites will all be included in the new Local Plan consultation due out in 2011; members of the public will then have their chance to comment. Already West Lothian and Midlothian councils are considering setting up their own GSWG's in which local geologists are the driving force. This system of working mimics that for local biodiversity sites.

Saturday 9th October was a Red Letter day for Rockwatch in Scotland. Lothian LaBGC in Dumfries and Galloway joined with Edinburgh and Glasgow's Geological Societies and their Universities in putting on a Volcano Fun Day (see right) for 80-100 children and adults in the Historic Scotland Ranger Centre in Holyrood Park in full view of the Arthur's Seat Volcano. The day was disturbed by many minor eruptions and tremors and the odd sortie to see the real volcanic rocks. The day was so successful that a repeat is very likely and even a Fossil Fun Day may be set up. Well done to Kat Braun as the chief cook and event inspiration....well someone had to help the children make the earth models of chocolate coated marshmallows with raisin cores! Fortunately most of them were eaten by their proud owners not the event providers.



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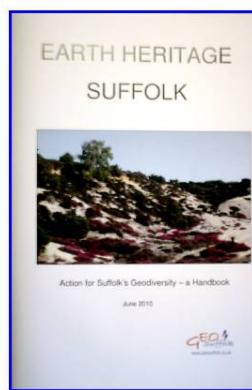
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### PUBLICATIONS — EARTH HERITAGE SUFFOLK: Action for Suffolk's Geodiversity (GeoSuffolk)

The latest publication from GeoSuffolk came out curious. However, the lack of a map showing their location might deter some people.

During 2008-2009 at different venues; each of these involved a series of mini-lectures on local geodiversity and a field trip and also included the opportunity to comment on the draft document. Its primary audience is Local Authority officers, nature / landscape conservation personnel, landowners / managers and conservation volunteers. However, this does mean that it will not be useful to, or indeed attractive to, other audiences.

The approach to designating and managing, including conflicts via a brief case study, geosites is covered next. It then moves on to examine the interpretation and promotion of geosites, including a welcome coverage of 'responsible fieldwork'. A range of panels, publications and exhibitions are noted; again a section on 'access for all' briefly addresses meeting the needs of individual users with visual and mobility disabilities.



It's an A4 60 page soft cover volume (see left) printed on good quality paper that has enabled excellent colour fidelity and the reproduction of fine detail in the many incorporated photographs; these and the varied approach to typography lend the publication a unique character. However, the page numbering is at first a bit confusing because each section is uniquely paginated.

The volume focuses on several interrelated aspects of the county's geodiversity. The introductory chapter outlines its geology and stratigraphy, before providing well illustrated and succinctly described accounts (see left) of some of its key localities. Some fifteen of these are covered

An innovative following section deals with how geodiversity has both inspired researchers and provided inspiration for artistic, literary and musical expression; it opens with a mention of some past 'local heroes' (see left).

The penultimate section describing 'geodiversity providers' opens with an illustrated account of relevant local BGS publications. It then covers museums and various national and local agencies and societies.

The final section is a gazetteer of geodiversity sites subdivided by District Councils. Overall, it's an interesting and undoubtedly, in the local context, useful contribution to raising awareness of geodiversity. The geosites included are all in the main publicly accessible. The inclusion of website addresses is helpful, just so long as they remain posted.

Anyway, as long as you are not a researcher or student looking for really detailed geosite descriptions, just detailed enough, sometimes strongly recommend that you do) you won't be with sketch maps, to disappointed. You might even be tempted to visit entice a visit from the some splendid beaches!

TOM HOSE





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## Agenda for the Twelfth Annual General Meeting of GeoConservationUK The Association of UK RIGS Groups

University College London, Gower Street, London  
Natural Sciences Common Room  
Room 10, South Wing

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2010  
13.00 – 14.00 pm, following the SGM

1. Welcome: Chairman, GeoConservationUK
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the 11th UKRIGS AGM, University of London, 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2009
4. Matters arising
5. Report of the Chairman, GeoConservationUK
6. Financial report of the Treasurer, GeoConservationUK
7. Other reports
8. Questions from the floor
9. Election of Members of the Executive Committee
10. Installation of new Committee
11. Date of next AGM

Now this space really would have looked so good with a photo and a note on some geology, geomorphology, geoconservation or geotourism conference, event or meeting. The *Newsletter* relies upon the contributions of member groups and individuals. So, don't be bashful, send in your news and illustration to the Editor; please note the new contact email (broadband, so it can at last accept large files without the copper wires glowing) account:

[t.hose123@btinternet.com](mailto:t.hose123@btinternet.com)

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### Twelfth GeoConservationUK AGM

#### Executive Committee Officers and Members Election 2010

Candidate statements will be available at the AGM

#### Officers:

There were no nominations for the position of Secretary and this position remains vacant.

#### Members

The Five Member positions received three nominations as listed below.

Nominee	Proposed by	Seconded by
John Reynolds	Staffordshire RIGS Group	Black Country Geological Society
Keith Ambrose	Leicestershire and Rutland RIGS Group	Nottinghamshire RIGS group
Lesley Dunlop	Berkshire RIGS Group	Oxfordshire Geology Trust

They are thus elected to the UKRIGS Executive Committee to serve for two years, 2010 - 2012

Mike Browne (Chairman), Alan Cutler (Treasurer), Ken Addison, Cynthia Burek, Kevin Crawford, Tom Hose, Rick Ramsdale have a further year to serve.

Now this space really would have looked so good with a photo and a note on some geology, geomorphology, geoconservation or geotourism conference, event or meeting. The *Newsletter* relies upon the contributions of member groups and individuals. So, don't be bashful, send in your news and illustration to the Editor; please note the new contact email (broadband, so it can at last accept large files without the copper wires glowing) account:

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# GeoConservationUK Newsletter

## MEETINGS and CONFERENCES



### Geodiversity & Geoconservation: An introduction for non-specialist audiences

A one-day workshop (Geological Society Endorsed Training/CPD Course) sponsored by **GeoConservationUK** (formerly UKRIGS).

#### Course Deliverers:

Professor Cynthia Burek: Centre for Science Communication, University of Chester  
Dr. Kevin Crawford: Liverpool Hope University  
Dr. Murray Gray: Queen Mary, University of London  
Dr. Tom Hose: Rockhounds Welcome!

#### Target Audiences:

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

#### Location and Time:

Liverpool Hope University, Wednesday 17th November 2010, 10.00am - 5.30pm (inc. walk)

#### Outline Schedule:

Introduction to course & logistics  
What is Geodiversity?  
What is Geoconservation?  
Interpretation of concepts  
Legislative issues  
Geodiversity in planning  
Geodiversity Walk (Optional)

The course will cover the key terms in geodiversity and geoconservation, explore the approaches to geoconservation, highlight important issues associated with geoconservation, and introduce methods of communication in geodiversity and geoconservation.

#### Course Fee:

**£160** (a 10% reduction is applicable for Geological Society and GeoConservationUK & RIGS group members). Fee includes lunch and refreshments throughout the day.



**For registration, payment and other information, contact:**  
Dr Kevin Crawford  
Department of Geography  
Liverpool Hope University  
Hope Park, Liverpool, L16 9JD  
Email: [crawfok@hope.ac.uk](mailto:crawfok@hope.ac.uk)



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## MEETINGS and CONFERENCES

### ESTA - 17 - 19 September 2010 - Leicester

John Reynolds took the new *GeoConservationUK* pull-up banners to the *Earth Science Teachers' Association* conference held this year in Leicester. The National Space Centre was the venue for the Conference Dinner, providing John with the welcome opportunity to preview the site for a potential visit with his grandchildren. He was much impressed by the gadgetry, but the rock samples were a bit small! In complete contrast, he thought Bardon Quarry was 'ginormous'! About 100 teachers at all levels attended the conference's varied range of professional development sessions, updating lectures and of course the very enjoyable field trips.



John Reynolds and Susan Beale take a well earned tea break at the *GeoConservationUK* stand at the *ESTA* conference; they have both been involved in geoconservation and education for many years, but neither will admit to just how many!

Considerable interest yet again continued to be shown by many delegates in the *GCUK Earth Science On-Site Project*'s materials; it is therefore rather sad that the project is no longer funded. Most of the Project's remaining CDs were distributed especially to younger teachers, along with leaflets from local Geoconservation Groups.

It was, says John, really good to meet up with lots of colleagues from across the education spectrum. Many, John commented, like Susan Beale, had helped with actually writing the popular *ESO-S* materials.

The 2011 *ESTA* conference will be held in Durham, but earlier in the year, in July. It is an annual, geology focused, event well worth attending.

### Rockwatch - July 2010 - Dorset



**Rockwatch** members (aged 8-18 years) enjoyed the delights of Dorset's geology this summer. The Purbeck Quarries were visited, on 28<sup>th</sup> July, with visits to Crack Lane (see left), Queensground (see right) and other sites. Some good fossils were found and kept!





# GeoConservationUK Newsletter

## 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

17<sup>th</sup> 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 should be contacted for further details: [crawfok@hope.ac.uk](mailto:crawfok@hope.ac.uk)]  
Dr. Murray Gray Dr. Tom Hose

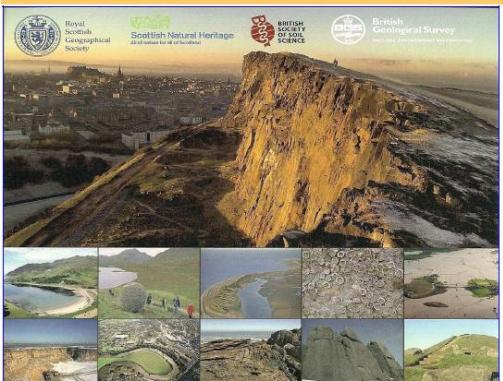
**Programme:**

*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—see page 10 for course details)



### Engaging with geodiversity —why it matters

**Speakers include:**

Iain Stewart  
Plymouth University

Stuart Morris OBE  
Our Dynamic Earth

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



1 December 2010  
Our Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh

For further information see [www.rsgs.org](http://www.rsgs.org)

### GeoConservationUK Executive Committee

**Chair:** Mike Browne - Lothian & Borders RIGS

**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

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**Copy dates for the GeoConservationUK Newsletter in 2010 are as follows:**

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