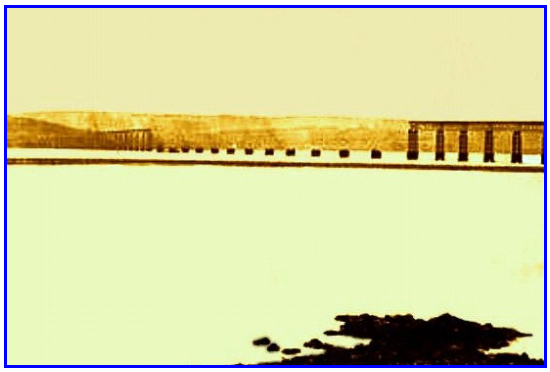
GeoConservationUK Newsletter

Volume 2, Number 4

28th December 2011

Wind, water and building bridges . . .



In 1908 on the same day that this newsletter is published the Messina earthquake struck in southern Italy. It destroyed the cities of Messina in Sicily and Reggio di Calabria on the Italian mainland. The earthquake and its resulting tsunami killed between 50,000 and 150,000 people. At home, in 1879 the first Tay bridge collapsed (see right) during a violent storm while a train was passing over it with up to 75 people on board and all were killed. In both disasters the destructive effect of water was clear. However, whilst Messina was a natural disaster the Tay disaster was down, at the very least, to human error if not to the incompetence of numerous individuals; a key issue revolved around matters of bridge design, inspection and the quality control of its materials. A new Tay bridge of appropriate design and materials stands alongside its predecessor's remains - as a reminder?.

Now what you might ask has this got to do with geoconservation? Well, if we cannot get right the design and material content of future legislation and planning guidelines, relying to some extent as they do on governmental agencies' advice (and of course politicians' willingness to accept and act upon the same), on nature conservation to reflect the significance of the UK's geoheritage it's a disaster in the making for the safe-keeping of our internationally significant geosites and geomorphosites. So, let's hope that in the coming year we in the geoconservation and geoheritage communities can, in order to rectify their past mistakes, build effective and strong bridges with those agencies and the Government of the day. Let's also hope they will feel inclined put some appropriate resources into supporting the UK's geoheritage and the ongoing process of the recognition and audit of RIGS.

E D I T O R I A L

Welcome to the fourth and last of this year's planned newsletters; as usual, it's a big "thank you" to everyone who contributed content. It's good to have an issue with news from across the UK and to be able to report some good geoconservation work from both GCUK's membership and other organisations, particularly the GA with its new rock coring code; let's hope that research students and their supervisors, on whom we rely to move us on from legacy geology, pay good heed to its advice so that we can look forward to fewer instances of this form of geo-vandalism. Whilst it is good to hear that geoheritage and geoconservation are appreciated in Wales, it is regrettable that this year has seen a range of governmental and agency documents and a white paper that could only cause those of us in living elsewhere in the UK much despair. Perhaps for 2012 we can but hope for better, and expect . . ! Tom Hose

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ENGLAND — *Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group*

The group started the first of many nature surveys at Whiteleaf on 26th October where one of the sessions included an invertebrate survey (see right). This was quickly followed by the second at Buckingham Sand Pit on October 30th. These were two training events which were led by Tom Hose. What are we doing and why are we doing it you may ask? As a geological group we are reviewing our sites with the intention of exposing the geology. This often results in cleaning up the faces and removing the very scrub that provides an important habitat for wildlife. We also have a legal duty to not disturb any protected species (e.g. bats, badgers, and newts). The first step is therefore to survey the wildlife and see if we have anything special.

Tom, myself and some BEHG members have made a good start. We have also made contact with the local wildlife groups, who have responded with enthusiasm. We are very likely to set up some joint events next year at our sites – we will show them our geology and they will explain and find the wildlife on site – sounds a great symbiotic relationship! In addition we have also had a very enthusiastic response from Natural England, the landowners and the managers. We have started to compile all the data known so far about the ecology to add to the geology, basic hydrogeology and soils reports. We now also have a good database of natural history knowledge for our sites. *Jill Eyers*

ENGLAND — *Dorset's Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites Group*

Geoconservation work at Red Lane, Abbotsbury (18th September 2011)

The Group had a successful conservation session on Sunday 18th September working in collaboration with Wessex OUGS group. Members from both organisations (some members of both) worked on one of the Dorset RIGS site at Red Lane in Abbotsbury. The site has an exposure of Abbotsbury Iron Stone which forms passage beds between the Corallian and Kimmeridge Clay in the Upper Jurassic. The ironstone was worked in Victorian times but was found to be too silicic to be economically workable and its exploitation was abandoned. The original oolitic limestone was converted to an iron silicate (chamosite). The site was quite overgrown, despite work on it in August 2010. It was amazing what an effect a group of a dozen people had in a couple of hours on several of the small sections (see right). The conservation session was followed by a walk around Abbotsbury and the surrounding area.

Geoconservation work at Crack Lane, Langton Matravers (October 2011)

At the end of October the Group carried out another of our monthly conservation sessions at Crack Lane (Isle of Purbeck). The site is a former quarry in Upper Purbeck Beds. The conservation at the site is an ongoing activity and the site is one of five in Purbeck that were studied in detail for our CD presentation on the Geology, Landscape and Stone Industry of Purbeck (still available from DIGS at

ENGLAND — *DIGS* (cont.)

the absolute bargain price of £5-00!). There was a successful clearance of vegetation obscuring one rock face and also stopping access to other parts of the site. The Group is also involved in a study of the building stone of Christchurch Priory and the conservator is keen to find a supply of stone which closely matches some of those used on the construction and conservation of the Priory over the past 800 years. Purbeck was one of the potential sources of the stone (Burr and Purbeck Marble) as well as the Isle of Wight (Quarr Stone).

Part of the Crack Lane site is very overgrown with trees and has not received a lot of attention for conservation over the past few years. However by looking at discarded blocks of stone on the floor of the former quarry we found a reasonable match for the sample of stone from the Priory and it was subsequently found in situ in the quarry face. This find resulted in further clearance activity to make this area better exposed. So this was an excellent result and shows the value of the conservation work. Despite it being a dreary day with rain or drizzle for the whole morning the group felt that it had really been worth the effort.

Geoconservation work at Holt Farm Quarry, Melbury Osmond (26th November 2011)

We had a successful morning at Holt Farm on November 26th. It was nice and mild and dry (unlike our last session at Crack Lane in October). One main face was quite overgrown (see top right) and our work party (see bottom right) cleared this and other smaller areas; they also improved the access by clearing some of the vegetation and overhanging branches. Fortunately the nettles had died back a bit, but summer access would be more of a problem.

What the faces need now is a bit of rain to wash off the loose debris. We were surprised by the amount of clayey soil that was covering the faces. The quarry was last work 50 to 60 years ago but it is possible it could be reopened by the land owner (Ilchester Estates) for conservation work on local buildings. We left a pile of loose pieces of Forest Marble in case anyone visits and wants a piece; some of it was very similar to the material seen on the Long Burton visit (just south of Sherborne) last month.

We removed a large bag of miscellaneous debris, most of which went into the scrap metal skip at the recycling centre in Weymouth on the way home! Having cleared the site (well, to some extent) it appears that it would make an excellent site for students to visit to measure (apparent) dip and then work out the true dip. Apart from the shelly Forest Marble there is good variation in thickness of beds, jointing and some really nice tufa in one fracture. There is also good evidence of weathering. It just needs some students studying geology! So a good result with just three hours of hard effort.

Alan Holiday

GeoConservationUK Newsletter

ENGLAND — *GeoSuffolk*

Bob Markham (second from right) with the GA President (David Bridgland) and other award winners.

Bob Markham (not Halstead as previously reported!), the GeoSuffolk Chairman, was awarded the prestigious Halstead Medal by the Geologists' Association for *"his outstanding contribution to East Anglian geology and Crag palaeontology"*. Meanwhile the county's geology continues to be interpreted for the public; a new 'Pliocene Forest' panel has been placed at Sutton. Walkers on the footpath passing by Rockhall Wood SSSI, Sutton, can see the new panel (it also can be down loaded from the GeoSuffolk website) about the trees in the 'Pliocene Forest'. This innovative project interprets the fossil pollen from Suffolk's Coralline Crag. The 'forest' is on private ground, but is easily viewed from the footpath near the panel. The *Dunwich: the geology of Suffolk's lost city* leaflet has been updated and reprinted thanks to a grant from the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Connect Fund. GeoSuffolk also put a portion of the money from the Dunwich and Westleton WEA class they ran at Westleton Common last April towards this project. The new leaflet has already been widely distributed in the Dunwich area; copies are also available at Ipswich Museum, and from the GeoSuffolk web site.

SCOTLAND — *Scottish Geodiversity Forum*

The Scottish Geodiversity Forum (SGF) held its First Annual Conference on 19th November 2011 at Scottish Natural Heritage's (SNH) Battleby Office north of Perth. Over 50 delegates attended to hear three lectures and take part in two from five available workshops of diverse interests (Working with young people; Engaging the general public; Geodiversity in Planning and Policy; Citizen science; More than an interesting narrative). Susan Davies (Director of Policy and Advice SNH) opened the meeting with a speech entitled 'Scotland's Geodiversity - Lets be creative'. Key to the inspirational success of the event were the quality of the presentations by Professor Colin Ballantyne of St Andrews University (Rock and ice- geodiversity at landscape scale in Scotland), Donald Fisher of Northwest Highlands Geopark (Geotourism- an international perspective, what Scotland can learn from others) and Professor Stuart Monro of Our Dynamic Earth (So what? Why geodiversity matters) and the presence of Scottish Government officials contributing to workshops on the planning process in Scotland. The draft Scotland's Geodiversity Charter, hopefully to be published mid 2012, was unveiled to members for critical appraisal and subsequent feedback to the working party (currently drawn from SNH, Scottish Government, SGF). The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is being re-written based on the ecosystems services approach and we are hoping that we will have enough influence that geodiversity will be an integral part of this document.

Mike Browne

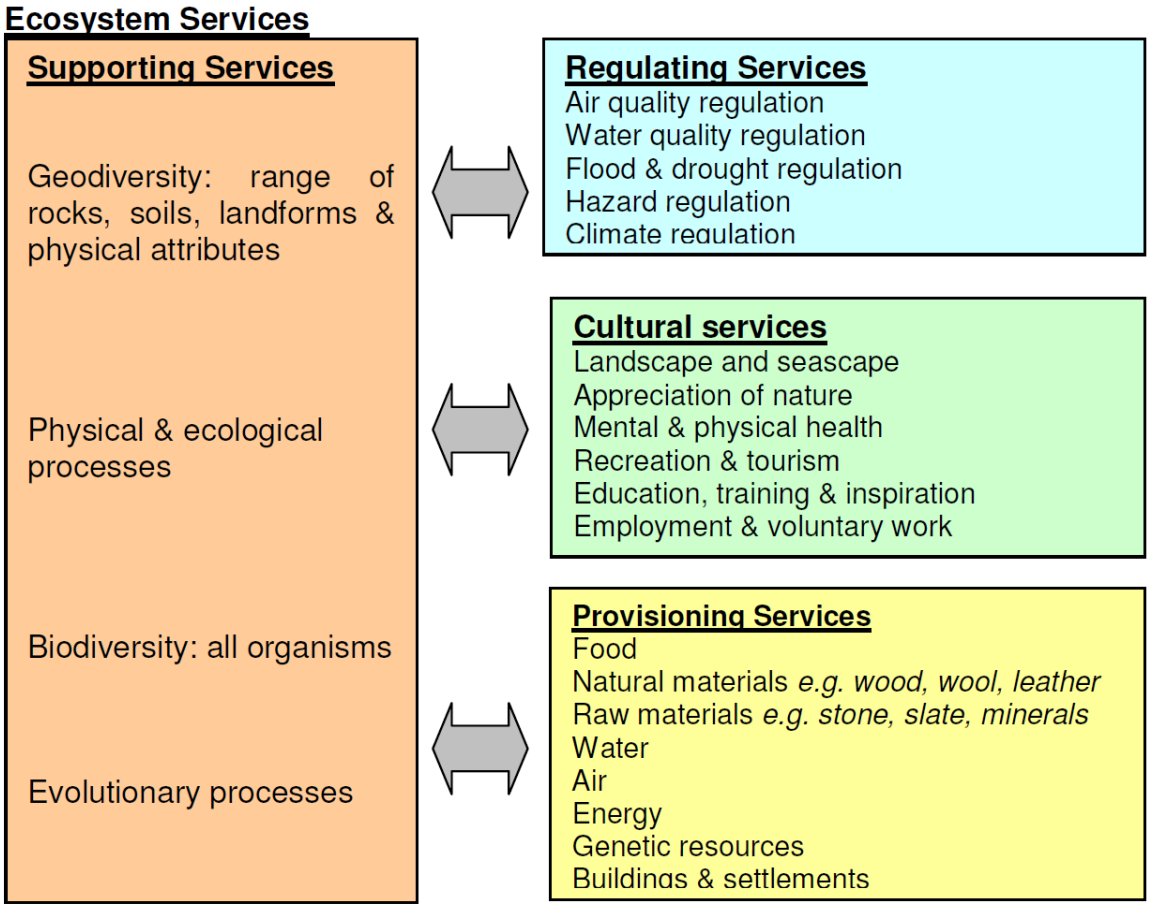
WALES — *The Association of Welsh RIGS Groups*

The Association of Welsh RIGS Groups (AWRG) has been involved in the completion of the All-Wales RIGS audit, which was undertaken by the British Geological Survey, funded by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund for Wales, and was completed this winter. There are now 578 RIGS (plus the South Wales sites) in Wales. The pilot study, in NW and NE Wales, was started in 2003 by Gwynedd and Mon and North East Wales RIGS and the All-Wales audit has taken nine years to complete.

WALES — *The Association of Welsh RIGS Groups* (cont.)

This remarkable achievement has involved many professional and amateur geologists, volunteers and enthusiasts who have produced an unique record of Welsh Geodiversity. This work is still continuing as a RIGS audit is a process and not and end in itself. The original RIGS are now due for monitoring and updating and ensuring that there is a good coverage of RIGS throughout the geodiversity of Wales.

In December 2010, AWRG responded to the Welsh Government's, Ecosystems services, 'A Living Wales' consultation for the Natural Environment Framework. The Welsh Government response has placed geodiversity at the heart of supporting services with strong two-way links to provisioning, cultural and regulating services. Subsequently a paper on a 'geosystems approach for promoting the integrated management, sustainable use and conservation of Wales geodiversity resource' has been published:



It is available from:

http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/nef/publications/geodiversity/?lang=en

http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/nef/currentwork/evidencebase/?lang=en

Wales and the geological community now have to rise to the challenge to ensure that this approach to ecosystems is both sustainable and productive in the coming years. Meanwhile AWRG is delighted to be formally represented on the Executive Committee of GeoConservationUK; I have already attended an Executive Committee meeting in Dudley held in the week before Christmas. *Jacqui Malpas*

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WALES — North-East Wales RIGS

Over the 'summer' NEWRIGS has had two field visits to major sits in the area. In May we spent an evening at the fossil forest at Brymbo, Wrexham. Brymbo continues to excite and amaze its visitors with the sheer variety and abundance of Carboniferous, Westphalian 'B' plant fossils ; these include well preserved leaves, (see below left) and cones (see below right, as well as spectatcular *in situ* large tree trunks and root systems (see below middle).

In September we visited the Garn Prys (see left) exposures of the Denbigh Grits (Silurian). This hill, south of the A5 between Pentrefoelas and Cerrigydrudion, has exposures of turbidites with an unusually high proportion of mass-flow deposits (see above right). These impressive exposures of conglomerates with sharp bases and imbricate pebbles interbedded with upward-grading coarse sandstones, record pulses of northerly transported mass flows in an ancient submarine canyon.

The programme of local summer field visits will continue next year. Meanwhile, NEWRIGS continues to investigate new RIGS and is working on the first village geodiversity trail. *Jacqui Malpas*

NEWS ITEM — Geology and Geoconservation in the Media

On Sunday evenings, in January 2012, BBC1 will broadcast a series of programmes on National Parks and the importance of geology to people's lives. For this series, I have finished filming a section on limestone pavements in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Also, on New Year's Day, on BBC Radio 3 there will be a piece on the River Dee from source to sea in which I am interviewed by a poet!! Needless to say in both of these broadcasts I stress the need for geoconservation. *Cynthia Burek*

NEWS ITEM — *Future of the Roaches Estate*

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) has been chosen to take over the management of the 395 hectare Roaches Estate in the Staffordshire Moorlands on a 125-year lease. This includes the impressive hill mass of Hen Cloud (see top right). The exposed geology of the area includes superb sections through the Roaches Grit (Namurian, Upper Carboniferous) deltaic beds with very evident current bedding (see below right). The rocks dip moderately steeply to the east forming prominent edges. The whole area is a favourite with walkers and rock-climbers — the edges provide some of the best gritstone climbing in England.

The area was originally acquired by the Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) in 1980, following the berak up of the Swythamley Estate. Following the break up of this estate, in order to protect the unique area and guarantee public access. However, cuts in the budget of the PDNA forced them to make the difficult decision to relinquish control of this landscape of both major wildlife and geological importance. The next fifteen months will involve much discussions with tenants and other interested parties, to ensure that the presently free public access is maintained and that there is a smooth hand-over. GeoConservation Staffordshire (GCS) is delighted with the outcome, as they have worked closely with the Trust for many years and two senior Trust employees are active members of GCS.

This episode has highlighted potential problems for geoconservation. In this case geoconservation was fortunate in the outcome., but elsewhere the picture might be less good. GCS, the SWT, GCUK and others were able to persuade PDNPA to put references to geoconservation into their proposal documents. They were happy to do so, but hadn't thought of it themselves! Checking out their website reveals a surprising shortage of appreciation of its geodiversity.

Geoconservation groups need to be alert not only to such potential land transactions but also to treat this as a wake-up call to check the websites of local private and public landholders to see if they have any real appreciation of their/our geodiversity resource. There are already, as Tom Hose has informed me, a number of Local Authorities in England looking to divest themselves of direct responsibility (and the on-costs) for their green spaces, including Country Parks. Similarly there are pressures on some museums services that will (inevitably?) lead to the loss of curatorial posts and consequent restricted access to geological and natural history collections.

Finally, we all depend on the maintenance of public rights of way, such as footpaths and bridleways, for access to the countryside, especially in the urban fringe; the funding for signage and upkeep, let alone the few dedicated staff, is under review at many Local Authorities. We are in danger of losing what has been achieved in many areas over the last seventy years in securing and maintaining access to the countryside. After all, don't some views says as much about the geology as individual sites. Landscapes and access to them cannot be taken for granted in these changing times.

John Reynolds

GeoConservationUK Newsletter

NEWS ITEM — *Park Hall Burns*

Park Hall Burns—well the Visitor Centre!

On 6th November 2011, the visitor centre at Park Hall Country Park was burnt down. An adjacent riding centre was also attacked, but the horses were fortunately safe. Apart from the obvious facilities, including a new classroom, the main loss to geology was the display and specimens of Triassic pebbles and Coal Measures plant fossils, plus the Triassic pair of watercolours from a set of eight depicting ancient and modern landscapes of North Staffordshire. Natural England lost £30,000 worth of equipment and Stoke-on-Trent City Council lost even more valuable equipment.

Following, for safety reasons, the necessary demolition (see right) of the burnt out ruins, everyone is rallying round Paul Shires, Senior Ranger, putting together suggestions for the rebuilding. Geoconservation Staffs and North Staffs Group of the GA are proposing the inclusion of a centre of excellence for field teaching. Park Hall is a geological SSSI, a geological NNR, one of the pilot Earth Science On-Site locations and has been used extensively for 30+ years for both wildlife and geological fieldwork for young and not-so-young. Last week, my three year old grandson had his first field visit to Park Hall with his nursery school; he brought me back a pebble, of course — genetics? Watch this space.

John Reynolds

NEWS ITEM — *GCUK and Funding*

Future Funding for Geoconservation Work

GCUK is currently negotiating with Natural England to establish a means by which funding can be made available for Local Geology Site Condition Monitoring and hopefully work on SSSI's as well. The first phase would probably be to end of March 2012. In this period, we would hope groups will be able to monitor a total between 50 and 150 sites subject to how much funding is available. Our Treasurer Alan Cutler has already contacted groups involved in such work for Natural England in previous years. We would also draw your attention to Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) since the highly successful Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust's project 'Community Earth Heritage Champions' is seen as best practice by HLF. Consider applying this approach in your area. Alan is always happy to advise and help on such funding matters.

NEWS ITEM — *National Network of Soil Sites*

Discussions (well, a tele-conference!) with known interested parties have recently taken place on the establishment of a National Network of soil sites. It has been agreed that the LGS/RIGS designation status is appropriate for this and that this is done on countywide basis in general. This should continue and there would need to be a mechanism to decide which would be best for highlighting nationally significant sites. The group have been pointed towards information on the GCUK website relating to site designation and criteria. For many soils sites the interpretation emphasis will be on 'telling the story of soil'. There are different aspects of the importance of soil that can be high-

NEWS ITEM — *Future National Network of Soil Sites* (cont.)

lighted; eg food production, biodiversity etc.

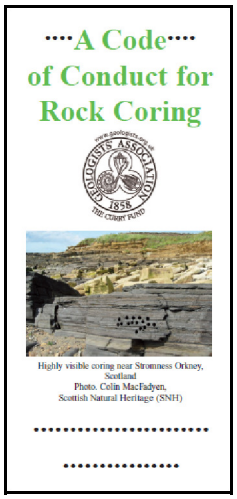
It has been proposed that a seminar/workshop should be set up in the not too distant future to discuss the following themes: designation of sites using the LGS/RIGS process; and, where to get more advice and similar. GCUK would naturally be involved in this seminar. In the meantime soil scientists who would be willing to offer local expertise if needed will be identified; this would be matched to local geoconservation groups. In the future there will be documentation relating to soils that should be available on a website and as GCUK is really the only national body involved its has been suggestion that it could put the material on its website.

Lesley Dunlop

NEWS ITEM — New *GA Rock Coring Code*

Core Blighty — what a holy mess!

The damage and unsightly effects of irresponsible rock coring for laboratory sampling have become rather too commonplace in the past twenty tears. Core holes drilled on the Garvellach Islands and on the Ardnamurchan peninsula in Scotland are some of the recent instances of such geo-vandalism that have sparked a renewed debate in the geological community about what can be done to promote responsible core sampling. The Geologists' Association (GA) has just updated and re-published its Code of Conduct for Rock Coring (see right); this can be downloaded from the GA's website at http://www.geologistsassociation.org.uk/downloads/GARockCoringGuide.pdf. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) helped the GA produce the new Code and has also published on-line its own guidelines on coring in Scotland (see www.snh.gov.uk/about-scotlands-nature/rocks-soils-andlandforms/scottish-core-code/). Let's hope it is widely read in universities in the UK and across Europe! Meanwhile, examples of irresponsible coring should recorded and reported to the appropriate national nature conservation agency and RIGS group.



Meanwhile, SNH is seeking to recognise good methods for the restoration of outcrops defaced by coring in sensitive and classic geosites. The standard means of restoring a cored face involves infilling the core holes with rock chips of the same rock type mixed with either cement or resin and then accurately replicating the texture on the top surface. An alternative method involves using rock chips and cement/resin mixture, with the hole capped with the broken off end of the extracted core. However, there might well be other possible methods used in the UK and elsewhere that could be reported.

When SNH staff examined such a restorative scheme, requested of the offenders by SNH after some irresponsible coring, at a classic site on Scotland's west coast they were disappointed with what they found. The restoration seemingly involved merely capping the holes with a mixture of silicone rubber and sand. Many of these caps had already been heaved out by frost action, revealing that the actual holes had been inappropriately filled with large rock chips wedged into them without any finer chips and resin/cement to completely fill the voids. In some cases, light-coloured limestone chips had been used to infill several holes; somewhat in marked contrast to the dark grey of the intrusive rocks that been cored. Worse still, from a geoconservation perspective, the rock chips had been derived from the hammering of the *in situ* limestone of the intrusion's contact zone. Quite why the more responsible, and physically easier, approach of using loose material off the beach of the same rock type that had been cored is unclear. What is very clear is that this poor restoration work at a classic geosite will continue to deteriorate with the passage of time.

Tom Hose

GeoConservationUK Newsletter

MEETINGS and CONFERENCES

GeoConservationUK SGM and AGM (1st October 2011)

The GCUK Special and Annual General meetings at the Dudley Museum and Art gallery attracted attendees from some 19 RIGS groups. A newly elected committee was duly installed: Ken Addison, Kevin Crawford, Tom Hose, Rick Ramsdale and John Reynolds will duly serve for the next three years. We now also have discrete representation from Wales and Scotland; the Chairs of the Association of Welsh RIGS Groups (AWRG) and the Scottish Geodiversity Forum (SGF) have joined the committee to represent those countries. Jackie Malpas represents AWRG and we await the installation of the chair of SGF for their person. The constitution of GCUK was necessarily altered to reflect this change in the Executive Committee membership. Mike Browne continues as Chair and likewise Alan Cutler as Treasurer. Lesley Dunlop is our new Secretary. Craig Slawson continues as our webmaster and likewise Tom Hose as the Newsletter Editor.

Mike Browne (see above right) in his role as Chair gave a full report of the past year's activities. He thanked the Executive Committee members for their sustained hard work over the past twelve months. Some mention was made of various funding initiatives and the general concern across the geoconservation movement over the loss of key funding sources from the statutory agencies and the impact of changes to the focus of Heritage Lottery grant support. However, due to careful fiscal management, the Treasurer's report showed a healthy balance although funding for future years was reckoned likely to decrease as only Wales has retained the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund.

GCUK had been very active and swift in responding, on behalf of the membership, to several public environmental consultations by both the national and devolved Governments. Discussion took place on the responses to drafts of Government documents which (except notably for Wales) were considerably depleted in their geodiversity content, concepts and ideas. Discussion also took place about the Local Sites and Ecosystems approach and the resultant opportunities. A short discussion also ensued on the Marine and Coastal Access Act, implications for local RIGS groups and the opportunities that would or would not arise from its implementation. Attention was also drawn to the continuing work on promoting GCUK and the membership through the production of new pull-up banners (see right), available for loan by member groups for their events, and the publication of a new revised up-to-date leaflet discussing and promoting our activities. The success of GCUK and its membership over the last decade is to be applauded, especially as much of it has been achieved through unwaged voluntary effort.

Tom Hose

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MEETINGS and CONFERENCES

ESTA Conference (1st — 2nd July 2011)

ESTA at Durham

The 2011 Earth Science Teachers' Association Conference was held in Durham, moving to early July at the suggestion of members. The expense of two conferences in the same academic year reduced the numbers attending, but half of the 50 delegates were newcomers to the experience. GCUK members were present from many parts of England, Wales and Scotland and we met several people from the re-formed Durham Group. Both the GCUK and Clwydian Range AONB stands were much visited; that both stands were close to the drinks was probably a mere happy coincidence!

ESTA Conferences always offer a good mixture of lectures, hands-on activities and fieldwork. Jill Essam from the Harehope Quarry Project [www.harehopequarry.org.uk] hosted the Friday sessions at the famous limestone quarry near Frosterley, just off the A689. This Project has received Heritage Lottery funding to develop the site for educational and community use, based on sustainability principles. On-site fieldwork ranged from hunting for fossils with Jill to interpreting cyclothems with Stuart Jones. Brian Young entertained us with mineral and (literally) boring tales, then dispensed chips of Weardale Granite. Carole Rushall's session on using your local quarry gave a glowing report on GCUK's Earth Science On-Site project, not realising that several of the authors were in the room!

Saturday brought the usual classroom workshops. A non-teacher grandmother attended the Primary sessions looking for something interesting to do with her grandchildren in the holidays. She found plenty! Updating lectures were given by Prof. Richard Davies on "Energy", and ESTA President, Prof. Jon Gluyas, on the "UK Looming Energy Crisis or Booming Energy Opportunity?" Positively updating indeed !

Fieldwork with chums and colleagues is so very different from that with a group of youngsters. Still with very much interest and enthusiasm, but you get much more questioning banter! Bob Holdsworth led the visit to Cullercoats to investigate the Ninety Fathom Fault and its affect on the Permian Yellow Sands. Stuart Jones went to Staithes to look at the Lower Jurassic environments of deposition and ironstone mining. Elizabeth Pickett and Fiona Knox led the visit to Low Force and Bowlees to investigate the Whin Sill and Lower Carboniferous stratigraphy. Fortunately, the weather was fine. Overall the Conference was very rewarding and I am already looking forward to the next one in the autumn of 2012

The 2012 Conference will be held at the headquarters of the British Geological Survey at Keyworth in Nottinghamshire; the dates are 28th to 30th September 2012 and the details will be posted on the ESTA website at www.esta-uk.net . So, perhaps I will see you there in 2012?

John Reynolds

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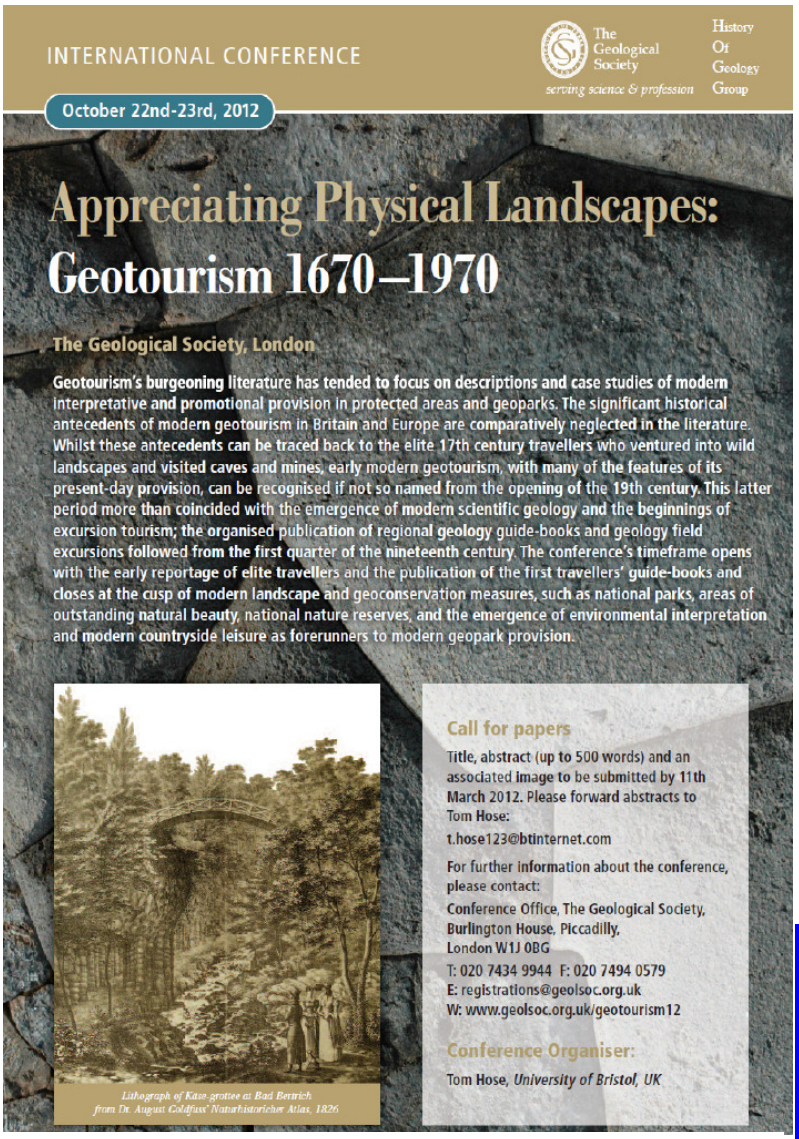
GEOCONSERVATIONUK

MEETINGS and CONFERENCES

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

Geological Society — *Appreciating Physical Landscapes* (22-23 October 2012)



This major international conference on the history of geotourism is organised under the auspices of the Geological Society and its History of Geology Group. Its purpose and focus can be gleaned from the conference 's preamble:

"Geotourism 's burgeoning literature has tended to focus on descriptions and case studies of modern interpretative and promotional provision in protected areas and geoparks. The significant historical antecedents of modern geotourism in Britain and Europe are comparatively neglected in the literature. Whilst these antecedents can be traced back to the elite 17th century travellers who ventured into wild landscapes and visited caves and mines, early modern geotourism, with many of the features of its present-day provision, can be recognised if not so named from the opening of the 19th century. This latter period more than coincided with the emergence of modern scientific geology and the beginnings of excursion tourism; the organised publication of regional geology guide-books and geology field excursions followed from the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The conference 's timeframe opens with the early reportage of elite travellers and the publication of the first travellers ' guide-books and closes at the cusp of modern landscape and geoconservation measures, such as national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, national nature reserves, and the emergence of environmental interpretation and modern countryside leisure as forerunners to modern geopark provision. "

Details of the conference can be found on the Geological Society 's website at www.geolsoc.org.uk/geotourism12 and offers of papers will be warmly welcomed by the conference organiser, Tom Hose.