

GeoConservationUK Newsletter

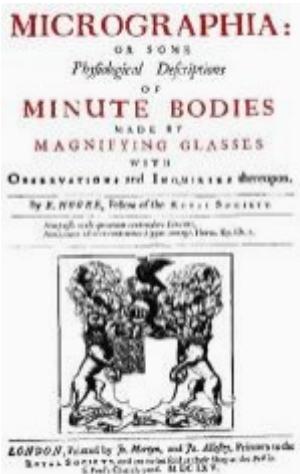
Volume 3, Number 2

18^h July 2012



On this day in . . . biology and geology overlapped a little!

On the same day in 1995 that this *Newsletter* is published, on the Caribbean island of Montserrat the Soufriere Hills volcano erupted. Over several years, it devastated the island, destroying the capital and forcing most of the population to flee, whilst at the same time providing a major study site for geologists! Three years later, and now largely forgotten, in 1998 a 23-foot tidal wave swept ashore, and killed almost 3,000 people, in Papua New Guinea. Such events are a constant reminder from the past of the need to better understand the workings of our planet in order to help plan for the major impacts of natural disasters and to better cope with them in the future. It is sometimes hard to convince politicians of such connections and it is up to geoscientist to demonstrate the societal, as well as the intellectual, value of their work. Making such connections, especially with the nature of detailed observations, is not easy.



But our past and its personalities is a way to interest non-specialist audiences. The 18th of July was when two greats of biological science were born: the scientist Robert Hooke (in 1703) and the naturalist Gilbert White (in 1793). Hooke built some of the earliest Gregorian telescopes and is also well-known as a microscopist. He published his observation with the two in 1665 in his illustrated book *Micrographia* (see above right) in which the detail really was important! Importantly, for modern scientific geology he was, based on his observations of fossils, an early proponent of evolution. White helped to establish the British fascination with recording the natural world. If none of the aforementioned events has stirred your imagination, then perhaps another ‘rock’ event worth mentioning is that on 18th July, 1953 Elvis Presley made his first recording in Sun Studios!

EDITORIAL

ISSUE CONTENTS

Welcome to the second of this year 's planned *Newsletters* and a very big 'thanks' to its few contributors and a plea for more items for the next issue in September. The *Newsletter* travels widely and has, for example, been seen and much appreciated in Australia. With that in mind it beholds all of us in the UK geoconservation movement to make sure that our endeavours are widely publicised and what better way can there be than a packed issue of the *GCUK Newsletter*? It also reinforces to those not directly engaged in geoconservation how much voluntary effort is involved in maintaining the UK 's geodiversity. It might just encourage the support, in kind and financial, the we need to continue our good works; truly, in these challenging times, an Olympian task to both get that support and to achieve as much in the future as we have in the past. Perhaps there will be some Olympic related geology story for the next *Newsletter*?!!

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ENGLAND — *Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group*

The Group has had a very full half-year to date with numerous activities and field trips. A report on just three of these gives a flavour of the past six months.

Coombs Quarry – clean-up, nature survey and fossil hunt day



On Saturday, 17th March, a good number of people arrived for a quick clean-up of one of our favourite quarries (*see left*), followed by a fossil hunt and a nature survey. Trying to do all three in one go was quite a juggling act, but people soon divided into the jobs they wanted to do and an enjoyable day was had by all.

After the initial clean-up, the quarry was looking good; a number of loose blocks were identified as potential hazards so a JCB was dispatched following the event to make things safe.

The fossil hunt took two forms. Firstly, the bigger fossils were identified so we could add the information to the geological log we had prepared in the autumn of 2011. Then we collected samples to look at the microscopic fossil remains.

The harder limestone beds and softer (marl) were both sampled. Samples were collected systematically ensuring they were correctly labelled with the bed that they had come from and that all surface dirt or soil was removed. This was important because the material washing down the face has come from higher in the quarry and also contains contamination from modern insects and plants. The samples will be sieved and analysed in thin sections by one of our members, Stephen Packer, who specialises in the area of microfossils and palynology. Palynology is the study of plant spores and pollen.

From the logging work done last year we came to some very good environmental conclusions from describing the rock lithology alone. It will be interesting to add the fossil information to this now and see how it complements our understanding. We also are eagerly awaiting the results from the microfossil work as this is completely new research and should add more insights into the Jurassic environment at Coombs Quarry and may also assist too in the geological dating. The geological information will be added to the Coombs Quarry pages on the web-site when we have the results back and will let everyone know what we have discovered.

Buckingham Sand Pit clean-up and nature survey



This site was in need of a good clean-up as vegetation was beginning to obscure the main faces. On Saturday, 7th April, ivy, brambles and saplings were removed by a hardworking team of four members (Tony Britten, Phil Clapham, Nicky Muizelaar and Jill Evers). The results of their work beautifully exposed (*see left*) the till and esker sections that make this such an important Quaternary site in this part of southern England.

Following the geological clean-up, a quick nature survey was undertaken resulting in the recording of a long list of species. This was the second of four surveys planned over the year as part of the 'Rocks and You' project. It has been surprising to



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ENGLAND — Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group (cont.)

see some of the species that have been encountered. At the Buckingham Sand Pit plants such as wild strawberry and lemon balm have been found while at Coombs Quarry site a massive leopard slug was amongst the more interesting species recorded. A good number of birds were recorded at both sites.

The recordings will enable the Group to recognise and protect 'special' species whilst we are undertaking geoconservation work such as cleaning-up rock faces. We hope to enhance the biodiversity at the Buckingham Sand Pit as we have cleared an area which will be more suitable for butterflies and other invertebrate species that prefer open spaces. It is hoped that the newly exposed sand faces will attract rare burrowing bees and wasps.

Joint BEHG and Bedford Geology Group Event: Munday's Hill Quarry



On Saturday, 14th April, a visit was made to Munday's Hill Quarry by a dozen or so members (*see left*) of the two Groups. This exposes a classic section of the Lower Greensand and Gault Clay Formations. The Lower Greensand (here called the Woburn Sands) are superb, showing a wealth of sedimentary structures and trace fossils which are indicative of the ancient tidal environments seen at this location. The Gault Clay provides abundant fossils as evidence of later fully marine conditions due to the Albian transgression.

Any textbook on the Lower Greensand will describe this area, near Leighton Buzzard, as a 'fully marine tidal seaway'. Evidence of the tidal nature, such as clay drapes highlighting bi-directional cross-laminations as well as amazing tidal bundles, can be clearly seen in the exposed faces. The tidal bundles are very clear – the bundles of 14 representing the lunar tidal cycles of neap and spring tides. Recent thinking suggests that the area might also have been influenced by fresh-water and that it could have been part of an estuary. To attempt to resolve these different environmental interpretations the Group took samples of the clay drapes for microfossil and pollen analysis. Looking at all the obvious field evidence it was concluded that the lowest beds of the Lower Greensand were probably formed at an estuary mouth and the upper sands formed as sand bars. Finally, the overlying Silty Beds were formed as tidal flat deposits.

Within the Woburn Sands several examples of fossil wood were found. Within the Gault Clay Formation many animal fossils were found, including: ammonites, crinoids, corals, bivalves, belemnites, scaphopods, serpulids, fish vertebrae and even a crab carapace. The April sunshine was very enjoyable. Members of both the Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group and the Bedfordshire Geology Group enjoyed some excellent geology and convivial company. We are very grateful to the manager of Aggregate Industries at the Munday's Hill site, Tom Wise, for allowing us entry to this very special quarry.

Jill Evers

ENGLAND — Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership



Norfolk's 'hard rock' geology, and one of its notified geodiversity sites, was recently in the local news again due its involvement in a major national celebration — the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The Great Hockham County Geodiversity Site was turned again on 3rd June to mark the event. This rolling RIGS (now a rolling CGS, which is not so alliterative!), was first dragged to its site on the village green in the 1880s and was then turned by the villagers to mark Queen Victoria's golden Jubilee in 1897. Since then it has been rolled over to mark other special occasions. So, again this year it was rolled over (see left), with much team effort, by the villagers.



The stone is a large, fossiliferous sandstone boulder; for the technically minded, the sandstone is quartzose, sparsely glauconitic and bioclastic with a carbonate cement; it's most likely to have been derived from the Spilsby Sandstone of the Lower Cretaceous. There are several such blocks of glauconitic Spilsby Sandstone found across Norfolk and south Lincolnshire.

The stone also has a historic and cultural value. It was brought to this site in the 1880s from 'High field' between the Shropshire and Harling roads, some three-quarters of a mile away. Since then, the stone has played an important part in major village celebrations. On special occasions it is turned over by the villagers.

The parish council maintains the village green, so securing accessibility to the stone. The stone will continue to be turned occasionally by the villagers. This will ensure that it is kept clear of vegetation.

Jenny Gladstone

ENGLAND — GeoSuffolk

Earth Heritage Suffolk

GeoSuffolk's Handbook, published in 2010, has been put onto our web site. At its inception four years ago *Earth Heritage Suffolk* was designed for ultimate use on the web and the gazetteer and geosite pages have been inserted individually. The Conserving, Promoting and Inspiration sections have been included as separate booklets. Why not take a look?

A new publication, *A Celebration of Suffolk Geology*, was launched at GeoSuffolk's 10th AGM on 12th May 2012. It is edited by Dr Roger Dixon and has over 40 contributing authors represented in its 400+ pages - it promises to be a very good read!

Caroline Markham



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WALES — *All Change in Wales*

The Countryside Council for Wales, the Environment Agency Wales and the Forestry Commission Wales are all due to merge in April 2013. This will produce one body for the management of Wales' natural resources. Whether this is a good move for geodiversity or not remains to be seen. This move to one body is in advance of two important bills, which are due for Wales in 2014: The Environment Bill and the Sustainable Development Bill. The Association of Welsh RIGS Groups (AWRG), Geodiversity Wales and NEWRIGS are keeping an active watch on all these moves and are hoping to influence the inclusion of geodiversity within government thoughts and documents. Responses have already been made to the two Welsh Government consultation documents on *Wales: Sustaining a Living Wales; Green Paper* on a new approach to natural resource management in Wales and *Natural Resources Wales Proposed Arrangements for Establishing and Directing a New Body for the Management of Wales' Natural Resources*. We would like to thank others who have submitted comments on the importance of geodiversity for Wales within these consultations.

Cynthia Burek (on behalf of AWRG)

NEWS ITEM — *Improvements at Tedbury Camp Quarry*

Tedbury Camp Quarry is one of the most important geological sites in southern England. It is located at the eastern end of the Mendip Hills, near Frome in Somerset. The site reveals a spectacular unconformity between two limestones. Steeply dipping Carboniferous Limestone is overlain by much younger sub-horizontal Jurassic Inferior Oolite. Now we are pleased to hear that significant improvements have been made to the Quarry which is used regularly by visitors to the nearby Somerset Earth Science Centre and also by geologists from further afield.

Key to the success of these improvements was the very generous provision of materials, tools, transportation and some manpower by three local quarrying companies: Hanson UK, John Wainwright, and Co Ltd and Tarmac Limited. Working in tandem with these resources was a group of volunteers from various geoconservation groups across southern England led by Martin Whiteley. Some volunteers came for the odd day, whilst others stayed for a week, but in total more than 250 person hours were spent installing a flight of steps up to the quarry floor and clearing key exposures within it.

Now it is far easier to access the site than was previously possible and the freshly cleared exposures in themselves provide much better information about the geological history of the area. These improvements are testimony to the efficacy of collaborative working. Not only did it get the job done, but it generated an enormous sense of enthusiasm and satisfaction. Every opportunity was taken to explain the purpose of the work to passing members of the public, and a local scout group that was camping nearby has agreed to visit the quarry periodically to control the invasive undergrowth. If that was not enough, no fewer than 50 geologists from Cardiff University, Rotherham Sixth Form College and Bedfordshire Geology Group just happened to use the site during the four days following completion of all of the work.

Martin Whiteley

Editor's note: the site is one of the 'Earth Science On-Site' project's locations.

NEWS ITEM — *ESTA Conference and Course (28th - 30th September 2012)*

Grab your diary and note the dates of the Earth Science Teachers' Association annual Course and Conference at the British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottinghamshire:- 28th-30th September 2012.

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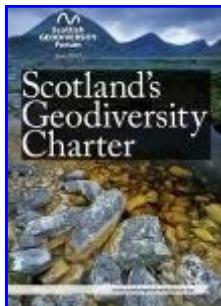
SCOTLAND — LGS/RIGS Stakeholder Meeting (12th June 2012)

The Scottish Soils Group of the British Society of Soils Science (BSS) hosted an LGS/RIGS Stakeholder Meeting on 12th June at the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) in Edinburgh. There were about a dozen delegates representing the James Hutton Institute (JHI), SAC, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Heriot Watt University, Stirling University, British Geological Survey, the Scottish Geodiversity Forum, GeoConservationUK and one consultant. The informal presentations were focussed on the new initiative to have sites listed as LGS/RIGS for their soils values.

Willie Towers (JHI\0, the BSSS Education Committee Chair, introduced the meeting. The first session was on designation of soils under the Local Nature Conservation Sites System and how a Scottish initiative might develop. With no LGS in the Highlands and only the Lothians, East Dunbarton and Dumfries and Galloway areas with more than 12 sites listed or with the planning authority for final approval, growing soils sites on the back of currently designated c.100 sites will be a challenge. Subsequent sessions considered aspects such as publicity, monitoring and maintenance of any sites, suggestions as to what specific types of soils could be included (e.g. main families such as gleys, forest browns) and potential sites around Scotland. The last session considered the key issue of funding and resources, and inclusiveness of all stakeholders. BSSS have a strong focus on education especially the schools curriculum as a lead driver. Soils trails were suggested as well as setting up any local sites. Amongst proposals for action for BSS to consider were writing a soils chapter for the RIGS Handbook (for example, criteria for listing sites), seeking guidance from the stakeholders on Flagship sites, and funding with possibly some input from BSS.

Mike Browne

SCOTLAND — *Scotland's Geodiversity Charter*



The Scottish Geodiversity Forum (SGF) published *Scotland's Geodiversity Charter* in June. This highlights the importance and value of geodiversity, and makes a strong case that it cannot be taken for granted, and needs wider appreciation and integration within planning and development frameworks. It includes a vision for the future, an action plan, and case studies highlighting what has already been done by geoconservation groups, industry and local authorities. It is a big step forward in encouraging the Scottish Government and local authorities to recognise and enhance geodiversity. Much of this work has been led by Mike Browne and GCUK, including a petition raised in the Scottish Parliament in 2009. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the British Geological Survey (BGS) produced several reports assessing the value and state of Scotland's geodiversity in early 2011, and the Royal Scottish Geographical Society were involved with others in convening an important geodiversity conference in Edinburgh in December 2010.

Since the GF was established in 2011, one of its main tasks has been to prepare the *Charter*, with encouragement from the Natural Resources Division of the Scottish Government, and strong support from SNH and BGS. The Charter was formally launched by Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change in the Scottish Government. So far, 29 organisations have signed the *Charter*, agreeing to work towards its vision, including some of Scotland's more forward-thinking local authorities (including Glasgow and with Edinburgh not far behind), organisations representing land-owners and industry, all of Scotland's geoparks and geoconservation groups, geological societies and small commercial geoscience companies. It has been heartening that in a short time they have come forward and supported the *Charter* and its vision; the launch heard strong speeches in support of geodiversity from the Minister and senior representatives from SNH and BGS.

Angus Miller



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News Item — *Flaybrick Cemetery brochure launch*

Cheshire RIGS has started the next in its series of raising awareness brochures. The first brochure (*see below left*) is on Flaybrick Cemetery, near Birkenhead on the Wirral. This is a pocketable folded A3 map and guide (*see below right*) to the headstones and local quarry. It also includes a summary account of the area's geological history and an illustrated description of the rock cycle.

The brochure was launched on 21st April 2012 as part of a wider geodiversity raising awareness day; this included fossil making (*see below left*) that was very popular with children, rock identification and two walks scheduled to launch the trail. The leaflet was produced in collaboration with the friends of



Flaybrick Quarry. Eleven people attended the walks (*see above right*) that were led by two members of Cheshire RIGS, Cynthia Burek (University of Chester) and Ian Chadwick (Manchester Metropolitan University). The launch was unfortunately scheduled on the same day as the Giant's parade in Liverpool, so we had some big opposition! The trail was very well received and another walk will be scheduled in the near future. The next leaflet to be researched and written for the new series will be for Overleigh Cemetery in Cheshire.

Cynthia Burek

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NEWS ITEM — *LNP: the future of local geoconservation?*

By now many Groups will be involved in one of the 45 Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) announced earlier in the year. I was one of 30+ delegates who attended the Staffordshire Local Nature Partnership meeting in April. We listened to a range of speakers and took part in discussion topics with the obligatory coloured pens and large sheets of paper. My key concern was the lack of Geo in the defra documents explaining all about Local Nature Partnerships. There was also a lack of Geo in the main presentation by Dr Mike Christie, of the defra-funded/commissioned research "The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) and UK National Ecosystems Assessment (NEA)". Clearly, Geo has not been part of the defra brief on Nature! The 2011 White Paper must have had something to do with this matter. The Local Nature Partnership idea was part of the White Paper, rather than the more geo-friendly planning documents that came later.

During the day many folks agreed that although it was obvious that geo underpinned the bio it was simply being taken for granted, but really should be mentioned. GCUK members and others attending the GA Geoconservation for Science and Society Conference in Worcester last Sept may recall a rather different Ecosystems Assessment presentation by Murray Gray et al, with Geo well and truly in the frame! Perhaps I'll wait for the publication of the Conference Proceedings before getting back to Mike Christie & defra!!

Local Nature Partnerships provide a useful opportunity for the message of geoconservation to be spread to other organisations and individuals. We are put into one room and forced to engage with a captive audience! In one day 30 assorted souls from local authorities, agencies, utilities, farmers and industrialists learned that geoconservation exists in Staffs! A good start! As in most counties, the Wildlife Trust is the lead partner in Staffs. Sue Lawley, formerly SRIGS/GCStaffs Secretary, has put together the bid/plan for the next stage and it includes several references to geoconservation. We await a successful outcome and take things from there. Taking part in your Partnership is key to the future of geoconservation. Our Editor, Tom Hose, will be glad to receive reports of your experiences.

John Reynolds

NEWS ITEM — *England's New National Planning Policy Framework*

The new National Planning Policy Framework (for England) was published in March 2012 by the Department for Communities and Local Government. This is a lot better for geoconservation than was expected following the June 2011 White Paper and its lack of Geo-words. Intense lobbying by Geo-ConservationUK and others has paid off. A quick look at the NPPF reveals Geo-words in several parts of section 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, and one in the Glossary.

The word "Landscape" is more abundant. Fortunately for both geoconservation and biodiversity, the three 2005/6 documents which underpinned the previous regulations have been retained, at least for the time being. For Statutorily protected sites [SSSIs] they are:

- 1) Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and their impact within the planning system.
- 2) Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - A guide to good practice.

For Non-statutory [Local] sites [incl RIGS], it is:

- 3) Local Sites: Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management.

We must, however, be ever vigilant! Electronic copies of the three earlier documents have been sent to Groups; I can forward same, if required.

John Reynolds



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MEETINGS and CONFERENCES

Geology Trusts AGM (June 2012)

At the recent AGM it was noted that it had been a relatively quiet year for The Geology Trusts, reflecting the lack of available external funding both for the organisation itself and for its member groups. However, work has continued at a modest scale but with an increased reliance on voluntary effort. Much of what has been achieved is recorded on the UK Geodiversity Action Plan where Geology Trust members account for nearly 20% of the activities.

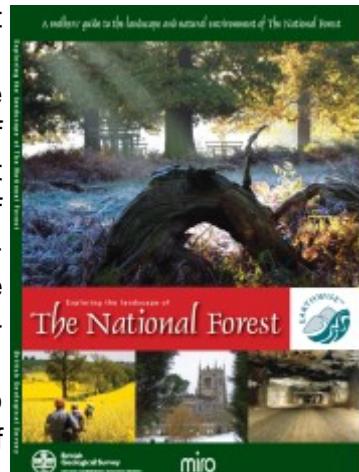
Site condition monitoring exercises were undertaken in five counties, resulting in 77 new sites being added to those already surveyed, about 700 in total. The funding come from Natural England. Little progress has been made on expanding the national Local Geological Sites database that began in 2008, the process becoming bogged down over concerns of data ownership and access.

The Trusts' website has been much utilised throughout the year but will continue to require modifications to reflect current activity and changes in legislation. An example is provided by the recent publication of the National Policy Planning Framework which renders some previous guidance obsolete, but fortunately much that related to local sites remains unchanged.

The Trusts continue to build relationships with the National Trust and Ramblers' Association, primarily through submitting articles to their newsletters and undertaking collaborative activities, such as guided walks, locally. Links have been maintained with GeoConservationUK, the Earth Science Education Forum, the Earth Science Teachers' Association and the Geoconservation Commission. All of these organisations provide a useful forum for the mutual exchange of information.

News Item — New BGS Publication

The BGS has published *Exploring the Landscape of The National Forest*. This comprises a simplified geological map of The National Forest with an accompanying book. The book describes the geology and geodiversity in simple terms, with chapters on the many products that the area has yielded because of the geology, such as coal, iron ore, fire, brick and pottery clay, aggregates, building stones and gypsum. There are also sections describing the landscape, archaeology, mineral wealth of Charnwood Forest, water resources, historic buildings and last but not least, the brewing industry that grew up in Burton upon Trent as a result of gypsum-rich waters. There are also ten walks covering many of the geological, landscape and industrial heritage features in the Forest. These include the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire coalfields, the Fauld crater wartime disaster, the Ticknall lime yards and a building stones walk around Burton upon Trent. The book provides an excellent companion volume to *Exploring the Landscape of Charnwood Forest and Mountsorrel* as most of Charnwood Forest is in The National Forest. Both are available on the BGS on-line bookshop at <http://shop.bgs.ac.uk/Bookshop/>. The cost is a modest £6.95.



Keith Ambrose

M E E T I N G S and C O N F E R E N C E S

Balancing Nature, Society and the Economy (12th June 2012)

This was the theme for the inaugural Natural Environment Conference that took place in London in June. It was organised by *GovToday*, the Government's media website, and supported by many of the major conservation organisations such as the Countryside Alliance, WWF, RSPB and Wildlife Trust. The aim was to explore the White Paper on the subject, *The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature*, that was launched a year beforehand.

The papers delivered during the morning session were primarily concerned with describing the evidence base that underpinned the White Paper, namely the UK National Ecosystem Assessment and the influential Lawton Report 'Making Space for Nature'. The White Paper itself is, of course, now well established and whilst it does nothing to promote geodiversity it is generally well received among the bioconservation community. The way in which its aims will be realised and the role that local authorities have to play in their delivery was also discussed. Subsequent sessions were rather more narrowly focused and dealt with sustainability issues relating to eco-towns, wind farms, water resources and biodiversity offsetting. Rounding off proceedings were contributions from The Land Trust, the Forestry Commission and Natural England, the latter providing a description of England's new Biodiversity 2020 strategy.



Among the 300 delegates who attended the conference geoconservationists were in short supply. The Geology Trusts had been offered free exhibition space at the last minute when a sponsor had to pull out, so we scurried around and were able to produce an informative display that described the role of local geoconservation groups and showcased some of their successes. The display (see left) was manned by Martin Whiteley (Geology Trusts) and Moira Jenkins (Herefordshire & Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust) and we were pleased to be joined by Tim Holt-Wilson

(Geo-East) and Tom Hose (GCUK) at various times in order to help fly the flag for geoconservation.

What was perhaps surprising, given that the conference focused on biotic nature and sustainability, was the degree to which our efforts were recognised and appreciated. Not overtly by the keynote speakers, but by many of the delegates who were aware of our ambitions through networks such as LGAPs, 'Champions' projects and geodiversity partnerships. That said, it's clear that the scale of our work, which is often small and site-specific, struggles to find recognition among landscape-scale initiatives such as the 12 Nature Improvement Areas currently being championed by Defra. Here the mantra is 'more, bigger, better and joined' and if the geoconservation community also wants to move in that direction it will certainly be a challenge.

Martin Whiteley



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MEETINGS and CONFERENCES

Appreciating Physical Landscapes (22nd - 23rd October 2012)

Monday 22nd October 2012	
08.30	Registration & Tea, Coffee & Biscuits
09.20	Welcome and Introduction Thomas A. Hose (Conference Convenor)
09.30	KEYNOTE: Reason to Believe: Dragons, New Science and Public Perceptions of the Prehistoric World Prof. David Norman (Department of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge)
10.10	Eugene von Guérard: a geognostic landscape painter in Australia Ruth Pullin (National Gallery, Australia)
10.30	Posters & Tea, Coffee & Biscuits
11.00	Geotourism as documented and photographed by the Geologists' Association from 1858 Jonathan Larwood (Geologists' Association/Natural England)
11.20	The role of Local Societies in the Early Geotourism Movement, the Chester Society of Natural Science: a Case Study Cynthia Burek ¹ & Thomas A. Hose ² ¹ (Centre for Science Communication, University of Chester) ² (School of Earth Sciences, University of Bristol)
11.40	Dovedale and J W Jackson's legacy Ros Westwood (Derbyshire Museums)
12.00	Lunch (no lunch provided for delegates)
13.00	KEYNOTE: Appreciating geology and the physical landscape in Scotland: from the 'tourism of awe' to 'experiential re-engagement' Prof. John E. Gordon (School of Geography and Geosciences, University of St Andrews)
13.40	Visitors to the Northern Playgrounds: Tourists and Some Science from North Norway Brian Whalley (University of Sheffield)
14.00	From tourism to geotourism, a glance to the French northern alps: historical cases Nathalie Cayla (Laboratoire EDYTEM UMR CNRS-Université de Savoie, France)
14.20	Comfort Break
14.30	Appreciating Loess Landscapes through History: the Basis of Modern Loess Geotourism in the Vojvodina Region of North Serbia Djordje A. Vasiljević ¹ , Tin Lukić ¹ , Slobodan B. Marković ¹ , Thomas A. Hose ² , Miroslav D. Vujičić ¹ , Biljana Basarin ¹ ¹ (Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Serbia). ² (School of Earth Sciences, University of Bristol)
14.50	From the History of Geotourism and Geological Monuments of Russia (an Example of Geological Monuments of the Leningrad region Maria Tsirkoburova (Department Historical and Dynamic Geology, Faculty of Geological Prospecting, St. Petersburg Mining University, Russia)
15.10	Rediscovering geoheritage, reinventing geotourism – 200 years of experience from the Sudetes, Central Europe Piotr Migór (Department of Geography and Regional Development, University of Wrocław, Poland)
15.30	Posters & Tea, Coffee & Biscuits
16.00	Thomas Compton and the Hirnantian rocks of North Wales Keith Nicholls ¹ & Cynthia Burek ² ¹ (Department of Biological Sciences, University of Chester) ² (Centre for Science Communication, University of Chester)
16.20	Thomas Sopwith (1803-1879) – Guide and Tourist Dave Greenwood (Kirkaldy Society, Queen Mary College, London)
16.40	In the Shadow of Inspiration: Canada's National Parks and Beyond Julian Ashbourn
17.00	Closing Ceremony John Henry (HOGG Chair)
17.15	Poster Exhibition Discussion Session
18.00	Wine Reception (in Lower Library)
19.00	Depart for Conference Dinner (optional)

Plans are well in hand for this international conference. From a wealth of submitted abstracts, a programme of paper readings (*see left*) has been put together; the Conference Abstracts Volume, available in hard-copy in September, will have full details of the various papers and posters; many of these, with additional material, will form the basis of the planned major post-conference publication. On the day following the conference there will be a railway-based field excursion, partly in the footsteps of a 19th century GA excursion, to Kent to look at coastal geology sections and geotourism localities in the Margate area. Conference details and a registration form can be found on the Geological Society web-site at:

www.geolsoc.org.uk/geotourism12

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

October 22nd-23rd, 2012

The Geological Society
serving science & profession

ARUP

Appreciating Physical Landscapes:
Geotourism 1670–1970

The Geological Society, London

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 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 time-frame opens with the early repertoire of elite travellers and the publication of the first travellers' guide-books and closes at the cusp of modern landscape and geopreservation 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.

Summary Conference Information

The conference is split between a
Paper Reading (Day 22nd October) with 2 keynote speakers, 12 paper presentations, and a poster session.
Registration in the Abstracts Volume, refreshments and wine reception costs from £45-165.
Field Excursion (23rd October) to the Isle of Purbeck including coffee, guide, track lunchbox, and afternoon tea cost is £45.
For further information about the conference please contact:
Conference Office, The Geological Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BG
020 7434 9844; E: conference@geolsoc.org.uk
W: www.geolsoc.org.uk/geotourism12

Conference Organisers:
Dave Greenwood, University of Bristol
geotourism12.org
Follow this event on Twitter: #geotourism12

NEWS ITEM:- *Soils as Local Geological Sites / RIGS*

Soils form a link between geology, geomorphological processes and the living world and the atmosphere. While soils reflect the underlying bedrock, drift or parent material, they can also tell us about how the land has been used, and how it has been changed by climate, people and other organisms. Soils are a link between ancient geological processes and today's society, yet they remain largely unrecognised in the current series of designated sites, and often play a minor role in environmental education.



GeoConservationUK along with the Geology Trusts, Natural England and a group of soils experts is working together to raise the general profile of soils as a key part of Earth Science and to get some important sites designated and interpreted. Further guidance is being written to add to the UKRIGS Handbook to be used with appropriate recording sheets.

We aim to encourage local geoconservation groups and soil science experts jointly to identify sites that tell the story of their local soils in the context of local geological, biological, landscape and cultural features. Eventually, it is hoped, this would form a network of sites to support soils education, through universities, schools, professional training or simply for interested members of the public.

Some years ago John Conway of the Association of Welsh RIGS Groups developed a trail of soil sites in part of Wales and this is a good starting point. We hope to build on this over the coming year. Some groups have already indicated that they would be ready to include some soils sites and others that they need additional help to do this.

Hopefully the link with soil scientists that we have made will enable us to put people in touch with one another.

There is no doubt that all parties have a great interest in this initiative and some geoconservation groups are very well placed to start including soils sites, or, have already done so. We would welcome any information that anyone would like to pass on. One obvious problem is keeping the profile visible and in good condition and perhaps there are useful tips to pass on.

Lesley Dunlap

NEWS ITEM:- *Sussex RIGS Reforms: Sussex Geodiversity Partnership*

We have recently rebooted the Sussex RIGGS group as the Sussex Geodiversity Partnership. This was formed in 2011 with the aim of promoting and protecting geodiversity in East and West Sussex and the city of Brighton and Hove. In 2011 the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, working with West Sussex County Council, published updated site sheets for West Sussex non-mineral site Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGGS); these are available for all enquirers. In 2011/12 a survey of East Sussex sites was completed in partnership with East Sussex County Council and in 2012 the remaining mineral sites in West Sussex will be surveyed. The aim is to have up-to-date RIGGS sheets for all 125 Sussex sites by the end of 2012. The Partnership seeks to share information on the geodiversity of Sussex, influence policy and establish cross-regional working for geodiversity as well as providing the following functions: a regional network for organisations, groups and individuals involved in geodiversity; a regional voice and profile for geodiversity; easy access to information about Sussex Geodiversity; influence planning, policy development and practice; share good practice. Further information is available from henri@brocklebank.sussexwt.org.uk

Henri Brocklebank



GeoConservationUK Newsletter



MEETINGS and CONFERENCES

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

Ed Derbyshire Meeting: Loess in China & Europe (27th - 30th September 2012)



This international conference will celebrate and develop the work of Edward Derbyshire. He pioneered and promoted international scientific collaboration, especially between Chinese and European loess researchers. Following Ed's spirit, the conference will promote loess research on the global scale. For this reason, the title of the conference highlights the huge Eurasian loess belt. However, it is in no way restricted to those regions and the participation of colleagues who work on all temporal and other aspects of dust deposition around the world will be most welcome to attend and contribute. Equally, the conference will also examine how best to conserve and promote loess studies and landscapes. This aspect should be of particular interest to UK geoconservationists; some have already booked their places!

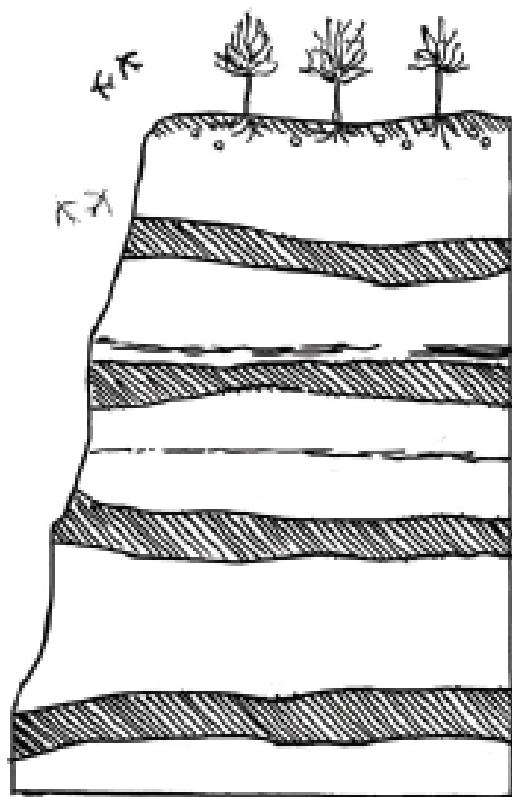
Amongst the planned sessions are: those on

- » Loess Landforms Dynamics
- » Eurasian Loess
- » Loess and the Record of Paleolithic Cultures
- » Reconstruction of Loess Environments
- » Dust and Man
- » Loess as Geoheritage: Geoconservation & Geotourism

Following the conference a series of publications will promote and disseminate the papers and posters in, for example, *Catena*, *Quaternary International*, and *Geographica Pannonica*. The closing date for submitting abstracts is 28th July. The conference is being held in Novi Sad, Serbia. It will include two days of field-trips.

Further details of the conference are available from the:

Official email: ed2012meeting@dgt.uns.ac.rs
Official website: www.inqua-loess.org/ed80s/



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GeoConservation Group

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Editor GCUK Newsletter:

Dr. Thomas A. Hose [correspondence to: 14 Forge Close,
Chalton, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU4 9UT]
email: t.hose123@btinternet.com