

GeoConservationUK Newsletter

Wishing a Merry Time to You All!



Volume 4, Number 4

16th December 2013



GEOCONSERVATIONUK

In this End of Year we Commemorate . . . Who and What?!!

With 2013 commemorating several major, but not necessarily geological, inventions and events of fifty years ago there are so many from which to pick that it's been challenging to select the most appropriate. Perhaps, it's worth noting that the first episode of the time travelling '*Doctor Who*' was broadcast on 23rd November, 1963 - the dastardly murderous Daleks appeared a month later. Extra terrestrially astronaut Gordon Cooper orbited the Earth in the final solo Mercury mission on 15th-16th May; exactly a month later, Soviet astronaut Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman in space. In England, a train on the west coast main line was stopped in Buckinghamshire and crooks carried off 120 mail sacks stuffed with £2.6 million of used bank notes. Geologically, the beginning of the year saw the idyllic island of Bali devastated (with some 1700 deaths) by the eruption of the Mount Agung strato-volcano. At its close, the icy waters off Iceland saw the emergence of the Surtsey tuff-cone volcano.

Now if you're wondering what links these disparate elements just think of the present festive season. NORAD is busy tracking, not rockets and missiles but, the progress of a space skimming bio-powered vehicle carrying a large jolly chap (but no women passengers reported!) with sacks stuffed full of goodies. Meanwhile, on the ground, many people are celebrating a birth (sadly followed by the deaths of the innocents) to a travelling lady and hope eternal. Whether a believer or not in those two travellers it is a time of the year to remember past losses, to look to the coming New Year, and to reflect upon how we all share and need to protect one small (as the Mercury photographs perhaps first brought home) and precious globe.



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the final *Newsletter* for 2013. As always I must thank those few faithful contributors and express a big welcome to the new ones - I just hope they will all keep going into 2014! Now as you tuck into your mince pies, it is worth reflecting that the *Newsletter* is a quarterly window into all of our geoconservation activities for both ourselves and a wider audience. As your humble Editor I can only report what is made available to me and that clearly isn't all that's happened - looking at various member groups' newsletters - this, or is planned for next, year! So, how about making a New Year resolution to send in your news as it happens and to give me the delightfully hard task of selecting the most seasonally appropriate? I will look forward to Santa's all year round little helper's email sack being much fuller in 2014! **TOM HOSE**



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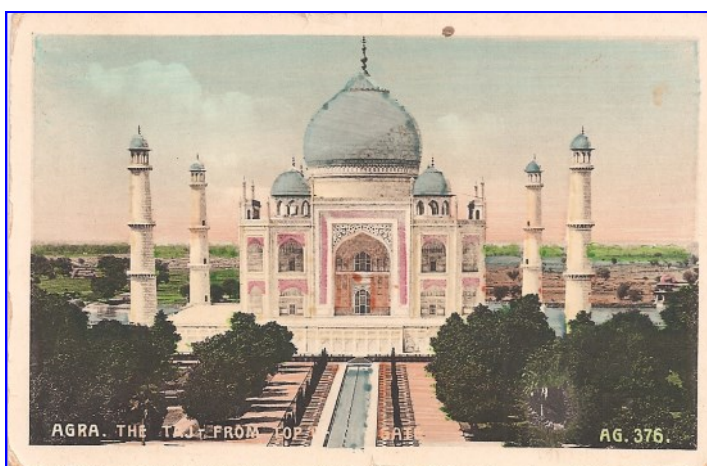


ENGLAND — GeoSuffolk

From India with Love

A 'Global Gallivant at Ipswich Museum' was pronounced in the autumn 2013 half-term publicity, and Wednesday 30th October would be 'India Day'. What a wonderful opportunity for GeoSuffolk (as unofficial Friends of Ipswich Museum Geology Collection) to demonstrate some of the Museum's collection of Sewalik Hills fossils – its elephants, hyenas and gazelles being morphologically and temporally so close to our Suffolk Pliocene fauna. Well, there were a few differences – we didn't have gharials and sivatheres in Suffolk – but near enough!

So how did they get to Ipswich? It starts with a young boy called Proby Cautley who was born in Suffolk in 1802. After joining the Bengal Artillery in 1819, he was involved in the construction of canals in the Sewalik Hills of India. Thousands of fossil bones and teeth from these excavations made their way to the Calcutta and British Museums. When Sir Proby Cautley died in 1871, part of his collection passed to Catherine Cautley in Suffolk and from her to Ipswich Museum in 1878.



We also demonstrated examples of Makrana marble, brought back from Bob & Caroline's visit to Agra (the Taj Mahal is made of Makrana marble), adding further to 'India Day' geology. What an excellent day this was to spread the message of geoconservation of museum specimens, and to relate Suffolk

Postcard of the Taj Mahal c.1917. Members of the public were very taken with the Makrana marble form Agra

Bob Markham

ENGLAND — Cheshire RIGS

Our Much Valued Secretary Moves on to Greener Pastures

Cheshire RIGS would like to acknowledge publically the contribution of Dr Kate Riddington, for the last ten years, as their secretary and to its RIGS work. Kate arrived in Chester's Grosvenor Museum to take over first as Assistant Keeper for Natural History and then Keeper for Natural History. Accepting the job involved her in becoming part of the Cheshire RIGS team . . . it was part of her job description! She has led walks, entered data onto the *UKRIGS database* then *GeoConservationUK database*, held exhibitions of a geological nature, done talks, participated in workshops and fairs, monitored sites, taken part in audits, developed town and cemetery trails, made thousands of fossils with children (*see right*) and has always been willing to answer the general public's geological questions. We wish her all the best at the Lapworth at Birmingham University and feel that Birmingham's gain is much our loss. Seriously, without Kate's patience and dedication to the work of RIGS we would not be in the position we are in now. So, thank you Kate and we all wish you the best of luck in your new museum post.



Cynthia Burek



ENGLAND — *London Geodiversity Partnership*

Consultation on Revised Geodiversity Action Plan

Since its formation in 2008, the London Geodiversity Partnership (LGP) has published and been implementing its *Geodiversity Action Plan 2009-2013* (see right). It has been supported in this by the Greater London Authority which, in March 2012, issued supplementary planning guidance on *Green infrastructure and open environments: London's foundations: protecting the geodiversity of the capital* (see below).



Following a well attended workshop at the Horniman Museum in February 2013 (see *GCUK Newsletter*, Volume 4, No. 2), the Partnership has now revised the *Action Plan* to take it forward for the next five-year period (2014-2018).

Significant progress has been made in implementing the existing *Action Plan*, which is summarised in an annex to the revised plan. The highlights include a continuation of the audit of London's geodiversity sites with recommendations for 27 RIGS (metropolitan-wide regionally important sites) and 15 LIGS (borough-wide locally important sites) in total, some success in getting these into the borough development plan documents, and the beginnings of action to improve access and visibility at the Gilbert's Pit SSSI in Charlton. LGP's membership has grown and the website continues to be developed.

Priorities for 2014-2018 remain the continuing audit of potential sites and of geodiversity archives and resources, inspection and reporting on all recommended sites on a regular basis, working with the Boroughs and local communities to manage and improve sites, disseminating information on London's geodiversity through geo-trails, building-stone walks, and information boards and displays, and finally working with London boroughs and other organisations to conserve and enhance geosites.

The consultation period ends on 7th February 2014. The draft version of the *London Geodiversity Action Plan 2014-2018* is available on the Partnership's website (www.londongeopartnership.org.uk).

David Brook



ENGLAND — Bedfordshire Geology Group

Bedford Cemetery - 6th October, 2013



Some fifteen members turned up on a beautiful autumn morning for a geological walk around Bedford Cemetery. As a Victorian cemetery it is a good place to see a range of decorative rock types and twenty graves were examined in detail.

The first to be studied was the Higgins Memorial (*see top left*), a fine example of marble on sandstone exhibiting much weathering and discolouration due to atmospheric pollution. This was also well seen on some Permo



-Triassic sandstones (*see top right*) and Jurassic oolitic limestones. The granite and gabbro gravestones clearly showed their better resistance to weathering and their use has increased in popularity since the 1840s. The monuments showed some fine examples of gabbros (*see bottom right*) and other dark basaltic rocks (called black, red or grey 'granite' by monumental stonemasons) reflecting the more modern preference over the past traditional real red and grey granites. Finally, a few slate headstones were seen and these were quite well protected by the vegetation.

Henrietta Flynn & Tom Hose



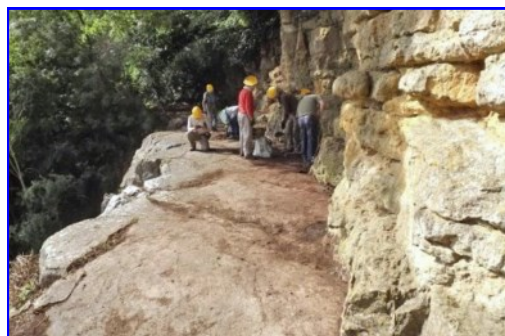
ENGLAND — Dorset's Important Geological Sites Group

Vallis Vale Conservation Day

Vallis Vale is where the spectacular De la Beche angular unconformity (*see bottom left*) where grey limestones of Carboniferous age overlain by Jurassic mellow brown oolitic limestones, an SSSI, has been just about visible for several years. Nettles, brambles, and saplings have obscured the geology; equally spray paint graffiti and fly tipped rubbish have not helped viewing and access.

The quarry site is near Frome in Somerset, so DIGS members were somewhat over their border on Sunday, 8th September when they joined with DGAG, Wessex OUGS and the Bath Geological Society for some geoconservation work. Twenty-one volunteers (*see top right*) spent the day on the clearance and cleaning work (*see bottom right*) and, while there is still further work needed, the section is now much more obvious.

*Alan Holiday
&
Tom Hose*





NEWS ITEM — *The FGB3D Project*

FGB3D Fossils – Taxonomic Reference Specimens Online

Type fossils are essential to palaeontologists because they are the specimens which define taxonomic species. In other words, they are the ones to which scientists compare new material in order to identify it and place it in its appropriate taxonomic grouping. They are usually safely stored away in museums where, due to their scientific importance, they are usually well looked after. They are often so well looked after in fact that occasionally it is difficult, if not impossible, to have casts made of them or their loans arranged for scientific study let alone for broader educational and museum exhibition purposes.

One of the aims of this Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) funded 3D Fossils project is to solve that particular problem by making fossil type specimens available to just about anyone. The British Geological Survey, together with its partners in The Geological Curators Group and the institutions of The Oxford University Museum of Natural History, The Sedgwick Museum at Cambridge and the National Museum of Wales have created an online database (www.3d-fossils.ac.uk) comprising data on the majority of the UK type specimens drawn from the national palaeontological collections. Together with general and specific information about the specimens, the website hosts high resolution photos, anaglyphs and a selection of 3D models (available for around 15%) of the fossils.

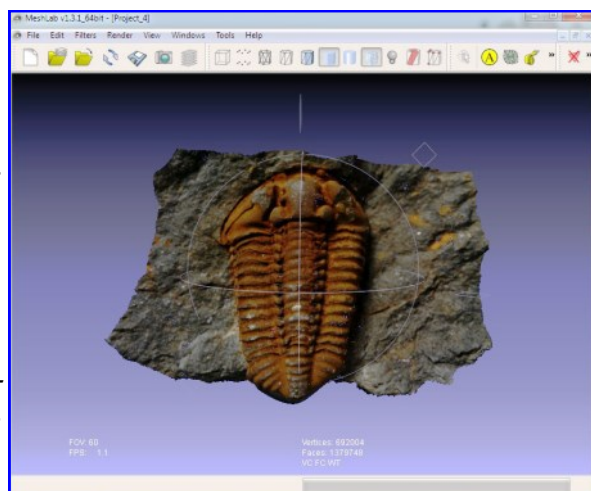
The 3D models have been acquired using both the *Nex-engine* laser scanner and *Agisoft PhotoScan* photogrammetric software. The 3D models can be viewed directly in your internet browser (we like to use *Google Chrome*), or downloaded as ply or obj files.

All of the material on the website is free for all non-commercial uses with a Creative Commons license. Links to useful pieces of open source software are also provided.

Our aim is to allow type specimens to be accessible to everyone, from academics to the general public, and for use from research purpose to education. Further, if you like, you can also 3d print your own fossil replica when technology and finances permit! Meanwhile the online database (www.3d-fossils.ac.uk) is a useful resource we would encourage you to access and view.



High resolution photograph, of an ammonite, as can be found on the website.



3d model, snapshot from Meshlab software.



Examples of 3d printed fossils, using the MakerBot Replicator2 3d printer.

Michela Contessi



ENGLAND — Dorset's Important Geological Sites Group

Through the summer and autumn the Dorset RIGS group has been busy. Conservation work has been carried out on several of our sites. In July we worked at Corfe Castle and Langton Matravers (Crack Lane) and we were helped by 'A level' geology students from Poole Grammar School. Both sites were quite overgrown but are now in good condition exposing steeply dipping Chalk at Corfe and the top of the Purbeck succession at Crack Lane (*see top right*).



In August we saw the results of our work at Poxwell in place at the Wolfeton Riding House at Charminster north of Dorchester. The stone extracted from Poxwell in the winter was finally integrated into the building (*see middle right*) allowing other conservation work to be completed. The new stonework stands out now but it will merge in with time.



In September the DIGS group worked in collaboration with Wessex OUGS, DGAG and Bath Geological Society to carry out conservation work at Vallis and Tedbury Camp (near Frome) in Somerset. The Tedbury work was coordinated by Dr Martin Whitely. This followed on from earlier work but great progress was made and now these two important geological sites are in excellent condition. There should be a report in the next issue of *Earth Heritage*.

In October the group had a very successful session at our site at Portesham (Rocket Quarry). This site (*see bottom right*) exposes the boundary between the Portland and Purbeck Beds and the quarry provided some of the stone for the village of Portesham up to the end of Victorian times. Despite regular work on the site the area soon gets overgrown and constant attention is necessary. Following financial support from Natural England the group has been able to purchase equipment which has helped our conservation activities.



During October two members of the group were asked to help with a building survey in the village of Trent near Sherborne. We provided geological knowledge and information on likely sources of the building stone that has been used in the village.



In November we spent time at Quarr Lane, Sherborne clearing nettles and brambles as well as recording the fossils preserved in the rock face of the former quarry (*see left*). Not all of the succession is visible as it was partially in-filled by domestic refuse in the past. It is hoped that the record of fossils present will help ongoing research on the Inferior Oolite.

For further information on these activities and the DIGS sites please go to our web site at: <http://www.dorsetrigs.org.uk/>

Alan Holiday



NEWS ITEM — *Welsh Consultations*

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Consultation

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) was formed from the merger of three of the Principality's leading natural environment stakeholder organisations: Forestry Commission Wales; Environment Agency (Wales); and the Countryside Council for Wales. Having completed the merger, and with the new body having begun its diverse work, a Public Consultation is being undertaken. This consultation closes on 10th January 2014 and it is intended that this will provide guidance to the new body on its Corporate Planning for the next three years. Full details of the Consultation are available at:

<http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/our-work/news/chance-to-shape-future-of-welsh-environment/?lang=en#.UpB4gS5FDcs>

Environment Bill White Paper Consultation

A public consultation is also been launched by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) in connection with the WAG Environment Bill White Paper. This includes proposals for a new area-based planning approach to natural resource management. Details of the consultation (which closes on January 15th) can be found at [This includes proposals for a new area-based planning approach to natural resource management](#). This change will undoubtedly impact upon such stunning landscapes as that of the Dovey Estuary (*see below*). A *YouTube* clip describing the Consultation can be viewed at:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpV4OtSdaly&feature=youtu.be>

Keith Nicholls

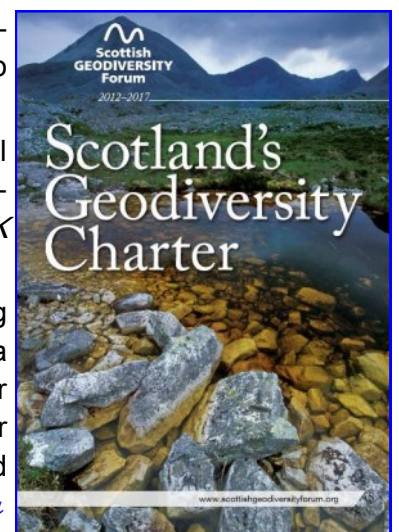
NEWS ITEM — *The Scottish Geodiversity Forum*

Our Geodiversity Charter (*see right*) continues to attract interest and enthusiasm, with Historic Scotland becoming the fiftieth organisation to sign up to support the vision of the Charter.

We worked with Scottish Natural Heritage to organise a very successful Sharing Good Practice conference about implementing the Charter in December - a full report on this conference will be included in the next *GCUK Newsletter*.

Our local groups across Scotland continue to work away at conserving and promoting local geodiversity. Tayside Geodiversity are working on a new website, including a comprehensive map of all sites of interest in their area. Lothian and Borders GeoConservation are further extending their series of leaflets for local sites, with new publications on the Pentland Hills, Siccar Point and the River Esk in preparation.

Angus Miller





NEWS ITEM — *Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales)*

From Acorn to Sapling

The seeds of the Earth Science Education Forum for England and Wales were sown at the launch of the Earth Science Education Unit (ESEU) in the Earth Galleries of the Natural History Museum on 5th February 2002. Conversations between the earth science organisations represented at the event highlighted a need to provide opportunities for interested parties to meet, exchange views, and raise the profile of earth science in education.

A little over a week later, on 13th February, a small group comprising representatives from the BGS, ESTA, and ESEU, and chaired by Allan Rogers, a member of the BGS Board and former MP for the Rhondda, met in the BGS's London office 'to discuss earth science in education' and agreed to set up a forum, along the lines of the recently established Scottish Earth Science Education Forum. The BGS agreed to act as a focal point and the inaugural meeting of the Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales) - ESEF(EW) for short - was held on 27th February 2002. The terms of reference for the new forum were to:

- Promote earth science in education;
- Bring together all relevant organisations, institutes and individuals in pursuit of the above.

Today there are over forty organisations associated with ESEF(EW). Membership is inclusive and encompasses academic institutions, professional bodies, industry, government agencies, museums, amateur geology groups, geoconservation and life-long learning. Members are able to raise issues of concern, discuss potential collaborative projects, share good practice and promote events, publications and other initiatives through the Forum's meetings and email distribution list.



A recent ESEF meeting with the Chair, Chris King (right) and Secretary, David Bailey (centre), in action!

Recently, members have been working hard together to ensure that earth science is properly represented in the revised National Curriculum. ESEF(EW) members, led by the Geological Society, Royal Geographical Society and the Forum's current chair, Professor Chris King, submitted a strong and coherent plan to the Department for Education recommending how earth science should be integrated across the Science and Geography curricula through each of the Key Stages. Continued correspondence during the consultation phase, supported by contributions from our other members, has ensured that the earth sciences have not been overlooked and we are confident that the outcome is a much stronger and more relevant earth science component to the curriculum, compared with the early drafts.

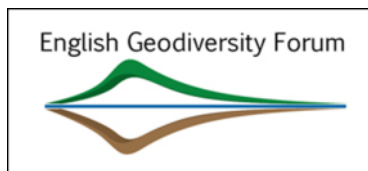
The ESEF(EW) meetings are held four times a year at the Geological Society's apartments in Burlington House, Piccadilly, thanks to the generosity of the Geological Society. Each meeting includes a discussion around a topic presented by an invited speaker. In recent times these have included two by GCUK Executive Committee members - Tom Hose on geotourism and John Reynolds on the Earth Science Education Project. Meeting dates are posted on our website (www.esef.org.uk). If you would like to receive information about future meetings, please email the Secretary, David Bailey, at ESEFEW@gmail.com to be added to the mailing list.

David Bailey



NEWS ITEM — *The English Geodiversity Forum*

A Geodiversity Charter for England



The English Geodiversity Forum is a multi-organisation group which has met several times during 2013. The aim of the forum is to be a collective voice for geodiversity across England. The forum aims to help support and assist the delivery of geodiversity using mechanisms such as the UKGAP and the shortly to be published 'Geodiversity Charter for England'.

Current members of the forum come from many different organisations such as GeoConservationUK, The Geology Trusts, Geologists' Association, Natural England, Museum Curators' Group, Geoparks, minerals industry, academia, British Geological Survey, Geological Society and others. We hope to help promote and share good practice in relation to geodiversity and geoconservation as well as raising awareness and understanding. The wide expertise of the group should assist with influencing the inclusion of geodiversity in local, national and international policies.

Following the continued success of 'Scotland's Geodiversity Charter' there is a need for a similar publication for England and the group are in the final stages of putting this together. It is hoped that a first public draft will be available early in 2014 with a launch to occur later in the year. As with any charter it is only of value if it is known about, signed up to and acted upon so this will be something that we ask everyone to work on during the year. As Chair of the Forum I will keep member groups of GeoConservationUK updated with progress and hope for your support with this. Please contact me if you would like to know more.

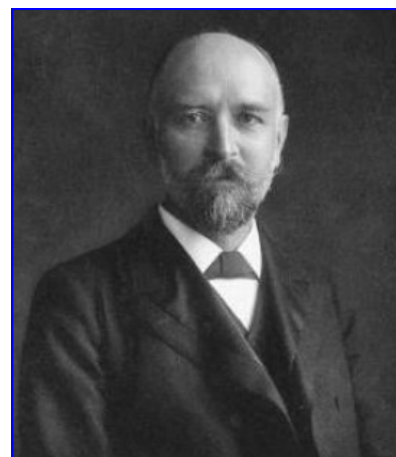
Lesley Dunlop

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

The Sir Arthur Smith Woodward 150th Anniversary Symposium

This event, of potential interest to many geologists and historians of science, will be held in the Flett Lecture Theatre of the Natural History Museum, London on Wednesday 21st May 2014. The symposium is open to the general public, and is free of charge. There will be displays of important fossil specimens, memorabilia and other items of interest in the Flett Theatre foyer. Attendees will be required to pre-register to gain access to both the foyer and the lecture theatre.

Arthur Smith Woodward (*see image - courtesy of GSL - right*) built his scientific reputation on his detailed and meticulous studies of fossil fish, many of which helped to form the foundations of current research on numerous fish groups. However, he also contributed to our knowledge of other extinct animals and also of regional geology. However, he also endured some notoriety for his involvement in the Piltdown Man hoax.



Sadly, almost no attempt has so far been made to assess Smith-Woodward's wider impact on palaeontology. Hence, this one-day symposium aims to rectify this omission with its invited speakers who will present papers on Smith Woodward's life and career, together with his varied scientific outputs, and his involvement in the Piltdown hoax.

To pre-register for the event, and to receive further information, please e-mail the Meeting Co-ordinator, Mike Smith, at ASW150@nhm.ac.uk



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

GCUK AGM and the Geologists' Association's Festival of Geology 2014

A Select Gathering

The AGM (*see top right*) was, as has become usual over the past few years, held during the Geologists' Association's Festival of Geology (*see middle and bottom right*). The attractions of the latter, including member groups stands with its numerous stalls kept a few AGM stalwarts busy and away this year from our required business meeting, but London Geodiversity Partnership (*see bottom middle*) managed both! However, just under a third of our member 53 groups (of 41 in England, 3 in Wales and 9 in Scotland were represented) and our two Associates; the West of England GA Regional Group was welcomed as a new member. Mike Browne noted it was his eighth annual report as Chairman and thanked all for attending the AGM and also Susan Brown and Sarah Stafford of the Geologists' Association for arranging the its hosting. Mike reported that the Executive Committee had met at Keele University (x3), Telford (x1) and Dudley (x1). Mike also noted that, through attendance, we maintain links to the Westminster All-Party Parliamentary Group for Earth and Environmental Sciences, The Geoconservation Commission of the Geological Society of London, ESTA, ESEF, ESEF Cymru and SESEF and to all national (Wales and Scotland) and English regional geodiversity partnerships; Cynthia Burek is on the Earth Heritage Editorial Board.

During the AGM various issues were discussed. Moira Jenkins reported that there has been a recent amendment to Defra's Local Sites guidance. The Black Country Geopark proposal has been received by the EGN and they have been asked to review aspects of this. Cornwall (mining) are also preparing an application. For Natural England's (NE) Natural Character Areas (NCAs) some groups have reported difficulty in giving input to the descriptions; GeoSuffolk highlighted that certain aspects were incorrect and they have not been able to make changes. For NE's Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) there has been some links to these, such as the Lee Valley NIA. However, in future Local Nature Partnerships will be able to propose and designate NIAs, something that needs to be brought to the attention of groups so that engagement with LNPs occurs. Ian Stimpson reported that he has registered interest with the British Standards Agency to have a British Standard for Geodiversity (in parallel to the Biodiversity BS).

Alan Cutler presented his Treasurer's report and accounts for 2012/13. We are most fortunate that voluntary support is received from the Executive members and that without this GCUK could not function; it was agreed to keep a record of the 'in kind' input to support future funding bids. A discussion over Associate's fees took place because they have not been reviewed for some time; it might be sensible to combine this discussion with proposed work on a geoconservation promotion package an item for the next Executive meeting. The Treasurer was thanked for the work he has put in over the accounts. Finally, Mike thanked the Executive for their hard work during the year and appealed for Groups to put forward nominees for election to the GCUK Executive in the coming year.

Tom Hase





GeoConservationUK Newsletter

MEETINGS and CONFERENCES



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

HOGG meeting at the National Museum of Wales — 15th November, 2013

It is perhaps not widely known by many in the geoconservation movement that during the first half of the 20th century, the first Keeper of Geology at the National Museum of Wales, Frederick John North, put together a truly remarkable collection of early geology maps and papers — most notably including several copies of William Smith's 1815 map and G. B. Greenough's 1820 map, together with some of William Buckland's correspondence relating to the discovery of the Red Lady of Paviland, and the diaries and letters of H. T. De la Beche. The collection continued to grow under North's successors, Douglas Bassett and Michael Bassett. Some of this material should feature in a major exhibition at the Museum in 2015; when it is hoped GCUK member groups will also help to celebrate the bicentennial of William Smith.

The HOGG meeting superbly put together by Tom Sharpe (*see right* - standing on the right), scheduled on a Friday due to the required Museum behind the scenes access, focussed on some of the highlights of the collection such as De la Beche's original watercolour of *Duria Antiquior* (*see top right*) and also provided a rare opportunity to view several issues of side by side of Smith's 1815 map. One of these (*see middle right*) was of some interest for its incomplete condition and history - having seemingly been rescued from a bonfire in the 1930s!

The meeting also allowed a comparison of Smith's and Greenough's maps. Of especial interest was the chance to view a (much faded) and recently discovered annotated copy of the latter map that had hung in the Geological Society's apartments in London until 1932.

On the Saturday an informal field trip was arranged to visit the monument at Llandaf Cathedral to William Daniel Conybeare (where he was Dean from 1845 to 1857) and to Sully (where he was rector from 1822 to 1835) to look at the local geology he encountered daily and also shared with distinguished visiting fellow geologists such as Sedgwick and Murchison.

Tom Hose



GeoConservationUK Executive Committee

Chair: Mike Browne - Lothian and Borders
GeoConservation Group
Secretary: Lesley Dunlop - Berkshire Geoconservation
Group
Treasurer: Alan Cutler - Black Country Geological Society
Committee Members:
Dr. Ken Addison - Gwynedd and Mon RIGS
Keith Ambrose - Leicestershire and Rutland RIGS
Prof. Cynthia Burek - NEWRIGS
Dr. Kevin Crawford - Cheshire RIGS
Dr. Thomas A. Hose - Bedfordshire Geology Group
Angus Miller - Scottish Geodiversity Forum
Keith Nicholls - NEWRIGS
Rick Ramsdale - Sheffield Area Geology Trust
Sam Scriven - Dorset's Important Geological Sites Group
Dr. Ian Stimpson - GeoConservation Staffordshire

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Copy date for the next Newsletter is 28th February, 2014