

UKRIGS NEWSLETTER



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Keeping you up to date with RIGS nationally and in your area.

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EDITORIAL

Dear RIGS groups, I hope that the New Year brings you whatever you want with Spring just around the corner we hope. I feel this year will be a time of change. We have the development of the National GAP, the discussion with the government on the climate change bill and the planning legislation debate. We have the evaluation of the LGAPs across England and hopefully another Geopark In Anglesey, but we must wait and see. Congratulations to The English Riviera for becoming the latest Geopark. We have the development of Regional Geodiversity partnerships which are looking very promising in England. The History of Geoconservation book edited by Burek & Prosser, is also due to be published in April /May by the Geological Society which is another first. It is full of interesting articles and features Fossil Grove, Glasgow on the front in the times before it was protected at the end of the 19th Century. All these are positive steps forward for the Geoconservation of Geodiversity. Best Wishes, **Cynthia**



UKRIGS Discuss Planning White Paper With MP

As part of the 'Planning Coalition', UKRIGS has been campaigning against damaging proposals in the Government's Planning White Paper - "Planning for a Sustainable Future". 32,000 other responses were received by the government voicing similar concerns, but despite this only limited concessions to the original document seem to be being made. To press the matter, in mid-December, the Coalition wrote to John Healey MP, Minister of State, to request a meeting to discuss the bill. The letter stated five main concerns:

1. There is no benefit to setting up a new democratically unaccountable body
2. An Infrastructure Planning Commission should not make decisions
3. Sustainable development must be a duty on the Commission, not just ministers
4. National policy statements must be robustly assessed and consulted upon
5. Inquiry procedures must provide effective rights for the public

The Coalition is deeply concerned that these proposals would be a backwards step in planning. We will keep UKRIGS Newsletter readers informed of our progress in discussing and resolving these concerns. Other members of the Planning Coalition are: The Campaign to Protect Rural England, The Civic Trust, Friends of the Earth, The Grasslands Trust, The National Trust, RSPB, Campaign for Better Transport, The Woodland Trust and the Wildlife Trust. Chair: F. Mahon of Link Land Use Planning Working Group.

UKRIGS Challenge Government Aviation Policy

In late December, UKRIGS, together with other renowned groups, wrote to Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State, Department for Transport, to request a meeting to address the relationship between the governments climate policies and aviation policies. As aviation is the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, it is on course to use up a major part of the UK's entire carbon budget.

"If the UK is to drive emissions downwards and retain credibility as an international leader on climate policy, its share of international aviation emissions must be included in the targets set by the Climate Change Bill from the outset. UK Aviation policy must then be developed to be compatible with these targets. Instead, we fear that the Climate Change Bill will continue to ignore international emissions from aviation, and the Planning Bill will be used to rubber-stamp existing aviation policies, by allowing the Air Transport White Paper to become a National Policy Statement. Rather than smoothing development of new runways, we need a moratorium to be put on further airport expansion immediately. This would require Government to withdraw support for plans for new runways at Heathrow and Stansted and abandon policy support for regional airport expansion including at Lydd, Bristol, Birmingham and Manchester."

Other Groups involved: The Woodland Trust, RSPB, Greenpeace, Green Alliance, AirportWatch, Campaign for Better Transport, World Development Movement, Aviation Environment Federation, Friends of the Earth.

UKRIGS Joins GA

UKRIGS are joining the Geological Association as an Associate Member as there is so much synergy between the two organizations.

UKRIGS Education Project: Earth-Science On-Site

**John Reynolds, Alan Cutler
& Rick Ramsdale**

We are continuing to develop and publish examples of high quality Earth Science field teaching activities for schools, in collaboration with partners in the Earth Science Teachers' Association [ESTA], the Earth Science Education Unit [ESEU] and the National Stone Centre [NSC]. The next sites to be available on the UKRIGS website will be those in Northumberland, and include Boulmer and Whin Sill. At Boulmer we have included modern coastal processes in the teaching materials. The Whin Sill exposure at Snableazes Quarry, has a thin transgressive sill underneath - just at the right height for students to investigate! Help for these projects has been given by Northumberland RIGS and Alnwick Estates. In Shropshire, several sites on Wenlock Edge have been investigated with help from Shropshire RIGS, Bardon Aggregates and the National Trust. In the Midlands, we are linking with the Black Country Geodiversity Partnership to produce materials for Barr Beacon, Walsall. As well as progressing with these important sites, we have also updated the education section of the UKRIGS Handbook - Chapter 10: RIGS and Education. This is expected to be ready in January 2008, and you will be able to download it from the UKRIGS website.

RSPB

Nature After Minerals Project

John Reynolds

RIGS Groups are alerted to this ALSF-funded project which involves consultation workshops around England. John Reynolds [Staffs RIGS] and Martyn Bradley [Warwickshire GCG] attended the West Midlands one, held near Tamworth on 13th November. The East of England workshops were held in Cambridgeshire on 5/6 December. We were very pleased that RSPB's Alice Davies and team had already included geodiversity in the items to be discussed. We were able to point them to several published items and were pleased to be able to engage fully in discussions without having to bang the drum too hard! The final events were in the South East on 16/17 January 2008, near Redhill, Surrey. Details of all the events are put up on the forum as they are available: www.afterminerals.com. RIGS Groups are encouraged to engage by finding out more and by attending their local event.

U K R I G S A G M

At the UKRIGS AGM on 3rd November 2007 held during the Geologists Association "Festival of Geology" in Liverpool, over 14 groups were present from across the UK from Scotland to SW Wales. This year we have had a paid up membership of (a new record) 45 groups and three associates: ESTA, University of Derby and University of Worcester.

New Committee

The following members of the Executive Committee of UKRIGS were elected unopposed, to serve for two years:

Chair: Mike Browne [Lothian and Borders RIGS Group]

Secretary: No nominations received

Treasurer: Alan Cutler [Black Country Geological Society]

Members: Ken Addison [Gwynedd & Mon RIGS Group]

Martyn Bradley [Warwickshire Geoconservation]

Cynthia Burek [NE Wales RIGS Group]

Kevin Crawford [Cheshire RIGS Group]

Peter Jones [Derbyshire RIGS Group]

Keith Ambrose [Leicestershire & Rutland RIGS Group] and John Reynolds [Staffordshire RIGS Group] have a further year to serve.

Write a Site Plan Joint Geology Trusts – UKRIGS Natural England project team

£250 Funding is guaranteed for any RIGS group writing a site management plan for this project. The majority of this project is funded by ALSF and a condition of this funding is that 40 site management plans are produced by groups across the country. As yet, we are a long way short of the 40 plans needed and we urgently need more groups to agree to write a plan. Groups already writing a plan are invited to consider writing another. Plans need to be completed by early February at the latest.

Plans do not have to be lengthy - just clearly set out and achievable. The essential elements are: a description of the geology; brief explanation of its relevance or context; a map or plan of the site; a geological section; a few photographs; brief consideration of any other interests at the site; the management plan (may be shown as a table). This may only take 5-10 pages in some cases. If you want to give more detail, that is fine too. The only set condition is that the site has a clear aggregates link. Please contact Chloe Brooks (Chloe@glosgeotrust.org.uk) if you would like advice about writing a plan or if you have any other questions.

All initial good-practise workshops are now complete. Follow-up meetings are planned in a number of regions to help with this process. Contact Julie Harrald in order to access funding for travel and refreshments for these, and also about funding

A First for an AONB in Wales

The Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has the first LGAP for an AONB in Wales. This stunning area of north east Wales, designated in 1985 for its outstanding landscape, now has a plan to manage and enhance the geodiversity for the social and economic well-being of its inhabitants and those of neighbouring areas and visitors. The Clwydian Range AONB LGAP had been approved by both Denbighshire and Flintshire County Councils. The LGAP partnership is wide ranging and includes NEWRIGS, Countryside Council for Wales and Denbighshire Countryside Services who manage the AONB with significant funding from the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund for Wales. The LGAP was launched on 7th December 2007 and will coordinate a series of projects that conserve and enhance the geodiversity. The LGAP will integrate geodiversity into the AONB's existing work such as the management of the landscape and the annual Denbighshire 'Out and About' booklet of family fun, guided walks and practical tasks. The LGAP partnership brings together a series of other projects including mining heritage, landscape interpretation and education. At the core of the LGAP is life-long learning leading to a greater understanding and enjoyment of the geodiversity of the Clwydian Range. One of the first objectives is the production of field-based education materials for the Welsh 'Outdoor Classroom' National Curriculum. If you would like more information on the Clwydian Range LGAP please contact Dr Jacqui Malpas Geodiversity Officer, Clwydian Range AONB, jmalpas@geodiversity.co.uk, www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk or www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en-gb/DNAP-76RGHQ

Spireslack Open Cast Site

Initial discussions are underway between East Ayrshire Council, Scottish Resources Group, UKRIGS, and Strathclyde RIGS Group on how best to proceed with developing the opencast coal site at Spireslack, Muirkirk for educational and recreational purposes. The main geological features of the site are: limestone pavements, coal section with examples of 'back fill', dykes, index limestone, a limestone face displaying 6 cyclothem representing 20Ma of deposition, a wealth of fossil material, folds, faults, and many other examples of geophysics in action. The council is keen to have the site designated as a RIGS and also to push to implement geodiversity into their local plan, which at the moment only covers biodiversity. In terms of development, which may take two or three years, the site could be a potential main feature of the proposed cycleway which will run from Coalburn to Dalmellington, it could house an on-site fossil museum, and Ayrshire schools could all be given school packs and site visits.

Black Country Second in Lottery Bid

By now you will all have realised that the Black Country Bid came second in the national competition for £50 million. As the rules were winner takes all, we get nothing. What is worse is that the £60 million in match funding that was waiting in the wings has undoubtedly evaporated too. Which means that for the want of a few thousand votes the Midlands has just lost the equivalent of £110 million of environmental and heritage investment that will never be on the table again. And some of the most important national heritage that we have may be lost forever too. We had about 30% of the total vote which was more than the Eden Project and The Sherwood Forest bids put together and this places the Black Country very firmly on the national stage as a/the major future heritage contender for the UK. We wish Graham Worton and his team all the best for the future. Let's hope there is a fairy godmother out there somewhere.

Visit France With Kent Geologists

Kent Geologists' Group is holding a week's field trip to Northern France from Saturday 10th – Saturday 17th May, 2008. We shall collect fossils from productive Palaeogene sites near Reims, with Alan Lane as our leader, then study the Chalk on the Somme and on the Dieppe coast, with Rory Mortimore as our leader. We shall also be able to collect fossils on the Dieppe coast. Travel will be by coach and ferry. The cost is £400 per person (this includes bed, breakfasts and evening meals in Dieppe) payable at the beginning of April. This trip is not suitable for small children. Email Gordon Anchin at gordonanchin@hotmail.com for further information or to book your place.

Ice-Age Wales

For eleven weeks in 2007, visitors were transported back to the Ice Age in North Wales at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester. The exhibition and associated activities formed part of the CrLGAP raising awareness theme, supported by Cheshire RIGS and was opened by Prof. Cynthia Burek. Visitors walked through a cave to be confronted with large mammals, once common in North Wales and the rest of Britain.

Spectacular skeletal material was enjoyed in an exhibition comprising 550 bones from caves in North Wales (now returned), together with material from The Lapworth Museum of Geology, University of Birmingham, World Museum Liverpool (National Museum Liverpool) and Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. A local Brownie unit helped by making a reconstruction of a woolly rhino from papier-mâché, wire wool, and hessian.

The story of the rocks in the Ice Age was told with specimens: limestone from Castle Cement's Cefn Mawr quarry, gravel from Tarmac's Borras quarry, an erratic from the museum collection, and a stalactite loaned by a local individual.

Dudley Rock and Fossil Festival

The geological stall run this year by BCGS at the Fossil Festival was a huge success with the public. For a weekend last September, Dudley Concert Hall and Dudley Museum and Art Gallery hosted the 'Dudley Rock and Fossil Festival' an event selling fossils, minerals, jewellery, gems, crystals and earth science books to the public. The 'Return of the Dinosaurs' exhibition within Dudley Museum was the theme for this years event and was enhanced by various children's activities available including dinosaur model making, fossil casting, trilobite racing and JAM (Juniors at Museums) club activities. The aim of the Rock & Fossil Festival was to celebrate the wonderful geological heritage we have here in Dudley and inspire people of all ages to engage in the fun and educational aspect of this popular event. The festival attracted about 7000 visitors. Most of the people who had attended the event came to see the Dinosaur exhibitions, see the exhibitor fossil displays and undertake the various activities for children. Review by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council says "The comments show that visitors and exhibitors alike have had an enjoyable time, whilst providing an informative and educational experience. A good proportion of people to the event were repeat visitors from the previous year and this is indicative of a well organized and memorable event that people wish to return to visit in the future."

PUBLICATIONS

Exploring the Landscape of Charnwood Forest and Mountsorrel

By BGS published with a grant from MIRO

This is a beautiful 52 page booklet walkers map guide to geology of the area with a useful A0 map with colour pictures.

Geotrails: Rocks Make the Landscape

By Shropshire Geological Society, published with a grant from ALSF:

Severn Valley Bridgnorth to Highley

From desert sands to glacial torrents

Titterstone Clee and Clee Hill

From 300, million year old tropical swaps and volcanic activity to coal mines and quarries.

Lyth Hill and Sharpstone

From a 500 and 50 mill year old viewpoint to a big hole in the ground!

The A3 laminated trails cost £1.50 and are available from www.shropshiregeology.org.uk

DIARY DATES

Tue 18th March 2008

"Growing Energy" Earth Science Education Forum Cymru (ESEF-Cymru) Presentation by Matthew Carse (Managing Director, Preenergy Power) 4.30pm for 5.00pm, until 6.50pm, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

Wed 19th March 2008

Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group. Identification matching and sources of stone supply for the conservation and repair of stone building. By Dr Graham Lott. BGS 7.30pm St Johns museum Warwick, www.wgcp.co.uk

Mon 31st March 2008

BCGS AGM starts at 7.45pm sharp, at Dudley Museum, St James Road, Dudley. Followed by "Charles Lapworth and the Highland Controversy - Maps, Mountains and Madness!" by Prof. Paul Smith, Head of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham. 01384 815575.

CREDITS

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Executive Committee

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Treasurer: Alan Cutler – Black Country GS
Prof Cynthia Burek – NEWRIGS
Peter Jones - Derbyshire RIGS
Kevin Crawford – Cheshire RIGS
Martyn Bradley - Warwickshire Geo
Keith Ambrose – Leicester & Rutland RIGS
Dr Ken Addison – Gwynedd & Mon RIGS
John Reynolds - Staffordshire RIGS

Co-opted

Secretary: Dr Cheryl Jones
Webmaster: Craig Slawson – Staffs RIGS
Education Officer: Rick Ramsdale



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NATURAL
ENGLAND

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It is always interesting and enjoyable to read about RIGS groups and their work. To share your news in this quarterly newsletter, please contact Prof Cynthia Burek, RIGS Newsletter Editor, c.burek@chester.ac.uk or

Vic Page, Assistant RIGS Newsletter Editor, v.page@chester.ac.uk.

Views expressed in this newsletter are of the individual authors and do not represent opinions of UKRIGS.