



THE BLACK COUNTRY GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN A. CUTLER, B.Sc., Dip.M., M.Inst.M.
VICE CHAIRMAN P. G. OLIVER, B.Sc., Ph.D., M.I.Geol., F.G.S.
HON. SECRETARY P. SHILSTON.
HON. TREASURER M. J. WOODS, B.Sc., M.Sc., F.G.S.

NEWSLETTER No. 20 - April 1980

REMAINING PROGRAMME FOR 1980

Indoor meetings at 7.45pm
Coffee and Biscuits at 7.15pm

May 1st Members Evening. Talks and slides. Dudley Library.

June 5th Meeting before field trip.
Dudley Library.

June 8th Field trip to East Midlands Jurassic. Leader Dr R.G.Clements of Leicester University.

July 10th Meeting before field trip.

July 13th "Black Country geology" part two. Leader Alan Cutler.

Sept 11th "Silurian Fossils". Lecture by Dr I.Strachan of Birmingham University.

Oct 30th Meeting before field trip.

Nov 2nd Field trip to Lickey Hills. Leader W.G.Hardie of Birmingham University.

Nov 21st Social Evening.

AGM

The fifth Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday 6th March 1980 at the Central Library, St. James Road, Dudley. The following officers and committee were elected

Chairman Alan Cutler
Vice Chairman Peter Oliver
Hon. Secretary Paul Shilston
Hon. Treasurer Maitland Woods
Conservation
Secretary Colin Mitchell
Field Secretary Tim O'Mara

Committee Members David Reynolds
John Easter
Anne Sutcliffe

EARTH MOVING (from 'The Engineer' 4.10.79)

I am in favour of using technology to make the world a brighter and more entertaining place, but I am not sure about one of the applications of modern technology on show at the Geological Museum in London. The museum has invested in an electronically controlled system which makes a platform on which visitors can stand move around to simulate an earthquake of a violence of 6.5 on the Richter scale. The controls were manufactured by Moog. What puzzles me is why anyone in their senses should want to experience what an earthquake feels like in the first place. I have never experienced an earthquake and am totally uncurious about whether it is fun or terrifying or boring or whatever. Those who have been through the experience tend to the view that it is not fun. The museum's head of design, Giles Verlarde, says that the earthquake simulator is one of the most popular items the museum has ever staged. Which all goes to show that there is no accounting for lack of taste.

Editor:- Sheila Pitts,
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SAFETY FIRST ON FIELD TRIPS.

In previous years the B.C.G.S. has provided at nominal charges a measure of Personal Accident insurance cover for both members and non-members attending on field trips. Thanks to a high level of care and responsibility both on the part of field trip leaders and party members we have not experienced any accident claims.

Unfortunately the costs of Personal Accident insurance cover has escalated beyond the society's means and in terms of increased insurance settlements our usual accident cover is nominal. As a result this type of policy will not be taken out in future although our Public Liability cover is of course continued.

You are strongly urged, however, to take out your own Personal Accident insurance cover to a level which you feel appropriate. Schools and other similar bodies attending on field trips should have appropriate insurance cover as a matter of course.

The society cannot accept any responsibility for injuries arising through accidents or for any other losses

With regard to general safety, the use of commonsense is the most helpful singular advice we can give, but do read "A Code for Geological Field Work" a copy of which was forwarded with a recent Newsletter.

Points to Note -

1. OBEY THE COUNTRY CODE
2. DO NOT TRESPASS.
3. DO NOT INTERFERE WITH MACHINERY.
4. NO LITTER, THIS INCLUDES ROCK FRAGMENTS.
5. AVOID UNDUE DISTURBANCE TO FLORA AND FAUNA.
6. BEWARE OF TIDES ON COASTAL SECTIONS.
7. DO NOT CLIMB CLIFFS, OR QUARRY FACES.
8. DO NOT ENTER QUARRIES WITHOUT THE MANAGER'S PERMISSION.
9. DO NOT APPROACH UNSTABLE QUARRY FACES.
10. BEWARE OF SLUDGE LAGOONS.
11. WEAR STOUT BOOTS AND SAFETY HELMETS ALWAYS.

Remember that on many geological sites, conservation of the existing exposure is of prime importance. Do not hammer or collect specimens unnecessarily. If you must use your hammer use it to knock your helmet on.

Safe Field trips to all.

STOP PRESS

Wolverhampton Fiesta '80 - Hobby Exhibition 29th - 31st May.

The Society will be putting on a display at this event, to be held in West Park Wolverhampton, Thurs & Fri 2pm - 9.30pm, Sat 12 noon - 10.30pm. We need volunteers for manning the stand over the three days, particularly Thursday and Friday. Members willing to help, should contact Alan Cutler as soon as possible (Tel. No. Brierley Hill 77865).

BLACK COUNTRY GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

1979 Annual Report

Membership

It is pleasing to report further gains in our membership. Assuming all 1979 members renew their subscription the present total stands at 71, comprising 38 Full Members, 8 pairs of Family Members, 12 Junior and 5 Associate Members. Perhaps even more pleasing is the fact that the proportion of resignations each year is dropping substantially.

Annual Programme

The 1979 programme maintained the attendance levels set the previous year indicating again that a reasonable balance is being made in catering for the interests of the broad cross section of geologists who are society members. Some concern has been expressed at the high numbers of students on certain field trips which has tended to overwhelm not only the leaders but also more mature members. A complete solution to this problem has not yet been found but the committee will be studying the matter further in an attempt to cater for local schools without detriment to the rest of our members.

In 1979 we were particularly fortunate in receiving the services of six prominent geologists. Keith Moseley - talking about pleistocene palaeontology which was further amplified by professor Shotton on his field trip. Dr Ixer from Aston, led two field trips the first one having the dubious distinction of being the first in our history which had to be postponed through bad weather. Dr Barnes from Swansea gave an illuminating lecture on mineralisation processes.

Paul

A week-end field meeting to the Dorset Coast in May led by Peter Enson of Dorchester Museum and Ian West of Southampton University attracted nineteen members. A similar exercise to South Wales is planned in April this year, details of which have already been circulated.

The skittles match at Clent made a welcome change from the socials held at the Old Mill. Sadly attendance was not up to expectations but all those who did attend had a thoroughly good evening.

From May to September last year four members led 10 geological walks for the public on behalf of the Countryside Commission to Wrens Nest and Doulton's Clay Pit, Netherton. Although attendance figures were variable the walks were generally regarded as successful. Unfortunately the Countryside Commission does not have the resources to undertake similar work in 1980 but the society has decided to arrange it's own programme for the summer months, and further details will be announced in due course.

Conservation

The number of sites on the society's list of Black Country Geological exposures has been increased to over 90. The list was originally started as you may recall in response to the County Structure Plan which was finally published before Christmas. A number of sites may be affected by proposed developments in selected areas and the society has commented upon these to the County Planner.

The exposures at Pouk Hill are giving rise to some concern over their future viability. Unfortunately the local children are damaging the coal measures/basalt junction with some risk to their

own safety. The only remedial course would now appear to be through education.

During the summer the conservation sub-committee held a useful meeting with Nature Conservancy at Wrens Nest. Several works have been put in hand as a result. The long term management of the reserve is however, still open to conjecture.

We were asked to side with local residents and object to a planning application for a scrapyard at Gornal. It was possible that it might have affected exposures of the Gornal Grit, although later investigation showed otherwise and therefore we were unable to lend our support.

One of the most important events in the year was the Geological Conservation Conference held at the Geological Society's rooms in London in March. Two delegates Peter Parkes and Colin Mitchell attended on our behalf and by all accounts received an excellent reception. There is no doubt that our presence there has had very valuable results in establishing the society's credibility. It was at the conference that we learned of the plan to launch the Shropshire Geological Society which was actually inaugurated in September. That society is modelled on our own and we wish them every success.

Graham Hickman was employed again at Dudley Museum to work on the geological collection during the 1979 summer vacation, although for a shorter period than in 1978. The majority of specimens have now been moved from the cellars into more hospitable surroundings at the rear of the geological gallery. In the present economic climate there is little likelihood that these specimens will be incorporated into the main public display or even housed in anything approaching proper fashion. Nevertheless

the type and figured specimens are now safely stored and indiscriminate lending has been stopped. I regret that the mailing to all 64 Dudley Councillors produced a negligible response. We are presently considering a number of other possibilities before any further direct action is attempted.

The society now has a small display detailing its conservation work. It was originally produced to feature alongside the NCC travelling exhibition when it appeared at Cotwall End Nature Centre. The display is now available on short term loan for appropriate events.

Publications

The newsletter remains as popular as ever and continues as the best way of keeping all members abreast of society news and activities. Sheila Pitts has tackled the job as Editor with customary enthusiasm, and we record our thanks accordingly. It is planned that the Newsletter will be published bi-monthly in future giving six instead of four issues each year, and will we hope, help to strengthen membership ties.

It was our hope that the Journal would have been published by now. In simple terms its priority in relation to other activities declined during the year, but I can report that with the aid of advertising revenue we have reached a situation where the Journal has become financially viable and is now being made ready for printing.

Finally, we record our thanks for their services to J.Golledge and P.Parkes who are resigning from the Committee. John joined the committee in 1977 and later that year took on the role of

of Secretary and remained in that office until now. Peter too has given sterling service for three years particularly in the field of conservation, and he assures me will continue to do so in a new specialist role.

1979 was a year of consolidation; before us there are many interesting, satisfying and challenging opportunities and with the current buoyant mood of the society we look forward to the future with considerable enthusiasm.

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