



The Black Country Geological Society

NEWSLETTER NO. 39 - JUNE 1983.

Editorial.

"It must be true - it was in the paper."

One of the most pleasant of editorial joys is interest among readers. Lately a most encouraging number of members have taken up their courage and a pen, and managed a little contribution.

From the early misapprehension that we "didn't have" letters to the editor, this part of the newsletter has become almost a regular feature. One of the most lively and well-documented must surely be the one in the present issue. It was the result of a "From the Papers" item, and no doubt all members will enjoy its precise information and local interest.

Now! What about one of you new 1983 members, one as fascinated by the living nature of geology as I am, going to the Krakatoa exhibition and writing it up? We'll all want to know, and very probably the judicious use of labels will do all the work.

Next Meeting.

June 6th. Evening field trip. "The Building Stones of Birmingham." Leader Paul Shilston. New meeting place. Meet at the Hall of Memory, Broad St. Birmingham. 7.15pm. The guided walk will go through the city centre, indicating the geology underfoot and some of the building stones used, ending at the "Longboat" canalside pub.

Meetings are held in the Allied Centre, Green Man Entry, Tower St. Dudley, behind the Malt Shovel pub. Indoor meetings commence at 8 pm. with coffee and biscuits (no charge) from 7.15pm. Field meetings will commence from outside the Allied Centre unless otherwise arranged. Those who would like lifts, please contact Nigel Bradley.

Non-members welcome.

The Society does not provide personal accident cover for members and visitors on field trips. You are strongly advised to take out your own personal insurance cover to the level which you feel appropriate. Schools and other bodies should arrange their own insurance as a matter of course.

Chairman
A. Cutler B.Sc., M.CAM.,
Dip. M., M.Inst.M.

Vice Chairman
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F.I.E.E., M.I. Mech.E.

Field Secretary
Anne Harrison B.Sc., M.B.,
Ch.B., F.F.A.R.C.S.

Programme 1983.

June 27th. Evening field trip to Ham Dingle and Wychbury Hill. Meet at the Foley Arms, Ham Lane, Hagley Rd, Pedmore, Stourbridge, 7 pm. Leader Alan Cutler.

July 9th, Saturday. Field trip to Cannock. Morning, Kingswood opencast site. Afternoon, guided walk in Cannock Chase. Meet 10 am. Newlands Lane, Cannock. Grid SK 003095. The NCB are limiting the party to 20 and require names in advance. Please book no later than June 25th.

July 18th. Meet at the Allied Centre to examine and classify the Society's collection of rocks and fossils.

September 26th. Lecture by Dr. Trevor Ford, "The Mineralisation of Derbyshire."

October 17th. Informal meeting at the Allied Centre. The following Sunday's field trip will be discussed.

October 23rd. Joint field meeting with the Shropshire Geological Society to local sites.

November 11th, Friday. Dr. G. Tresise will explain "Geology and Wine in Western Europe" as a prelude to our sampling some wines.

December 5th. "The Biology of Trilobites", lecture by Dr. P.D. Lane of Keele University.

December 6th 1982. Lecture by Mr. Eddie Francis, on "Glacial Deposits."

Mr. Francis began his talk by saying that he had been interested in glacial deposits since doing field work in the Durham Coalfield area, which is overlain by glacial deposits. He had eventually become Secretary of the Quaternary Research Association and had

been U.K. delegate to many international conferences on Quaternary research.

He illustrated his talk first with present day photographs of Swiss glaciers showing their morphology, with crevasses, medial moraines, and ridges left where the ice had retreated. Streams emerging from below a glacial snout carrying very little debris were compared with others showing stratified debris, and boulders from stagnant ice above. Outflow streams were braided. Imbricated deposits showed the direction of flow, and cross bedding dip on one photograph showed the change of flow from left to right. The crests and troughs of ripple marks showed reversal of flow from the lower beds to upper ones, but since there are often local flow changes, many measurements are needed to decide the overall change of flow.

Greenland is mainly an ice cap with wide effluent glaciers. Debris from Vatna Jokull, Iceland's largest glacier, has been distorted by ice pressure. One of the oldest glacial deposits is a tillite in the south of the Canadian Shield, intruded by a dyke of 2,300 m.y. and with its surface abraded by ice of the last ice age.

Some till deposits show a sharp base above sand and gravel, with no disturbance at all, and others show lenses of sand within them due to surface water channels carrying it. Several of these could represent only one ice advance because till can flow. Weight can cause upward flow from plastic deformation, rather like salt domes. It is disputed whether flow tills are true tills (i.e. sorted) because they are re-sorted, and they are sometimes called glacial diamicts, such as channel fills moving downhill due to gravity. Individual clay balls can become

pressed together to form a bed, by flow due to gravity. Wedges and laminae of clay distort easily. Ellesmere has lenses of flow tills within gravels, which were mud flows contemporaneous with the gravels. Such flow tills have only been studied in the last 15 years.

Waterlaid deposits were shown from the Rhone glacier, where braided streams deposit bars of silt. Very complicated anastomosing channels flow on fans from Vatna Jokull, where flow is maximal in the evenings, following much daytime melting.

Cross bedding was shown dramatically etched with coal fragments, showing a series of units within the same direction of flow, on a braided river bar near Bridgnorth in the Severn main terrace.

Irish eskers ridges were shown north west of Dublin. Not all eskers are formed in tunnels below ice, but if they are from tunnels then they show concentric arched layers reflecting the shape of the tunnel.

Mr. Francis showed us how to look positively at glacial deposits - like all good teachers he taught us how to think, and gave us a very constructive and interesting evening.

Sheila Pitts.

Annual General Meeting. March
14th. 1983.

The sherry and shortbread again attracted a good attendance. The treasurer's report stressed that members' subscriptions were used to cover the normal running costs i.e. insurance, lecture fees, film hire, purchase of books and maps for resale, together with the production and circulation of this newsletter. The income from the profit on Christmas cards and the NCC Country Walks is used mainly

to finance the production of journals and for the acquisition of equipment and books. The amount of this income varies from year to year. The projection of income and expenditure showed the desirability of increasing the subscriptions with effect from January 1984 as follows:-

	<u>Increase of - to.</u>	
Ord. members	£1	- £6
Family	£1	- £8
Student	nil	- £2.50
Affiliated	£5	- £15

The last increase in subscriptions took place in January 1982.

The Treasurer's report and the increase in subscriptions were agreed.

The meeting then received the Chairman's Report, which showed membership stood at 69 at the end of 1982 and 70 at the end of 1981. The following items are extracted from the Chairman's Report.

" The weekend meeting at Dolgellau was extended to include members of the Shropshire Geological Society and proved to be the most popular weekend yet. In October we were the guests of the Shropshire Society and had a most interesting day at the Wrekin and in the Onny valley."

" Conservation.
a) Collection.

A number of schemes for the future housing of the Dudley collections have been put forward by various parties during the year but none have met with general approval, so no progress has been achieved.

The Geological Curators' Group has been actively lobbying Wolverhampton Polytechnic concerning the current state of the John Fraser collection and it is hoped that the funding money of the Manpower Services Commission may be available in due course to provide specialist help.

b) Site news.

It is pleasing to report that all the information collected by the Society in the Black Country geological site survey has now been incorporated into national record sheets, and must be regarded as one of the major achievements of 1982. A set has been lodged with Stoke Museum, our nearest geological records centre, and the Society's own reference set is kept at the Allied Centre for members to inspect if they wish.

The appeal for photographic material has produced no results and is a major disappointment.

c) Other activities.

Guided walks for the public were organised once more at Doulton's Claypit, Wrens Nest, and Cotwall End on Sundays between June and September. Although the average attendance was lower than in 1981, the total of 227 adults and children still make a significant contribution to the Society's income. We record our thanks and appreciation to members who willingly give their time to act as leaders and helpers.

d) Publications.

Interest in the Society's Journal "Black Country Geologist" has continued with copies being requested from the Illinois State Geological Service and Brisbane Museum Australia. Response from within the Society is still disappointing, but it is hoped to commence the second issue in the not too distant future.

The Society was instrumental in preparing the Geological Trail Guide for Saltwells Local Nature Reserve which the Conservancy Council has published in a provisional form. It is hoped that a definitive edition will be published by Dudley Council in due course.

The newsletter remains as lively and informative as ever. It is encouraging to see new contributors coming forward, which

helps its continued vitality. Our thanks go to the editor and the other members involved in its production and distribution."

The Chairman reported the co-option during the year of Peter Knight as a Committee member. He also reported that Anne Harrison would be unable to continue as Field Secretary because of extra professional duties. She deserves particular thanks for working so hard, well, promptly and cheerfully to ensure our enjoyment in the Society.

The following is the list of officers and committee for the following year:-

Chairman - Alan Cutler
Vice Chairman Dr.P.Oliver
Hon. Sec. - Paul Shilston
Hon.Tres. - M.J.Woods
Cons.Sec. -
Field Sec. - N.G.Bradley.

Committee members

J.Easter,
M.Coles
P.Knight
Mrs.H.Logan

In my opinion the officers and committee, with their various helpers and the Hon.Auditor Mr.F.R.Grimes, deserve our thanks and support in the future.

The evening concluded with two films on the British Ice Ages, but unfortunately one was of quite poor quality in both sound and vision.

Douglas Warren.

Letter to the Editor.

11, Priory Close,
Dudley.
May 11th.

Dear Sheila,

Newspaper Extracts.

The newsletter is one of the items of post we receive; that is usually "devoured" on the day of its arrival. The press extracts are one of the features

that we enjoy.

My knowledge of limestone workings in Dudley ceased to be up to date in March 1974 and my knowledge of Sandwell and Walsall is limited. However a word of caution is necessary about the reprint from the "Express and Star" given in the newsletter of April 1983.

The second paragraph reads:-
"Although no houses, shops or factories have collapsed - -"
This is not true. Roof falls and settlement of limestone workings caused 12 houses to be demolished in Dudley - 79 and 81 Meadow Road in November and December 1948 and 102-120 (even numbers) Meadow Road during the period October 1948-February 1949. In recent years several factories in the Wednesbury area have had to be demolished from a similar cause.

The paragraph under the heading "pumping" implies that the whole of the Black Country is built over limestone workings. This also is not true.

The last paragraph reads:-
"The risk of buildings suddenly disappearing down a hole is extremely remote. If anything were wrong, there would be adequate warning."

This may or may not be true in Walsall. However in Dudley a significant number of crownings in have occurred due to degradation of limestone workings in the areas of Mons Hill, Wrens Nest, the Sports Centre and elsewhere. There exists on Wrens Nest a crownings in which took place before I came to Dudley, which is big enough to swallow a semi-detached pair of houses and was of such a size as to take the volume of 120 double deck buses. The hole has since been infilled - the nearest houses were but 120 feet away!

I hope that my words of caution will not stop the publication of further such extracts.

Douglas Warren.

Hail and farewell.

Welcome to new members:-

S.J.Deer, Four Oaks.
Mr.& Mrs.Howie, Bilston.
D.J.Price, Lower Gornal.

Farewell from Chris and Mike Newman:-

I felt it was about time I wrote and explained our recent absence. I am now the mother of a 5 month and 23 month infants, and my husband is a part time Ph.D.student, hence our poor attendance. Now that we are moving to Cardiff this month, we will not be renewing our membership. We miss your meetings and outings, and thank you all for pleasant memories.

Chris and Mike Newman.

And after several years of your company, we miss you too!

Editor.

Publishing Success.

Anne Harrison, who has served us so well as field secretary, earns her living giving anaesthetics, often in emergency situations.

In March she had a textbook published on emergency anaesthesia, which she wrote entirely by herself in a very few months. We congratulate her on this considerable achievement, and on the attractive appearance of the book.

"From the Papers."

Nature Site Opencast 'would be sacrilege' Express & Star, 10.8.82. Dudley borough planning committee unanimously agreed to fight proposals to opencast land adjacent to Doulton's Claypit. Don Walters, director of planning services is quoted as saying that the mine would destroy a significant portion of a site of immense value in terms of its natural beauty and ecological and geological interest. We agree with these fine sentiments but cannot help wondering if there would have been quite the same outcry if anyone other than the Countess of Dudley had lodged the planning application. Unfortunately the local resistance to opencast workings anywhere may thwart NCB plans to mine coal and alternatively the continual development of the enterprise zone adjacent to Pedmore Road. C'est la vie.....

A flurry of activity in the papers at the end of January occurred, concerning the Countess of Dudley's application to mine coal at Saltwells.

"Opencast Mining Plan ready soon" (Express & Star 1.2.83) "Countess Pit Plan in the Balance" 3.2.83.

"Mining bid at Beauty Spot" Evening Mail 31.1.83. In fact there was little extra information that was new, but delays caused by the Countess's agents trying to meet all objections occurred before the plan went before the County Council.

"Opencast scheme for colliery Site." Express & Star 13.12.83. Plans for another opencast scheme at the former Fibbersley colliery site at Willenhall have been prepared. It is estimated that 25,000 tons of coal could be produced. A similar application has been made to opencast an area at Moxley, Darlaston. Council decisions have been deferred pending a site visit.

Committee meetings changes.

<u>General</u>	<u>Conservation</u>
June 20th at	July 18th
Park Inn,	Sept. 26th
Sedgley.	Nov. 21st
Sept. 5th	
Nov. 7th	

Guided Walks 1983 Programme

Wordsley Ridge Hill and Buckpool.
3 pm. June 26th and Sept. 25th.
Meet White Swan car park,
Brierley Hill Road.

Cotwall End Valley, Sedgley.
3 pm. July 3rd. Sept. 4th.
Meet car park, Nature Centre at
corner of Cotwall End Rd. and
Catholic Lane.

Wrens Nest, Dudley, 3 pm. June
19th, July 17th, Aug. 21st. Sept.
18th. Meet King Arthur public
house, corner of Priory Rd. and
Birmingham Road.

Advertisement.

Book:- "The Last Dinosaurs" by
L.R.Croft. 80 pages. Paperback
£2.50. Hardback £4.95. From Elmwood
Books, 3 Elmwood, Chorley, PR7 1UU.

Natural History Museum, Cromwell Rd.
London SW7 5BD.

Krakatoa Centenary.
Temporary exhibition to mark 100
years since the loudest volcanic
eruption in recorded history, which
destroyed the island of Krakatoa,
sent tidal waves across the world,
and caused deaths of 36,000 people.
Aug. 26th - Oct. 25th. Free.

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