



# THE BLACK COUNTRY GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN	A. CUTLER, B.Sc., Dip.M., M.Inst.M.
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HON. TREASURER	M. J. WOODS, B.Sc., M.Sc., F.G.S.

NEWSLETTER No 14 - November, 1978

## Editorial

The time has come for a fresh approach to the production of the Newsletter. Beginning with the February issue Sheila Pitts will be the new Editor. She is warmly welcomed, for she has helped much in the past, and she has many interesting points of view to put forward.

This is an appropriate time to mention all those who continue to help the Society in one form or another. To the Members, for excellent support at meetings and field trips, to Alan Cutler for setting and achieving such high standards, to John Golledge for superb efficiency as Hon. Secretary, to Peter Parkes and Colin Mitchell for excellent examples of enthusiasm; to all these people the Society is indeed indebted. Graham Hickman has worked industriously on the collections at Dudley Museum, Peter Whitehead never fails to respond to calls for assistance, the services of Margaret Oliver and Maitland Woods have ensured the success of functions and finance. Kate Ashcroft is always ready to produce material for the Newsletter, and those geologists of earlier years will always be remembered; Dave Wraight, Eileen Bakewell and Terry Bond. Strength is provided by active Associate Members and Doug Bedson considers he has failed when he is unable to supply urgently required goods with no better than a 10% discount.

The Society is now part of the Black Country and of British Geology. Long may it be so.

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## November 17th - Annual Social

At the 'Old Mill', Windmill Street, Upper Gornal. 8.00 p.m. to 12.00 p.m. Please make sure you have ordered your ticket from the Hon. Sec., 62 Red Hill, Stourbridge (Stourbridge 6907).

## Programme (note two changes of dates)

December 7th Various aspects of Black Country Mining. The Friends of the Black Country Museum Mining Group. Dudley Library 7.45 p.m. Tea and biscuits 7.15 p.m.

January 18th A study of the local geological maps with particular reference to igneous intrusions. Dudley Library 7.45 p.m. Tea and biscuits 7.15 p.m.

January 21st 'Igneous Intrusions in the Black Country' - A field trip to a number of localities. Meet at Dudley Library at 9.00 a.m. Bring a packed lunch.

February 15th Lecture. Possibly dealing with one or more aspects of palaeontology. Dudley Library 7.45 p.m. Tea and biscuits 7.15 p.m.

March 15th Annual General Meeting / Film Night and Sherry.

April 19th A general discussion about Pleistocene geology with particular reference to the next field trip.

April 22nd A field trip to look at the Pleistocene deposits of part of the Midlands. Leader - Professor Shotton.

May 10th A meeting to discuss the geology of the Dorset area.

May 18th, 19th, 20th Weekend field trip to Dorset. Leaders from Southampton University.

June 10th Igneous Rocks of the Peak District. Field trip. Leader Dr R Ixer of Aston University.

July 12th A discussion relating to the progress made to date on the matter of conservation of geological sites in the Black Country.

July 15th Sites for Conservation. A field trip to those localities in the Black Country, that the Society is particularly interested in.

September 13th or 20th Lecture on Mineralisation.

October 11th Geological maps relating to next field trip.

October 14th Field trip to the Roaches and Goldsitch Moss. Some practical field mapping thrown in for those interested. Leader Peter Whitehead.

November 16th Social Evening.

December 13th Members Night. 'The Geology of the Dumfries Area' by Graham Hickman.

Non-members welcome at all meetings.

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Is Parliament Killing Field Studies in Geology?

In recent years, Parliament has passed several acts to protect the people. The intention of these acts may have been good, but the road to Hell is paved with such good intentions, as we know. In schools, there has been a healthy trend of increased numbers of geology courses, and hence of pupils having experience of field work. This has many benefits, not just in terms of making geology real and getting them to tackle real geological problems, but in social terms. They have to work as teams, in difficult conditions; they see a wider range of places - the countryside, the coasts, but of special value must be the contact they get with real work places - quarries. They see the economic value of geology and meet those who work in the extractive industries.

These studies of necessity cause good links to form between schools and industry. Teachers have built up contacts with quarry managers, and the recent calls by many people for education to have more contact with the 'real world' surely have been showing how this is a desirable thing.

All this is under threat. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 has caused many quarries to refuse permission for visits. Now, the Unfair Contracts Act 1978 is causing even more quarries to look again at their positions. Many were willing to allow access in return for a signature on an 'Indemnity Form', waiving claims against the firm; this is now considered to be an 'Unfair Contract' and the insurers of the firms are not allowing these forms to be used. As a result, large numbers of valuable teaching sites are being lost. This is as big a threat as the infilling or despoilation of sites.

Schools are asked to discourage collecting in places other than working pits; but they can't get into working pits. We are asked to develop links with industry; but industry dare not let us on the premises for fear of insurance problems and the Acts.

The whole situation needs sorting out. It took a Private Members Bill to get school minibuses exempted from PSV licences, following Transport Acts. Do we need a special 'Educational Visits Bill' to absolve firms from some of these 'protection' acts? Or are the acts being interpreted too rigidly? Come on, Parliament, sort out this mess for us!

(Pete Whitehead, Head of Geology, Blue Coat Comp, Walsall)

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Pouk Hill

The tunnel at Pouk Hill has been infilled and blocked off resulting in the partial covering of the small dolerite exposure adjacent to it. The Society was informed by the County Council that there was no way of retaining this exposure. Obviously that was not the case - some 2ft of weathered rock is still exposed and with a little excavation could make a reasonable outcrop again.

At the northern end of the site tipping is now complete and all rocks previously exposed are covered.

The rocks collected from the old quarry may be used by Aston University for research purposes. If this is the case it illustrates the importance of the work that the Society undertook in recording and collecting prior to infilling.

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### The Black Country Geologist

The Journal of the Society is now being typed prior to printing. There have been many difficulties but these are now largely overcome and it is hoped to be in print very soon.

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### Conservation of sites

Conservation Officer Peter Parkes still requires more assistance in the visiting and recording of sites of geological significance. Contact him on Sedgley 75895 or Field Secretary Colin Mitchell on 021 353 4083.

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### Book Review - Geological Handbook - Wrens Nest

Published by N.C.C. Price 20p

This book is very good value for money and members should find it quite interesting. The geology of the Dudley Area is described in the first three pages in a style that assumes that the reader is a non-geologist but a basic geological vocabulary is needed (such terms as anticline, dip and fault are used). The book continues with a very good description of the new sections and the fossils to be found and although the fossil drawings are excellent there are too few; less than thirty are mentioned in the text and it would not have been difficult to illustrate them all. There are eight pages of photographs but the standard is poor, members could have supplied better and more informative pictures. Frankly, I think the book could be improved by the omission of half of the photographs and the addition of more drawings. The third part of the book is first class; it reviews the economic history of the area. The book concludes with a "pull out" stratigraphical column of the exposures recently excavated; excellent but oh what a pity a full geological column was not printed alongside so that the budding geologist could see where Wrens Nest "fits in".

(DOUG BEDSON)

### Bookbox

Doug Bedson has donated the following books to the Society:

The Earth - Rocks Minerals and Fossils  
by W.B.Harland

Reprint from 'Ice Ages: Ancient and  
Modern' by G.R.Coope

The Palaeogeography of the Midlands  
by L.J.Wills

The Assynt District - Geological  
Excursion Guide

Geology of the Area around Birmingham  
G.A.Guide (2 copies)

The Dorset Coast from Poole to the  
Chesil Beach - G.A.Guide

Geological Model of the Isle of Purbeck  
by A.Strahan

Genesis and Geology - C.C.Gillispie

British Mesozoic Fossils - British  
Museum

Introduction to Geological Structures  
and Maps - G.M.Bennison

Geology and Scenery in England and  
Wales - A.E.Trueman

The Observer's Book of Geology -  
I.O.Evans

The Minerals of Jersey - A.E.Mourant

British Fossils - Duncan Forbes

The Geology of the Church Stretton  
Area - J.E.Wright

The Geological Column - Manchester  
Museum (2 copies)

The following are also available to  
Members:-

Fossil Collecting

The Earth

Observers Book of Geology

British Regional Geology Guides:-

Northern England

Pennines

Yorkshire/Lincolnshire

Central England

East Anglia

Bristol/Gloucester

London/Thames  
South West England  
Hampshire  
Weald

G.A. Guides:-

- No 1 - Birmingham
- No 17 - Swansea

Journal of Geological Society:-

Volumes 131, 135

Mercian Geologist Vol 5

Welsh Geological Quarterly 1966-9

Black Country Museum Mining Group  
Newsletters

Maps (Geological Survey)

10 miles/1" Scotland  
England and Wales

- 1m/1" 121 Wrexham
- 137 Oswestry
- 141 Loughborough
- 152 Shrewsbury
- 153 Wolverhampton
- 154 Lichfield
- 166 Church Stretton
- 167 Dudley
- 168 Birmingham

Special Bristol Area

1m/2 1/2" ( So.49 Church Stretton  
( Explanatory Booklet

Book Review - "The Endless Village - The  
Wildlife of Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell,  
Walsall and Wolverhampton"

This survey, by ecologist W G Teagle, was done for the Nature Conservancy Council. It is intended to make people more aware of the wildlife in the West Midlands conurbation and how it has adapted and how we may hinder or help it to prosper. The book is well produced, with photographs and diagrams and is packed with information of what is living where. The survey will be distributed world wide because it is envisaged that similar situations exist in conurbations elsewhere. To

some extent it is a pioneer survey and is all the more interesting to read because of this. Subjects covered include basic geology; history of land use; plants and animals in a series of different types of habitat; special features of canals etc. There is also a list of clubs, museums etc. It is often not realised how much "Wild Country" there is in the Black Country in particular. These are often important "ancient monuments" - being the only indicators we have of what the area was like centuries ago. The book also points out the importance of local organisations such as B.C.G.S., because they have special knowledge of the locality. Those making land use decisions often do not employ such expertise and local organisations have an important role to play in advising them. The book has 58 pages and will be useful to anyone interested in natural history, local industrial history, local geology, etc. It will be especially useful to schools.

"The Endless Village" is good value, copies are available from the Hon. Secretary at meetings (£1.00) or by post (£1.20).

(JOHN GOLLEDGE)

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Extra-Mural Course

Introducing Geology - Dr P Toghill  
20 meetings on Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m.  
starting 9th January, 1979. Polytechnic,  
Wolverhampton - Stafford Street Entrance  
Room No B 310. A basic course dealing  
with all aspects of geology and including  
field trips.

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For Sale

- Hammers £2.75
- Helmets £1.50
- The Endless Village £1.00 (£1.20 by post)
- Geological Guide to Wrens Nest 20p  
(30p by post)
- Geological Excursions, Walsall &  
Surrounding Areas 30p (50p by post)
- Chart of Geological Ages 25p (32p by post)

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EDITOR: Peter Oliver, 26 Belvedere Close,  
(Outgoing) Kidderminster, DY10 3AT

EDITOR: Sheila Pitts, 4 Siskin Road,  
(Incoming) Pedmore, Stourbridge.