



The
Black
Country
Geological
Society

NEWSLETTER No. 168 December 2004

The Society provides limited personal accident cover for members attending meetings or field trips. Details can be obtained from the Secretary. Non-members attending society field trips are advised to take out your own personal accident insurance to the level you feel appropriate. Schools and other bodies should arrange their own insurance as a matter of course.

Leaders provide their services on a purely voluntary basis and may not be professionally qualified in this capacity.

The Society does not provide hard hats for use of members or visitors at field meetings. It is your responsibility to provide your own hard hat and other safety equipment *(such as safety boots and goggles/glasses) and to use it when you feel it is necessary or when a site owner makes it a condition of entry.

Hammering is seldom necessary. It is the responsibility of the hammerer to ensure that other people are at a safe distance before doing so.



A Merry

Christmas and Happy New Year to all
from the editorial team.

(Image is artist Duane Hilton's view of Santa in space, from- science.nasa.gov)

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Tech.RICS.

FUTURE PROGRAMME

**Lecture meetings are held at Dudley Museum, St James's Road,
Dudley. Phone (01384 815575)
7.30 for 8 o' clock start unless stated otherwise.**

MONDAY 31ST JANUARY 2005 (Indoor Meeting)

'Gold Exploration' by Tim Colman of the BGS.

MONDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2005 (*Indoor Meeting*)

'Global Mass Extinctions: Volcanism versus Impacts' by Prof. A.D. Saunders of the Geology Department, University of Leicester.

Professor Saunders was born in the West Midlands and educated at the High Arcal Grammar School in Sedgley, and so he is very familiar with the Wren's Nest and the Baggeridge spoil heaps! He read geology at Sheffield and took his PhD in Birmingham. His research has been mostly into igneous petrology and geochemistry, and he is now working on mantle plumes and their relationships to volcanism and mass extinctions.

MONDAY 28TH MARCH 2005 (*Indoor Meeting*)
Joint meeting with WMGS

'Life in the Triassic in Britain' by Professor G. Warrington of the BGS.

Professor Warrington is a leading authority on the Triassic. He read geology at King's College, London in the 1960's, and obtained his PhD in 1965. He was with the BGS until 2003 as a palaeontologist and stratigrapher specialising in plant microfossils from the Permian, Triassic and Lower Triassic rocks. He is currently a member of the IGS, the International Commission on Jurassic Stratigraphy, and is Chairman of the Triassic – Jurassic Boundary Working Group of ISJS.

Lecture Abstract:

In the British Isles the Triassic is represented by the Sherwood Sandstone, Mercia Mudstone, Penarth Groups, and the basal beds of the Lias. These were deposited in a wide range of conditions from continental to marine. These "red beds" were regarded as unfossiliferous, however, micro and macro fossils can be found; annelids, brachiopods, bivalves, scorpions, crustaceans, insects, fish and reptiles. The youngest Penarth Beds and the basal Lias contain richer deposits with spores, pollen, plant and vertebrate deposits, and much more. In N.E. Scotland, and in fissures in the limestone of the Mendips, vertebrate remains of the late Triassic fauna have been found.

MONDAY 25TH APRIL 2005 (*Indoor Meeting*)

'The fascinating minerals of Northwest Scotland, by Spencer Mather.

As you will know, Spencer is one of our members, and his lectures are always relaxed, amusing and highly informative. He will share with us his unparalleled knowledge of minerals from a part of the world that he knows well. An evening not to be missed.

SATURDAY 7TH MAY 2005 (*Field visit*)

National Stone Centre, the Peak District Mining Museum and Temple Mine. The limestone landscape of Derbyshire.

MONDAY 30TH MAY 2005 (*Indoor Meeting is still being arranged*)

MAY (*Field visit; date to be announced*)

Chelford sand quarry and Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope.

MAY (*Possible field visit*)

Drakelow Tunnels and Kinver; when there is space in their visitor programme.

JUNE 2005 (*indoor Meeting*)

A mineral expert from Holland will be talking about crystals. More in the next Newsletter.

JULY 2005 (*Field visit*)

North Wales day out by coach to Snowdonia, studying some geology and geomorphology. Visit to the Slate Museum and the Pump Storage HEP scheme at Llanberis.

JULY or SEPTEMBER 2005 (Field visit)

Joint meeting with the Woolhope group to the Wren's Nest and Dudley Canal Tunnels. Graham Worton to lead this visit.

OTHER MEETINGS IN THE AREA

As referred to in Gordon Hensman's report of the Society's visit to the Lapworth Museum (see below), the first of the term 2 lectures is being held on **Monday 17th January 2005**, from 5:00 to 6:00pm. It is entitled "*The Caledonides*" and you can congregate before 5:00pm in the Museum on the ground floor. The **Lapworth Lectures** are free, and are normally held about every fortnight, and in term 2 are mostly concerned with palaeontology. I am indebted to Alf Cole for this information, and he also tells me that there is often a glass of wine after the event. Alf also advises that you telephone the Museum Curator *John Clatworthy* (0121-414-7294) on the day before because occasionally lecture times are changed.

PROPOSED SOCIETY EVENTS

There are three proposals for events in the New Year that require feedback from members.

1. By train to London, day return, to visit the **Geological Museum** in South Kensington. A Saturday is preferred and we may be able to arrange a guided tour. Please express your interest as soon as possible to **Gordon Hensman** on GWJHENSMAN@aol.com or **01384 256423**; or **Andrew Rochelle** on cft-wrochelle9@supanet.com or **01952 299136**.
2. A social get together, perhaps a meal out. It has been proposed that we could meet, not to listen to a speaker but as a purely social function. Gordon suggests that we could eat out on Burn's Night (26th January) or any mutually convenient evening in the New Year. Please let Gordon Hensman know of your interest; e-mail and telephone number above.
3. A two-day field trip to study geology in **North Wales**. We would stay the night at 'The Climbing Hut' at Beddgelert and then move on to see the copper mine at **Parys Mountain Anglesey** the next day. Please contact **Bob Duncan** on **01384 256733**, or **Andrew Rochelle**, telephone and e-mail above.

Andrew Rochelle

EDITORIAL

The recent series on BBC1 describing the 'Natural History of the British Isles' has had mixed reviews. I expected that it would be concentrating on geological history, in the early episodes at least, and I was impressed with the superb aerial photography and I quite like the style of Alan Titchmarsh. However, as I watched this series I became increasingly frustrated with the way geology was being presented. Facts were often wrong, inaccurate ages for rocks given and the location of important localities frequently ignored. The regional section for the last ten minutes of each programme was very disappointing, and too often the editor chose to ignore interesting geology and retreat to the safe subjects of flowers, birds, and in Dudley's case, bats.

But, there was to be an episode on the Industrial Revolution, and we knew that the programme unit had been to the Wren's Nest for a day and interviewed Dudley's Keeper of Geology. Inexplicably the main programme managed to spend 50 minutes describing the development of the Industrial Revolution without mentioning the Black Country! It was an incredible piece of editing, and at times I thought that I was watching a promotional film for Ironbridge and the Potteries. Still the Midlands section was based on Dudley so surely that would be about iron

making, the pioneer work of Dud Dudley, the Thick Coal and nearly two centuries of 'metal bashing'. Hardly a mention, but an interesting piece on the flora and fauna.

I was reminded of this programme once again when the Mayor opened the new geological gallery earlier this month. In his speech he said how determined he was to make Dudley famous for the right reasons. I absolutely agree with him, particularly with reference to the history and heritage, which includes its geology and its leading role in the development of Britain's Industry. Perhaps we should shout a bit more about the positive aspects of the Black Country, and point out to the media when they misrepresent the area. I must point out that this is a purely personal view, but I do get the impression that when the media are composing a piece on industrial heritage they immediately think of Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge, even though there are so many gems in the Black Country waiting to be marketed.

Bill Groves

REPORTS

Visit to Lapworth Museum. 20.11.2004

One of the oldest specialist geology museums in the country was the destination for some of our members, one bleak Saturday in November, as the first snows of winter fell in the morning. The knowledgeable and affable museum curator, Jon Clatworthy, took us on a conducted tour. The biggest problem with such a visit is the sheer quantity of material on display - to say nothing about that in storage! There is so much - all of great geological and historical importance.

The Museum is named after Charles Lapworth, the first Professor of Geology at the Mason College - the forerunner of Birmingham University. There are over 250,000 specimens in the collections, plus large collections of geological maps, equipment, models and zoological specimens.

We are all aware of the significance of the Dudley area and know about the Fossil Shops in Dudley in the 19th century, but here in the Lapworth Museum are many of the original collections containing breath-taking specimens. Many of the finest specimens from the Wenlock Limestone and the Carboniferous Coal Measures - such as fossil plants, fish, insects and arachnids are kept in the Museum. Some of the named collectors from the Dudley area, donated, or, sold their collections to the Museum. E. Hollier of Stone Street, Dudley has his collection housed in the Museum. Quarry owner, Holcroft sold his collection to the Museum together with his book recording the cost of specimens and their dates of purchase. Chas. Ketley of Smethwick was a mining engineer and amassed fossils and minerals from the Wenlock Limestone and the Coal Measures in the West Midlands. Alf Cole was delighted to discover original photographs of Pouk Hill - now buried under Walsall's waste.

I was fascinated to see that William Murdoch, who worked with Matthew Boulton and James Watt at Soho House, was also an avid collector of minerals, and in 1826, left them and his notebook to the Museum together with his desk - in very good condition. The book is a masterpiece of calligraphy with exquisite copperplate writing and superb geological drawings.

There are many other things of consuming interest at Lapworth Museum, which runs regular lectures during University term time, and is open to the public. All those with enigmatic fossils or minerals will be delighted to know of the free identification service. What a fascinating place this is, and we could all spend hours of delight completely lost in the world of geology. A further visit is planned.

Gordon Hensman

Reports are still coming in from the Members' Evening of December of December 6th. We would like all those members who gave presentations at this meeting to give to one of the editorial team a résumé of what they said, so that we can publish them together. The idea is that we put them together as a small booklet, so need not worry about writing too much. We hope to achieve this in February 2005.

Editorial Team

MUSEUM UPDATE

The Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Malcolm Knowles on the evening of Thursday 9th December, officially opened **Geology Unearthed**. There were many guests present, not only those from the local authority, but the small army helpers and volunteers who made the project so successful. Members of BCGS can be included in this group, together with students from local schools and colleges who had helped while on work experience, or in their free time; members of the Staffordshire Iron and Steel Institute who helped to set up their display. The basic themes of the exhibition were described in the last Newsletter, but I could mention here the far end of the second gallery where there is a display cabinet large notice board that the Keeper of Geology is using to celebrate local activities with a geological and heritage theme. Artwork in schools is prominent, but this is also where our society is able to show its input into the geological awareness of the Black Country.

Geology Unearthed: first gallery:

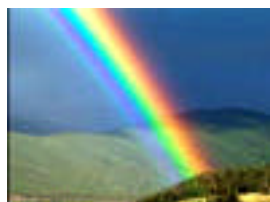


JUNE 2004



DECEMBER 2004

GEOBABLE



RICHARD OF YORK GAVE BATTLE IN VAIN. A little rhyme or *mnemonic* used by people to remember the order of the colours of the rainbow. Everyone I am sure will have used this means for remembering sequences: the order of kings and queens, the six wives of Henry VIII, there must be several examples, and geology is no exception. All students have to know the sequence of the geological periods, and in some cases ages and zones. The amazing thing is that there does not seem to be any general acceptance of one mnemonic, for the geological periods illustrated left. Below I give you two that I have come across:

- Police Constable Davies Saved Our Cat
- Camels Often Sit Down Carefully, Perhaps their Joints Creak.

There is also Please Mend Ollies Engine, for the Cenozoic ages: Pliocene, Miocene, Oligocene and Eocene. Note that this one and PC Davies go from young to old, whereas camels is more conventional, working up from the Cambrian.

Cretaceous
Jurassic
Triassic
Permian
Carboniferous
Devonian
Silurian
Ordovician
Cambrian

Nicknames and abbreviations do seem to have a more universal language, particularly in mineralogy where *qtz*, *fspr*, *px*, *aug*, *olv* etc are widely used for some of the rock forming minerals, and in the Black Country we are familiar with the 'Dudley Bug', although I have also the 'Dudley Locust' used. As a student on a field trip to the Isle of Arran, where Olivine Dolerite is so abundant, 'Olly Dolly' entered our vocabulary, but I have not heard it used since.

If you know of any other interesting mnemonics or nicknames, please let us know, as they make interesting reading. I am grateful to Graham Worton and Paul Trower for the above mnemonics, but there must be more.

Bill Groves

[CONTACT US](#)

As ever we would love to hear your news and views so please put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and give us your thoughts. Notices that appear in this Newsletter will remain in future editions until the date of the related meeting or event has passed. In order to include material in the October Newsletter, please send or give it to one of the Editorial Team by **Monday 8th February 2005**.

Please note below, that Bill Groves has a new email address.

<u>EDITORIAL TEAM</u>		
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BCGS Website now at www.bcgs.info