

North Staffordshire Group Geologists' Association Bulletin 51 : October 1999

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ARTICLES & PUBLICATIONS

Thompson, D.B. 1999 **

Charles Darwin's presence in North Staffordshire c.1815-1842: The rationale for some educational initiatives

Teaching Earth Sciences 24 pp.52-68

A detailed account of how Charles Darwin developed his geological interests and how 'Local Heroes' can be used to promote enthusiasm for science in schools.

** items are available for reference (by prior appointment) at the Geological Records Centre, Natural History, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 3DW Tel. 01782 232323

NSGGA Web Page Address

Please note that the NSGGA web pages are now hosted at: www.esci.keele.ac.uk/nsgga

John Myers Awards and Medals 1999

The 1999 winners were Zoe Robinson of Keele University and Vidar Brekke of Staffordshire University. There were also awards to the runners-up: David Meredith and Emma Page of Keele University, and Neil Yates and Rory Bates of Staffordshire University.

The third year of the awards honouring John Myers, Founding Father of the NSGGA, has been most successful. This has again been due to the willingness of many people to contribute their time over the year. The presentations took place in the respective Departments on Graduation Day as part of their awards ceremonies, in the presence of parents, friends and staff. Ann Myatt was unable to attend at Keele, but David Thompson did the honours. Ann presented the awards at Staffs. University, with Dr. Dave Roberts accepting the medal for Vidar Brekke who had returned to Norway to work. The two winners will be invited to attend the Distinguished Visitor's Meeting on 11 November 1999.

Thanks need to go to Ann Myatt for her generous donations, with new awards for the runners-up, her support and encouragement over the years.

Any Member wishing to make a contribution to this good work should contact our Treasurer.

John Reynolds, Sub-committee Chairman

The Millenium Rock

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery is in line to display a small fragment of rock from North Staffs. that has been carried in the pocket of a cosmonaut to the Russian MIR Space Station. NSGGA member Phill Parker, who persuaded the Russians to take the rock on the space flight, called this specimen *The Millennium Rock* as a "small token from this millennium to the next millennium and hope that it will act as a focus for inspiration to descendants of our species to continue the exploration of space with the possibility of meeting extra-terrestrials and discovering their origins."

The rock is part of an igneous dyke reputed to have been discovered by Charles Darwin whilst he was staying at Maer Hall and was collected by Phill as a result of attending a field excursion at Butterton Church Quarry led by David Thompson. Due to the uncertainties of when the rock will return to Earth and its subsequent transfer to England, the exact dates when it will be displayed at the Museum are at present unclear (probably for about 2 weeks in November) - so keep a lookout in the local press for further details. This display will be the first showing in a terrestrial world tour which includes German and American venues.

Local Earth Tremors

A minor earth tremor was felt at about 1pm on Tuesday 7 September in the area to the west of the Potteries around Baldwins Gate, Madeley and Clayton. Measuring 2.6 on the Richter scale, it was too small to cause structural damage and apparently felt like a very strong shudder. Dr. Ian Stimpson of Keele University considered the tremor to be the result of movement in old mine workings associated with collieries in Silverdale.

RIGS News

NSGGA Member John Reynolds is a representative on the committee of The Association of UK RIGS Groups. As a member of the Earth Science Teachers Association, he will be campaigning for the recognition of the importance of education criteria when assessing potential RIGS sites.

Starwood, Cotton Dell RIGS (SK 061 460) - is a small site within a large area purchased as a nature reserve by the Staffs. Wildlife Trust. It has been nominated as a RIGS because of a the outcrop of a bed of unusually well preserved Namurian (Carboniferous Millstone Grit age) goniatites. The official opening ceremony was performed by David Bellamy on 24 September 1999.

Next Meeting: **Tuesday 9 November 1999** at 7.30pm at the Staffs. Wildlife Trust headquarters, Coutts House, Sandon. For further details contact Sue Lawley at SWT Tel. 01889 508534

New Zealand 2000

Dr. Fred Broadhurst and Dr. Paul Sheldon are leading a three week Study Tour to New Zealand in February 2000. If you are interested contact The Wilmslow Guild - Tel. 01625 523903

Extractive Industries

A second application by Independent Energy UK to drill for gas at Three Nooks Farm near Biddulph Moor (SJ 915 578) has been rejected by Staffordshire County Councillors. Despite Planning Officers recommending accepting the revised plans (mainly to scrap on-site generation in favour of a 5km pipeline to a generation plant in Knypersley), the councillors dismissed the proposal on environmental grounds. Independent Energy UK are likely to now take the case to appeal.

The British Geological Survey has been commissioned by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) to review the UK resource and supply of brick clay. The project aims to improve understanding of issues involved in planning for the provision of clay for brick, pipe and tile making. The research will be published in February 2000 (report from RIGS Briefing, June 1999).

Lafarge Redland Aggregates have been given permission to continue working Eccleshall Quarry near Cold Meece for a further 18 months after they discovered extra reserves near Meece Brook. The sand and gravel quarry, opened in 1990, can now dig out another 98,000 tonnes of material up until the end of May, 2001. The extra 5.2 hectare site will eventually be restored into a lake for water sports and angling.

Shropshire Geological Society

26 October: Members Evening - Trilobites at Ludlow Museum

17 November: Boring Old Granites - Or Are They? Prof. John Clemens

8 December: AGM

For details contact: Susan Beale, SGS Secretary

Tel. 01694 723679 email: beales@church-stretton.freeserve.co.uk

NSGGA Jubilee Sub-committee Meeting

- Thursday, 4 November, 1999 at 6.30pm
in Room CBA1.077, Chancellor's Building, Education Department, Keele University

NSGGA Committee Meeting

- Wednesday, 24th November 1999 at 7.30pm
in Room CBA1.077, Chancellor's Building, Education Department, Keele University
- Wednesday, 26th January 2000 at 7.30pm
in Room CBA1.077, Chancellor's Building, Education Department, Keele University

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