

Bulletin

Number 54

July 2000



Thursday (evening) 27 July - British Geological Survey Tour

An evening meeting, you need to be at Keyworth (near Nottingham) at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm tour start.

For expressions of interest, directions and further details contact:

Bill Fone on 01782 294284 or 01952 596656, email: W.Fone@staffs.ac.uk

A wonderful opportunity to see behind the scenes at the foremost geological establishment in the country.

ROCKWATCH

Saturday 12 August - Rockwatch Day

10.00 - 4.30 in Natural History at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

The NSGGA, headed by Mike Fereday, are having their first event as part of the Rockwatch scheme to encourage interest in geology amongst young people. Details are on the leaflet enclosed with this mailing. Further information from Mike Fereday on 01782 714643

Thursday 12 October - Lecture

A brief EGM about annual subscription rates, followed by an eminent talk to be revealed in the next Bulletin!

7.30pm Earth Sciences Department, Keele University

Thursday 9 November - Lecture

The Challenge of Global Climate Change;

understanding its past and anticipating its future

Prof. Geoffrey Boulton (Edinburgh University)

8.00pm Earth Sciences Department, Keele University

A Distinguished Visitor's address that will be preceded by a buffet meal - a booking form will be provided with the next Bulletin mailing

for further details of the lectures contact Dorothy Wright: 01782 721576

Thursday 7 December - Members Night (including a buffet meal)

7.00pm in Room 324, Mellor Building, Staffordshire University, College Road, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent. A booking form will be provided with the next Bulletin mailing

What on Earth

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 8-10 August

10.30 - 4.00 each day in Natural History at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. Contact the Museum on 01782 232323 for further details.

Summer holiday fun with rock science activities - ideal to keep the kids amused!

A Successful Jubilee!

Our Golden Jubilee celebrations are now largely over, and what a success they have been! From the first of the special events, Hugh Torrens's public lecture at our AGM, to our presence at Earth Alert in Brighton, we seem to have made our mark to a wide audience.

Hugh Torrens treated us to a masterly overview of '300 Years of Remarkable History of Geology in and around the Potteries'. An audience of over seventy at the Museum Forum Theatre, including many members of the public, were fascinated by the story that unfolded. How little most of us know of the details of the contribution that geologists have made to our area. We hope we may see the story in print one day, and so available to a wider audience.

The following week, Hugh Owen from the Natural History Museum in London challenged us with his lecture: 'Expanding Earth', in which he presented evidence for an Earth that has expanded significantly in diameter in geological time. This evidence seemed very convincing, yet to our amateur audience 'mainstream' geology appears not to engage with it. Perhaps because it raises difficult problems that do not fit with present geological thought, or because geologists have more convincing evidence to the contrary. If the latter, no-one present stepped forward to reveal it. However if the expansion is real, no hypothesis was presented to explain how this might have happened. Perhaps one day we will hear more about this matter.

On Saturday 17 March, with our Golden Jubilee exhibition on public display in the Museum, we held our public open day - GeoFun Day. Advertised by posters in libraries and schools, on the radio and in the press, the day attracted some 750 visitors at the Museum, a large number of them children. In the morning they panned for 'gold', they made fossil plaster-casts, they painted dinosaurs, and they admired and bought rock and mineral specimens. Above all they went round our exhibition, with its magnificent set of nine pairs of oil paintings of Staffordshire 'then and now' in geological time painted for us as a labour of love by local artist Tony Pugh. We are deeply indebted to Tony, and we now own a marvellous resource for our future use. The other features of the exhibition included The Geological Resources of the Potteries and Six Famous Scientists of the Potteries Area, all created by a devoted working party drawn from the Committee. In the afternoon, a family lecture demonstration on the Volcanoes of North Staffordshire attracted a good audience who watched Chris King, assisted by Bill Symonds, explain with models and experiments the evidence for a volcanic past under our feet.

Throughout National Science Week, a range of events at the Museum run by Don Steward and his colleagues, including 'Rocky Socks' and 'Barmy Rubble Rambles' at the lighter level, and a field excursion to Berry Hill. The 'Darwin Trail' event led by David Thompson was fully described in the last Bulletin, and finally in May John Reynolds led a geological walk for beginners at Park Hall.

The sum total of all these events has been a significant raising of the profile of NSGGA in the area, including the recruitment of some new members, and greater awareness on the part of large number of members of the public, especially children, of the importance of geology in our lives. Finally our wonderful exhibition, having been on display at the museum for a month, was taken to Brighton for the national Earth Alert festival of geology, organised by the Geologists' Association, where it drew many admiring comments as one of the more noteworthy exhibits, several suggestions for developing the materials into more long-lasting published forms, and gave our local group a much enhanced national profile. The standard of the lectures at Earth Alert was outstanding, and it was a great pity that the timing and distance discouraged so many members from making the journey south. Next year the GA Reunion will be in Liverpool; perhaps we may see a good turnout of our members!

We must acknowledge gratefully the support of COPUS in helping to fund our activities in National Science Week, and the Curry Fund for enabling our display to go to Earth Alert.

Frederick Wolverson Cope 30.7.1909 = 4.5.2000



Emeritus Professor F. Wolverson Cope, the founding Head of Keele's Geology Department, died at St. Bartholomew's Hospital on 4 May.

He was born on 30 July, 1909, at Macclesfield and attended the King's School there before moving to Manchester University, graduating with first-class Honours in 1931. After obtaining his MSc he was a Demonstrator at Bedford College, London, before joining the Geological Survey in 1934.

Cope's Survey work was mainly in Lancashire (where he discovered the Formby oil-field), Cheshire, Derbyshire and North Staffordshire, especially in the Carboniferous, and he augmented this with private research, earning the Geological Society's Daniel Pidgeon Fund (1937) and Murchison Fund (1948) and Manchester University's DSc (1946).

Appointed as Reader in Geology at the University College of North Staffordshire in 1950, he had to establish the Department, equipping it with both apparatus and specimens, and move it from Keele Hall and army huts into its present buildings in stages in 1954, 1957 and 1970.

He was promoted to Professor in 1953 and having had a broad education himself he enthusiastically supported the Keele 4-year course, including the Foundation Year and Subsidiary subjects. Moreover he believed in the unity of 'The Department' and provided the base from which his colleagues' research and teaching could prosper.

A member of the Geologists' Association since 1932, he was an early chairman of the North Staffs. Group and one of the

earliest members of the Essex Group when he retired to Clacton-on-Sea in 1976. He toured Europe extensively in his caravan, always taking a keen interest in its geology and he published a paper on igneous rocks in the Peak District when he was 87 and revised guides to that area in 1998 and 1999.

Wolverson Cope married first during his Survey years, his wife, by whom he had a son and two daughters, dying in 1961, and secondly in 1962 to father another daughter.

He was awarded the Halstead Medal of the Geologists' Association this year and was to have received an Honorary DSc from Keele this summer.

A celebration of his life will be held at Keele later this year.

Colin S. Exley

Articles & Publications

Thompson, D.B. 2000 **

The Origins and Development of Geological Education in the Potteries and Adjacent Areas.

Bull. of the North Staffs. Group of the Geologists' Association 54 Appendix 12, pp.1-20

A detailed history of the teaching of geology in this area and of all the personalities involved.

** 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 ☎ 01782 232323

The Rock Exchange 2000

The Peak and Lapidary Society are holding their annual mineral and fossil show - widely acknowledged as one of the best of its kind in Britain (last year there were over 120 stalls) - on **Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 October 2000** at the Lady Manners Drama and Sports Halls, **Bakewell**, Derbyshire. The show is open from 10.30am to 5.30pm on both days and admission is £1.00 per day for adults; children free. Car parking is free.

For further information contact Les Fox ☎ 01629 813542

Extractive Industries

Silverdale Colliery may become a pioneering test site as a coal gasification plant. The technique involves turning coal into gas using underground drills and has so far only been trialed in Spain. The gas produced is then collected as a fuel source. The Coal Authority has applied for planning permission to test-drill the site for up to ten weeks.

Manchester Geological Association Field Excursions

For details contact: Jane Michael, MGA Field Secretary

22 St. Giles Drive, Godley, Hyde SK14 2S, e-mail: jammyjane@aol.com or ☎ 01613 660595

Sunday 6 August - Meander around the Medlock, Park Bridge near Oldham

Saturday 16 September - Derbyshire ore field

Shropshire Geological Society Field Excursions

For further details about the field meetings contact: Gordon Hillier, SGS Field Secretary

☎ 01691 682484 email: gr-hillier@micro-plus-web.net

Weekend 18-20 August - A weekend with the Shropshire Geological Society (with the national GA)

For general details of SGS activities contact: Susan Beale, SGS Secretary

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

NSGGA Committee - next meeting

- **Thursday, 21 September 2000 at 7.00pm (note earlier start)**

in Room CBA1.077, Chancellor's Building, Education Department, Keele University

The following meeting has been provisionally booked for Thursday, 23 November 2000

NSGGA Extra-ordinary General Meeting

Please note that there will be an **EGM** on the night of the talk on **Thursday 12 October**. It is to discuss the raising of subscriptions; further details are shown in the leaflet accompanying this mailing.

NSGGA Committee 2000-01

Chairman: Alastair Fleming,

1 Vicars Close, Oulton, Stone, Staffs ST15 8UQ ☎ 01785 816862 email: alastair_fleming@talk21.com

Vice-chairman: Bill Fone,

23 Mill Farm Drive, Randlay, Telford TF3 2NA ☎ 01782 294284 (work) ☎ 01952 596656 (home)

email: w.fone@staffs.ac.uk

Secretary: Dorothy Wright,

24 Elm Tree Lane, Bignall End, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 8NG ☎ 01782 721576

Treasurer: Carol Burnett,

28 Brookside Close, Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 2HX ☎ 01782 713227 email: carol@burnett40.freemove.co.uk

Membership Sec.: Mike Brown,

6 Spring Close, Rode Heath, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3TQ ☎ 01270 878130 email: michael.a.brown@lineone.net

Field Sec.: Steve Alcock

Longfields, Park Lane, Cheddleton, near Leek ST13 7JS ☎ 01538 360431

Conservation Sec.: Keith Harrison,

21 Grove Avenue, Heron Cross, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 3BA ☎ 01782 331699

Bulletin Sec.: Don Steward,

Natural History, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 3DE ☎ 01782 232323
email: don.steward@stoke.gov.uk

Executive Committee (honorary):

Dr. Colin Exley; Terry Jones; David Thompson; Ted Watkin.

Executive Committee (elected):

Janet Fairclough (to shadow the Secretary), **Peter Hulme; Gilbert Kelling; Dave Roberts; Ken Rout; John Winchester.**

Executive Committee (co-opted):

Phil Burkinshaw, Mike Fereday, Zoe Fleming, Chris King, John Reynolds; in addition a representative from the Staffs. University Geol. Soc. and the Keele Geol. Soc. is invited to attend committee meetings

Why not visit the NSGGA web pages: www.esci.keele.ac.uk/nsgga

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