

Bulletin

Number 56

January 2001



Thursday, 18 January - Lecture

Snippets from a suture: A Tibetan Geologist

Gordon Hillier (Shropshire Geol. Soc.)

7.30pm in Room 324, Mellor Building, Staffordshire University, College Road, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent

A guarantee of some exotic geological sights (and sites) to drive away the winter blues.

Thursday, 8 February - Lecture

Mining Induced Earthquakes: Friend or Foe?

Some people have strange friends, but a friendly earthquake sounds a bit extreme! Find out if there is a good side to a potentially destructive character.

Prof. Peter Styles (Keele University)

a joint meeting with Keele Geology Society

8.00pm in the Earth Sciences Department, Keele University

This talk will be preceded by a buffet meal with the speaker. If you wish to be at the meal, please return the booking form provided as soon as possible to Janet Fairclough.

ROCKWATCH

Saturday, 3 March - Rocks and Minerals day

At The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery. Contact Mike Fereday ☎ 01782 714643 for details

Thursday, 8 March - AGM & Chairman's Address

The Evolution of the Atmosphere: In Search of Answers

This is the story of the Chairman's continuing quest for a clearer picture of present understanding of this topic, which forms part of the current school science curriculum. Unlike solid geology, the atmosphere has not left a record of its past in convenient layers!

7.30pm Earth Sciences Department, Keele University

The first item of the evening will be the AGM followed by the talk from Alastair Fleming.

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

Articles & Publications

Greensmith, T. 2000 **

Obituary Notice: Frederick Wolverson Cope

Proceedings of the Geologists' Association 111, pp.375-376

A concise report with acknowledged information provided by NSGGA member and former colleague, Dr. Colin Exley.

** 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

Dear Carol and Mike,

Here is my story and Hello!

We got up very early in the morning to get ready for my very first **Rockwatch** field trip (Editor's note: Ben and his family travelled some 70 miles to the event). I was very excited. We headed for Dudley and met up with the other Rockwatchers at the museum. I was amazed how many different species of trilobite they had found at Dudley. I was even more excited as we were going to The Wren's Nest Nature Reserve to look for some of our own! Thomas and Emily (Editor's note: Ben's 2 ½ year old twin brother and sister) were kept busy drawing dinosaurs so I had more time to look at the great displays. I really liked the time trail, you felt you were going below the earth's surface. It was wonderful in the mineral section and the iron-pyrites sample was fantastic. After a chat we met Mike, Carol and Phil. Phil was the expert so I was going to stick with Phil at Wren's Nest in case he found something interesting! When we got to Wren's Nest, Thomas and Emily went to sleep, GREAT!! I scrambled up the rocks, every stone we turned over had an interesting fossil on it. The whole place was like a fossilised seabed. I found crinoids, brachiopods, coral and sponges but I was really looking for a trilobite. Then my dad found a trilobite's tail and the next moment I had found a trilobite head poking out of the rock. Phil said it was a Dudley bug head. The sad thing was I had to leave it behind. At least I will be able to visit it next time I go to Wren's Nest. It was a really good day out and when Thomas and Emily finally woke up they were able to play with the pull along trilobites. I can't wait for my next trip.

Love from Benjamin. (Benjamin Cuffin-Munday, Rockwatch member 102850/50)

Staffordshire RIGS Group

- **Birchenwood Quarry**

The RIGS site (which is in part in Birchenwood Country Park, Kidsgrove) exposing rocks from the lower part of Westphalian C (Bolsovian) Coal Measure horizons is in danger from safety work associated with a housing development. Parkhill Estates Ltd. has applied for the removal of a planning condition aimed to protect the RIGS exposure. The company is concerned by the steepness of the rock face close to a residential development and describes the sandstone buff as being not particularly attractive. They wish to regrade the slope so that it has a less steep profile; however it is unclear as to whether this work will result in 'grassing over' of the site. SRIGS and NSGGA with John Reynolds taking command of the situation placed objections. As a result of the combined efforts, Newcastle Borough councillors refused to lift the planning condition at their meeting on 6.12.2000 and the planning officers, the company and NSGGA/SRIGS members have been invited to hold a meeting to discuss how safety and access to the site can be combined. Anyone with an interest or knowledge of the site should contact John Reynolds on 01782 327068.

- **Staffordshire Ecology Record**

Craig Slawson has been appointed Ecology Records Officer for the Staffs. Ecology Record Partnership. Based at the Staffs. Wildlife Trust headquarters, he will be in charge of keeping up-to-date both biological and geological records so that the partnership (Staffs. County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Staffs. Wildlife Trust, some Staffordshire District Councils, and English Nature) is fully informed and can respond accordingly when planning applications (such as the one above) are made.

- **next SRIGS committee meeting: Tuesday, 16 June 2001 at 7.30pm. This is the AGM.**

at the Staffs. Wildlife Trust offices, Coutts House, Sandon. Contact Sue Lawley at the SWT for details ☎ 01889 508534 or contact SRIGS Chairman, Ken Rout ☎ 01785 662291

Job for Geologists

The Leek Post and Times of 1.11.2000 report that land off Clewlovs Bank next to St. Chad's graveyard, Bagnall is to be surveyed by engineering geologists to determine whether it is suitable to dig out as a new burial ground. It is believed that the area is unsuitable because hard rock strata are too close to the surface, but Bagnall Parish Council wishes to proceed with a survey to make sure. The Rectory of St. Chad's is the Reverend Godfrey Stone!

Go and Ask Phil!

The first field trip for the newly formed NSGGA **Rockwatch** Group took place on 21st October. The group met at Dudley Museum, having travelled by mini-bus from Newcastle and private transport from Lichfield and Chester, to spend the morning viewing the Museum's Millennium Bug Exhibition and the Geological Time Line.

In the afternoon, we went along to the nearby Wren's Nest Reserve where the Senior Warden, Alec Connor was waiting to welcome us. The unprepossessing exterior – a collection of rather derelict-looking old sheds! – hid a warm, informative visitors' centre with paintings illustrating geological history and interactive exhibits.

Alf Cole from the Black Country Geological Society guided the group around part of the Reserve, explaining some of the more elementary aspects of rock formation, and one of NSGGA's newest members, Phil Pye, had his knowledge of fossils tested by the questions of both the younger (and older) members of the party. Once the youngsters realised he knew where trilobites were (possibly) to be found, they were never far from his side!

The group consisted of thirteen children, (ages between 2 ½ and 11 years) and 15 adults – of uncertain ages. Whilst the 2 ½ year old twins slept through most of the fossil hunting, the rest of us enjoyed a successful afternoon and found brachiopods, corals, crinoids and trilobites.

Back in August, on our first Rockwatch meeting at the Potteries Museum, a competition was set to find the best ammonite

time-chart drawn by the children. These were brought to the Wren's Nest, where Phil was given the difficult job of judging and prizes were awarded.

Thanks are extended to Alec, to Alf, and to Phil who gave up their free time and so made the whole day such a success and to Mike Fereday for organising the day.

Carol Burnett, NSGGA

New Subscription Rates

In his Treasurer's Report 2000, Peter Hulme recommended an increase in membership subscriptions. In my own very short time as your new Treasurer, I have also come to the same conclusion and I made my recommendations formally to the committee meeting on 11.5.2000.

Without the sales of the booklet compiled by David Thompson, the Group's finances would have been in a very unhealthy condition but this source of income has now virtually ended. Without a small rise in subscriptions, the Group would not remain financially viable. Activities supporting National Science Week, the buffet meals, and Rockwatch, are self-financing and are not subsidised by Group funds. The main drain on funds is insurance for Public Liability (which we are obliged to have) and, of course, lecturers' expenses.

At an EGM held on 12.10.2000, it was decided that the new subscriptions from 1.1.2001 would be:-

Full Membership	£10
Family Membership	£13
Retired or Student	£ 7

At the end of April 2000, 30% of members had still not paid their subscriptions, although they continued to enjoy the benefits of lectures and receipt of the bulletin. This is a special plea from the committee to pay these promptly, so helping to alleviate the financial position of the Group. It is hoped that members will support the committee in their efforts to maintain the Group's present level of activity

Hoping you will be able to comply with this request.

Please act now and send a cheque to the Membership Secretary:
Mike Brown, 6 Spring Close, Rode Heath, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3TQ

Carol Burnett, Treasurer.

Potential Lectures in Science Week

Depending on the outcome of a grant application, the NSGGA may be organising some talks at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery on **Saturday 24 March 2001**. Bill Fone is co-ordinating and can be contacted as listed below if you need any further details or wish to help.

Field Trips 2001

Field Secretary Steve Alcock is planning the programme for 2001 and a full listing will be available in the next Bulletin. So far suggested are a weekend trip to Bridlington and a conservation day at Brownend Quarry, Waterhouses. If you need to clear any dates with him (or have any suggestions as to where to go), contact him on ☎ 01538 360431

Extractive Industries

A Seabridge Residents Action Committee was formed in October to oppose plans by StrataGas to drill four exploratory wells on land off Whitmore Road in the Seabridge and Butterton areas. The test drilling is to explore the commercial viability of extracting methane from underlying coal seams for electricity generation.

NSGGA Committee - next meeting

- **Thursday, 25 January 2001 at 7.00pm (note earlier start)**
in Room CBA1.077, Chancellor's Building, Education Department, Keele University
It will be preceded by a John Myers sub-committee meeting, starting at 6.30pm

NSGGA Committee 2000-01

Chairman: Alastair Fleming,

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

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Conservation Sec.: Keith Harrison,

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Bulletin Sec.: Don Steward,

Natural History, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 3DW ☎ 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; Peter Hulme; Gilbert Kelling; Dave Roberts; Ken Rout; John Winchester.

Executive Committee (co-opted):

ROCKWATCH

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

Co-ordinator: Mike Fereday ☎ 01782 714643 email: mike@mfereday,freeserve.co.uk

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

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