

# Bulletin

## Number 61

### April 2002



## NSGGA Field Trip Programme for 2002

**Sunday 14 April**

**Charnwood Forest, Leicestershire**

Leader: Helen Boynton

A chance to study Pre-Cambrian rocks and search for Charnia Supergroup metazoan fossils. Bring a packed lunch.

Meet: 10.00am at Huntshill car park (SK533116), 2 miles NNE of Newton Linford

This will be a joint meeting with the West Midlands Open University Geological Society.

**Weekend 27 / 28 April**

**A weekend field trip to the Gower Peninsula, South Wales.**

This is now Fully Booked!

**Sunday 9 June**

**Ercall Quarry, Shropshire**

Leader: Ian Stimpson (University of Keele)

Be prepared to do some active geology. The opportunity to learn about Pre-Cambrian rocks - volcanic lavas, pink granophyre, steeply dipping quartz bedding, an unconformity, slickensides, ripple beds...

Meet: 10.30am at Forest Glen car park (SJ639093)

For more information about the field trips [see enclosed leaflet](#) or contact:

Janet Fairclough ☎ 01782 641812 Email: [jfair1sc@btinternet.com](mailto:jfair1sc@btinternet.com) or

Carol Burnett ☎ 01782 713227 e-mail: [carol@burnett40.freemove.co.uk](mailto:carol@burnett40.freemove.co.uk)

### More Field Trip Dates

**Sunday 21 July - Clent Hills and St George's Land, West Midlands.**

Leader: Graham Worton (Keeper of Geology at Dudley Museum).

*From the Carboniferous to Glacial Deposits* - this is the next instalment of Graham's geological story of the West Midlands.

Meet: 10.15am at the steel cross of the church on top of Barrow Hill (SO917817), Pensnett, Dudley

**see enclosed leaflet for further details of this trip and several more**

### The Legend of the Boon Hill Bear

As told to my wife Mrs. J. Harrison and her mother Mrs. J. Masterson by a Mrs. Phillips of The Firs, Meaford, Stone, Staffordshire. Mrs. Phillips died a year or so later at the age of 83. She would have been fifteen years old and living in the mining village of Bignall End at the time of the recorded events.

On January 12th 1918 two young colliers employed at the Mini Pit, Halmer End set off for the colliery. As usual they took a short cut by walking over Boon Hill. As they approached the summit where there were some small trees and bushes they could not believe their eyes for a huge bear came out from the trees and started to come after them. All thought of continuing on their way to Halmer End was put out of their minds and they dropped their lunchboxes and ran for their dear lives, not looking back till they reached the safety of Bignall End - and home.

Later that day the tragic news was brought to the people of Bignall End of the terrible mine disaster at the Mini Pit with the largest loss of life ever recorded in North Staffordshire.

When word got round of the remarkable escape the two young miners had and of the appearance of the Bear on Boon Hill search parties combed the local countryside and enquiries were made far and wide but no trace of the bear could be found. There had been no instance of such a beast escaping from a circus or travelling fair. The bear seemed to have vanished.

Towards the end of the twelfth century Hugh de Audley set out from Heighley Castle for a days hunting. In the afternoon the party had reached the neighbourhood of Boon Hill. Near its summit the young lord Hugh saw a bear in a clearing. He got ready his bow and was about to take aim when his squire observed that it was a female bear and had with her a young cub. He pointed this out to his master who, being a kind man despite a hard exterior, put away his bow and returned to the castle putting off any further hunting till another day.

Could it be that the two young colliers were descendants of Hugh of Audley and the bear or its apparition had re-appeared that day to save the miners from destruction, thereby repaying an ancient debt. We will never know. All we have is this fascinating legend as recounted above.

Keith Elliott Harrison February 2002

## Geowatch Developments

Carol Burnett and Mike Fereday have recently become Watch Leaders with Staffs Wildlife Trust (SWT) Wildlife Watch.

Our bid for a COPUS (Council for the Promotion of the Understanding of Science) Grant was not successful this year; this has caused us to restrict our activities for 2002 due to insufficient funds. However, in spite of this we put on two highly successful events during National Science Week.

### ➤ **Potteries Museum Hanley March 9**

Some 90 children took part in our Plate Tectonics and Volcanoes day; at the peak period there were 67 people (40 children and 27 adults) involved. The children made their own volcanoes; we sold 92 model volcano kits giving an income of £46 towards the costs of putting on the event. In addition there were talks by Ian Stimpson (University of Keele) on Plate Tectonics and Peter Floyd (University of Keele retired) on Volcanoes. Peter is our new Vice-Chairman. There were also two plate tectonics jigsaws for the children to play with. Thanks to all who helped on the day, we could not have managed without you.

### ➤ **Eccleshall Library March 16**

This event was timed to coincide with National Science Week and a three-week exhibition of Tony Pugh's paintings organised by Ken Rout. The paintings created a great deal of interest amongst the many visitors to the library. The day's activities comprised fossil casting, Geological Time, an erupting volcano and Plate Tectonic jigsaws. Some 40 children with their parents enjoyed the day and the event brought income of £15 50 towards the cost of materials.

Look for more information in future Bulletins or contact Mike Fereday on 01782 713227 or e-mail [carol@burnett40.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:carol@burnett40.freeserve.co.uk)

## Geowatch Activities Planned for 2002 - Dates For Your Diary

- **23 March - SWT Cellarhead Environmental Centre Open Day:**  
Fossil Casting, Geological Time and an erupting volcano.
- **5 / 6 June - SWT at Staffordshire County Show:**  
Fossil casting and Geological Time Display.
- **10 August - Potteries Museum:**  
Fossil casting and Geological Time Display Board and an Ammonite Time Chart to make and take home.
- **21 September - Dudley Museum and Wren's Nest:**  
Morning visit to Dudley Museum to the Rock and Fossil Fair (see below for more details) and after a picnic lunch at the Wren's Nest Visitor Centre we will go fossil hunting for trilobites at the Wren's Nest National Geological Nature Reserve.
- **12 October - Potteries Museum:**  
Learn all about life in the Silurian Period of Geological Time. See the fossil collection from Dudley Museum and have fun with the Remote Controlled Trilobite.

Meetings co-ordinator: **Mike Fereday** ☎ 01782 713227, email: [carol@burnett40.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:carol@burnett40.freeserve.co.uk)

## Launch of Stoke-on-Trent's Natural Heritage Strategy

In autumn 2001, Stoke-on-Trent City Council approved a Natural Heritage Strategy for the City. On 18 April there will be a launch event to promote the Strategy and raise awareness about Stoke-on-Trent's diverse wildlife and geological resources. In the morning session of this 'by invitation' event there will be a series of talks, including one by NSGGA member Dr. Patrick Cossey (Staffs. Univ.) about local geology and in the afternoon there will be short guided walks at Park Hall Country Park, led in part by members of the NSGGA. **It is anticipated that the day will feature some exciting news about a geological site within the City!!**

During the **weekend of 20 - 21 April** there will be public geological/environmental guided walks led by the Park Rangers; these are aimed at those with little knowledge of geology but should be of interest at any level. - **For further details see local press nearer the date.**

## Dudley Rock and Fossil Fair 2002

One of the UK's largest and most varied festivals of fossils, minerals, rocks and the wonders of the solid Earth returns to Dudley Museum and Town hall complex on the weekend of the 21 /22 September 2002. Bigger and more ambitious than ever, it will include

- displays and exhibitions of dinosaur, fossil and geology clubs and societies
- loads of hands on-activities for young and young-at-heart alike
- fossil hunting walks and trips into the dark underworld of caverns
- the launch of the Dudley Town Geological Walk/Trail.
- Junior rockhounds 'discovery Room'
- Puppet theatre
- Large exhibitions on art and geology in the town
- Creation of works of art by sculptors during the weekend
- Ask-the-expert sessions
- Lectures and film shows
- Fossil, Mineral & Rock identification
- Updates on Dudley's World Heritage Bid and geological conservation
- Web demonstrations and it browsing for dinosaurs, fossils and volcanoes
- Many stalls selling fossils, gemstones, videos, books and maps

This will be a spectacular celebration of the treasures of the Earth and the dramatic stories that they tell. For more information of how to book a stand or become involved in the fair or other museum activities visit our website on [www.dudley.gov.uk](http://www.dudley.gov.uk) or contact us at Dudley Museum on 01384 815575.

## New Members for 2002

We would like to welcome the following who have joined the Group this year:

Chris Eardley, Phil Newton, Pam Sambrook, Mandy Snape, Jonathon Toyn & family, and Mary Yate.

## Would You Like to Contribute to the Bulletin?

We are always interested the comments of Members about the activities of the Group, for instance your field trip recollections. If you have any notes that you would like adding, please contact Don Steward, the Bulletin Secretary. We also publish on an irregular basis short articles relating to the geology of the local area under the heading of an Appendix to the BNSGGA. We would be pleased to receive any potential contributions to add to our list of appendices and as a guide we suggest that the length of the article should not exceed 8 sides of A4 paper, which is in the region of 2,000 words maximum. Our one proviso is that we cannot guarantee when an approved article will be published as this depends on what other things are being mailed out to Members with their Bulletin.

## Staffordshire RIGS Group

\* **SRIGS AGM: Tuesday, 18 June at 7.30pm**

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

## NSGGA - Next Committee Meeting

**Thursday 2 May 2002 at 7.00pm** in room CBA1.077, Chancellor's Building, Education Department, Keele University

## Contacts List: NSGGA Committee 2002-03

**Chairman: Bill Fone,**

23 Mill Farm Drive, Randlay, Telford TF3 2NA ☎ 01782 294284 (work) ☎ 01952 596656 (home)  
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**Secretary: Dorothy Wright,**

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☎ 01782 232323 email: [don.steward@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:don.steward@stoke.gov.uk)

**Executive Committee** (honorary):

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

**Executive Committee** (elected):

**Mike Fereday; Alastair Fleming; Elizabeth Hallam; Phil Pye; John Reynolds;**

**John Winchester.**

**Executive Committee** (co-opted):

**Ken Rout;** in addition a representative from the Staffs. University Geol. Soc. and the Keele Geol. Soc. is invited to attend committee

**Why not visit the NSGGA web pages: [www.esci.keele.ac.uk/nsgga](http://www.esci.keele.ac.uk/nsgga)**

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