

Bulletin

Number 65

April 2003



NSGGA Field Trips

Each person attending field meetings does so on the understanding that they attend at their own risk. The NSGGA has Public Liability Insurance Cover for field and indoor meetings, but Personal Accident Cover remains the responsibility of participants.

Please note:

A field fee of £ 2.00 is charged for members and £ 4.00 for non members on day field meetings.

27 April: The Volcanics of Snowdonia Leader: Peter Floyd

We will be studying the stratigraphy and lithology of selected Caradocian volcanics and the nature of the processes involved in their formation. We will also be looking at the effects of the glaciation on the adjacent landscape.

We will be running a minibus at a cost of £10 per person, plus the normal field fee. There are still seats available; to reserve a seat please complete the reply slip enclosed and send with the money to Janet Fairclough.

17/18 May: Weekend trip - Black Mountains

Joint meeting with Essex Group ----- NOW FULLY BOOKED.

15 June: Earl Sterndale Leader: Joe Jennings OUGS

A chance to study the geological processes, mineralisation, geochemistry and geophysics of the area. Palaeontologists please note: you will be in heaven.

13 July: Clitheroe Leader: Alan Diggles OUGS

We will walk through the Carboniferous in the Ribble Valley and Pendle Area followed by a visit to Clitheroe Castle and the Castle Museum.

20/21 Sept: Dorset Weekend Leader: George Raggett OUGS

A weekend away on the 'Jurassic' Coast. Please note revised date.

To reserve places please complete the enclosed reply slip.

See the enclosed [field trip flyer](#) for more details of all the above

If you need a lift or can offer a lift to any of these field trips,
please contact Janet or Laura who will endeavour to put you in contact.

Geowatch

9 August 2003 Potteries Museum, Hanley 10am to 4pm

A "Dinosaur Day". There will be dinosaur face painting, make your own dinosaur mask, make a dinosaur mobile, examine some real dinosaur bones and hopefully talk to the man who dug them up.

11 October 2003 Potteries Museum, Hanley 10am to 4pm

A "Magic of Minerals Day" including all sorts of experiments for the children to do and exhibits for them to handle.

Mike and Carol Fereday

Award to NSGGA member

Congratulations to Chris King of the Keele University Education Department for being presented with the Distinguished Service Award of the Geological Society of London in recognition for his dedication to the advancement of Earth Science teaching in the public sector.

Manchester Geological Association meetings 2003

Wednesday 16 April - *Mount Etna* - 7.00pm start

Most meetings are held in the Dept. of Earth Sciences, Williamson Building, Univ. of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester

Further information from Norma Rothwell, MGA Hon. Sec. ☎ 01616 530 862

Geodiversity Officer - Cheshire

Jonathan O'Dell, a Member and former Chairman of the NSGGA, has been appointed as the Geodiversity Officer for Cheshire. Hopefully he will be able to supply updates of his work in future issues of our bulletin. Jonathan and Laura Cox (Staffordshire Geodiversity Officer and new NSGGA Field Secretary) have already forged links that should benefit geological sites within these areas.

Money for old rocks!

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is delighted to acknowledge receipt of grants for its Brown End Quarry nature reserve that will transform the visitor facilities available at the Waterhouses site.

In recent weeks the Trust has received £28,000 from English Nature via the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund and £3,000 from the Dennis Curry Charitable Trust. The money will allow the Trust to undertake long-held plans to help bring this geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to life.

"The project will provide a range of improved visitor facilities including new full colour interpretation panels, an outdoor seating area, education packs for schools, a site leaflet and website," said Helen Gee of the Wildlife Trust. "We are thrilled that these grants have been awarded and that in a variety of ways we will now be able to improve the experience for the casual visitor, student and those with greater geological knowledge."

It is planned that the new facilities will be available at Brown End Quarry early next year.

Helen Gee hgee@staffswt.cix.co.uk

Articles

Fone, W., Donovan, S.K. & Lewis, D.N. 2002 **

Middle Ordovician crinoids from the Shelve Inlier, Shropshire, UK

Special Papers in Palaeontology 67 pp. 97-113

Written whilst Chairman of NSGGA, this article covers the rediscovery of a crinoid-rich horizon by Bill Fone and the subsequent identification and taxonomy of the species found.

**Copies available for reference by prior appointment at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - 01782 232323

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – new address

SWT have recently moved into their new headquarters. Their new address is:

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

The Wolseley Centre

Wolseley Bridge

Stafford

ST17 0WT

01889 880100

staffswt@cix.co.uk

www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk

Aliens Worlds event, 7-16 March 2003: Overview and final report

As part of National Science Week most members will be aware that the NSGGA hosted an event called "Alien Worlds" this year at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. This involved two linked, but self-supporting features: displays and activities.

The displays were mainly posters showing planetary surface features largely imaged by recent space probes. The object was to illustrate the variety of features and demonstrate how we interpret planetary surfaces and the processes involved, now that the astronomers have handed the planets over to the geologists! There were also more specialised posters on Mars, illustrations of impact structures and actual samples of meteorites (courtesy of Tony Pace). A "sand-box" (or rather flour-box!) was available for children to create their own impact craters and consider the parameters important in producing actual craters on planetary surfaces.

Half way through the week a general talk open to the public was given by Phill Parker on space equipment and the shuttle, illustrating space suits and clothing worn by astronauts. This was part of the Museum's talking shop series and enjoyed lively participation by the attendees.

Activities for young children were organised and staffed by the GeoWatch team and helpers. Both Saturdays were well attended throughout, being packed with children (and adults) making planet mobiles and space shuttles. I had it on good authority

(from an adult) that running the radio-controlled Mars Rover was good fun! Word had apparently got around over the weekend such that Mike and Carol opened up on Sunday afternoons as well.

The numbers passing through our displays and participating in the activities are often difficult to judge, although based on spot checks and numbers of materials sold, we had about 180 children involved in GeoWatch activities. Add to them all adults throughout the week and at weekends, about 770 persons in total visited our event over the 10 days. We also managed to get some (only about 15%!) to fill in the "public response" questionnaire; analysis of the display results showed the following (On a scale of 1=poor up to 5=excellent):

- How much did you enjoy the displays? – 48%(5); 41%(4); 8%(3); 3%(2); 0%(1)
- How did you rate "Aliens Worlds" as a whole? – 48%(5); 39%(4); 12%(3); 1%(2); 0%(1)
- How did you first hear of this event? The main ones were... from a Museum pamphlet (36%) and from a friend (29%), followed by poster in a library (20%); school and newspaper came low on the list.
- Who did you come with? Most came with their family (66%), then with either friends or on their own (both 15%).
- There were about equal numbers of males and females, and relative to young children (under 11 years), the older age group (>45 years) predominated.

As with any major NSGGA event it would not have been possible to organise and mount without the active participation of many members. To the initial planning subcommittee, Tony Pace, Phill Parker, and all who helped set-up the event, manned the activities and registration desk – a very big thank you – your involvement made it all worthwhile. Activities of this type, involving the public, can only be good for our Group and the advancement of the understanding of Earth Science.

Peter Floyd, Chairman

David Owen Thomas

The Group is sorry to record the death of David Owen Thomas who died at his home in North Wales on the 22nd of February 2003.

David Thomas was a founder member of the North Staffordshire Group of the Geologists' Association and he and his wife Dorothy were regular attendees at winter and summer field meetings. He led many field meetings over a number of years, principally to the Cotswolds.

He was Research Secretary for the Group until 1960 and was Chairman in 1962-63. He was Treasurer from 1968-72.

The few present members who knew him will remember him as a cheerful, hard working amateur geologist of the kind which ensured the early success of the NSGGA.

David served throughout the war with the RAF instructing parachute jumpers and after demobilisation entered the world of teaching. He was on the staff of the North Staffs. Technical College for a number of years and ending his teaching career as acting head teacher of Edensor High School in Longton. He retired in 1978 and after a year of commuting to Portmadoc, he and Dorothy settled in Pentre-Falin near Criccieth. They both had a passion for boats. He and Dorothy built their own sailing cruiser. He was Commodore of Madoc Yacht Club for many years before illness caused him to give up sailing. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him as a staunch friend.

Terry Jones

AGM highlights

The AGM took place at the School of Earth Sciences and Geography at Keele University on Thursday 13th March.

34 members attended the meeting (33% of the total membership). Bill Fone, Chairman, welcomed all present. Terry Jones advised the meeting of the recent death of David Thomas, the last of the Group's founder members. An obituary appears elsewhere in this Bulletin.

Bill Fone congratulated Chris King on his being awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Geological Society. See the reference elsewhere in this Bulletin.

There followed the usual AGM business of minutes of the last meeting, matters arising and reports from the Chairman, Treasurer, Field Secretary, and Conservation Secretary.

Carol Fereday, Treasurer, gave her report on the 10 months to 31st December 2002, explaining that the committee had agreed to her suggestion that the financial year be changed to 1st January to 31st December instead of 1st March to 28th February. This has given a slightly distorted picture and she wishes to point out that finances are healthy. A copy of the accounts is enclosed with this Bulletin.

Bill Fone thanked Janet Fairclough, retiring Field Secretary, for her sterling work over the past three years.

The election of Officers and Executive Committee then followed, the new committee details can be found on the last page of this Bulletin. We welcome three new committee members in Laura Cox, Eileen Frazer and Jonathan O'Dell.

Bill Fone, Retiring Chairman, handed over to the Incoming Chairman Peter Floyd who thanked Bill for his efforts during his two years in office and invited him to present his Retiring Chairman's Address entitled "The Earliest Skull". Those present were treated to a fascinating talk concerning research that Bill is engaged in with others into some rare fossils found in Shropshire and their place in evolutionary development.

Mike Fereday

Darwin to the Stars

An American group is building and will soon launch a 'solar sail' spacecraft that will – hopefully – gain enough power to leave our solar system and head out towards the stars. It is called the *Team Encounter Starship*.

The group invited people from around the world to send their 'messages to the stars' – so I sent a copy of the 'Darwin Card' that was used in the Millennium Rock mission along with a few grains from the Millennium Rock from Butterton Dyke!

These have now been accepted for flight. It has been microfilmed and recorded onto the disc that will fly onboard the solar sail Spacecraft to the stars. The message number is TE000002873.

Many of the main systems – solar sail, the deployment device, the electronics and software - have now been tested on Earth. A dummy run pilot mission should take place early in 2004 – when many of the spacecraft systems will then be tested in Earth orbit – before the real mission takes place a few years later (circa 2006/7?).

If the spacecraft makes it out of the solar system the spacecraft will wander through the emptiness of space of our universe for many hundreds of thousands of years before it ever encounters any other star system. Should one day other beings discover this craft and they can decode the disc – our Darwin Millennium Rock message will be there to say 'hello'!

Phill Parker

Books for sale

Members may be interested to know that the following items are for sale from NSGGA at very competitive prices.

- Old GA Guides: Birmingham, Liverpool, West Cornwall, Lewisian & Torridonian[NW Scot], The Weald, Plymouth, Anglesey, Jersey
- New GA Guides: Lake District, Isle of Arran, Mallorca, Costa Blanca, Spain, Late-Precambrian, Scottish Highlands & Islands, Isle of Man
- Other GA items: London Walks [Eric Robinson] vols. 1 & 2; Geology of the Eastern Alps[Ron Oxburgh]
- British Geological Survey: Sheet 123, Stoke-on-Trent – Memoir; Sheet 123, Solid Edition - folded map
- Others: OS Geological Wall Map [with local input] [paper or encapsulated]; Ornamental & Building Stones of Stoke-on-Trent
- NSGGA official mug £1.50 each, 4 for £5.00

If you are interested in any of the above, please contact John Reynolds on 01782 327068 or email: jr.reynolds@virgin.net

Newcastle Countryside Project - *Pete's Perambulations*

Sunday 27 April - *Edge of the Glacier* - Meet 2.00pm at Maer Village Hall

A 5-mile walk to study and admire the geology and scenery of the Maer Hills area. Charge of **£1.50** for adults. One of a series of walks offered by the NCP, Apedale Valley, Loomer Road, Chesterton, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs ST5 7RR. Further information from Pete Wells ☎ 01782 566 331; email: keith.morris@staffordshire.gov.uk

NSGGA Library additions

From Bill Fone, a reprint of his article about Shropshire crinoids:

Fone, W., Donovan, S.K. & Lewis, D.N. 2002, Middle Ordovician crinoids from the Shelve Inlier, Shropshire, UK, *Special Papers in Palaeontology* 67 pp. 97-113 - reprint

From Jonathan O'Dell, a collection of photocopies relating to articles about the N. Staffs. Coalfields

From John Reynolds, 2 copies of BGS Memoirs:

Geology of the country around Chester and Winsford (sheet 109), 1986

Geology of the country around Nantwich and Whitchurch (sheet 122), 1966

NSGGA - Next Committee Meeting

- **Thursday 3 April 2003 at 7.00pm**
in the School of Earth Sciences and Geography, Keele University

Staffordshire RIGS Group

- **AGM on Tuesday, 17 June 2003 at 7.30pm**
at the new Staffs. Wildlife Trust offices, The Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge, Stafford ST17 0WT
Contact Sue Lawley at the SWT for details ☎ 01889 880100 or contact SRIGS Chairman, Ken Rout ☎ 01785 662291

Contacts List: NSGGA Committee 2003-04

Chairman: Peter Floyd,

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23 Mill Farm Drive, Randlay, Telford TF3 2NA ☎ 01782 294284 (work) ☎ 01952 596656 (home)
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21 Grove Avenue, Heron Cross, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 3BA ☎ 01782 331699

Bulletin Sec.: Don Steward,

Natural History, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, 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):

Mike Fereday; Eileen Frazer; Elizabeth Hallam; Jonathan O'Dell; John Reynolds;

John Winchester.

Executive Committee (co-opted):

Ken Rout; Alastair Fleming; in addition a representative from the Staffs. University Geol. Soc.

and the Keele Geol. Soc. is invited to attend committee

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