

# Bulletin

## Number 85

### April 2008



*This is my first Bulletin since taking over from Don Steward who retired from the post of Bulletin Secretary at the recent AGM. Don produced 84 editions over the past 21 years of the NSGGA bulletin. His sterling work will be a hard act to follow and I promise that I will not attempt to break his record. Many thanks Don. If you have any reports or articles that you think will be of interest to our members please send them to me, preferably by e-mail if you can.*

*Mike Fereday*

**The Group has Public Liability Insurance through a GA insurance policy which also carries limited personal accident cover for members attending meetings or field trips. Non-members attending Group field trips are advised to take out their own personal accident insurance to the level they feel appropriate.**

#### Diary Dates:

### FIELD PROGRAMME FOR 2008

*Note: a field fee of £2.00 per head is made*

#### Saturday 29 March:

**Lapworth Museum of Geology, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, (Joint with BCGS).**

Meet at 10.30am at the museum (SP047834). The Curator, Jonathon Clatworthy will have available material from the collections of rocks, fossils, minerals, historical maps and documents that are not on general public view. Likely to extend into the afternoon. Directions by car; take the A38 (Bristol Road) out of Birmingham centre for 3 miles, at the end of the dual carriageway turn right into Edgbaston Park Road for the University, the South Car Park (free on Saturdays) is on the left. The Lapworth Museum is accessed from Ring Road South, due south of the Clock Tower.

**If you have specific material that you wish to see from the collections or would like more detailed directions to the museum let the Field Secretary know.**

#### Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 April:

**The Yorkshire Coast based at the Raven Hall Country Hotel, Ravenscar, near Scarborough.**

Leaders, Eileen Fraser and Peter Rawson.

On Saturday Eileen Fraser will take us to Staithes for the sedimentary sequences and fossils of the Lower Jurassic, On Sunday Peter Rawson will take us to see 1. The Speeton Clay in Filey Bay for the only continuous exposure of the whole marine Lower Cretaceous sequence in Britain.

2. Flamborough Head for the chalk in Selwicks Bay where the main interest is structural – one of the so-called 'shatter zones'.

Ref: Geologists' Association Guide No. 34 "The Yorkshire Coast" by P.F. Rawson and J.K. Wright.

#### Sunday 18 May:

**North Stiperstones, Pontesbury to Poles Coppice.**

Leader: Andrew Jenkinson

A joint meeting with the Shropshire G.S. based on the Poles Coppice Geotrail that is currently being prepared.

Meet at 10.30am at the Habberley Lane car park at the south end of the County Council's Poles Coppice nature

reserve (Grid ref. SJ385042).

Directions; take the A488 (Bishops Castle road) off the Shrewsbury by-pass; go through Pontesbury and just before the roundabout in Minsterley turn left up Habberley Lane, and it's a mile and a bit up on the left.

We will visit the Granhams Moor unconformity, the Poles Coppice Quarry and Callow Quarry looking at the Stiperstones Quartzite, its structures and relationships to the Habberley Shales and the Mytton Flags. Time permitting we will then extend the trip up to Snailbeach and/or Pontesbury. A quick look at Earls Hill may also be possible.

## Sunday 15 June:

### **Malvern**

Leader: Professor John Winchester

A field trip to illustrate features of the Late Precambrian basement of Central England visiting a number of quarries and exposures along the Malvern Hills. From the Precambrian inlier, rocks of the Malvernian and Warren House Group and from the Lower Palaeozoic, rocks of the Cambrian and Silurian periods.

A minibus is planned (subject to numbers) leaving from the Earth Sciences Car Park at Keele at 8.30am. Booking details are given on the attached flyer.

## Sunday 20 July:

### **Crummack Dale, Austwick, Yorkshire.**

Leader: Alan Diggles

A walk of about 9km into Crummack Dale from Austwick (situated to the SE of Ingleton) for rocks of the Silurian (Austwick Formation Sandstones), Carboniferous Limestones and Ordovician Siltstones. Features to include the Norber erratics, Nappa scars and Moughton Whetstone Hole. A minibus is planned (subject to numbers) leaving from the Earth Sciences Car Park at Keele at 7.30am. Booking details are given on the attached flyer.

## Saturday 16 August:

Leader: Dr Patrick Cossey

Provisional, either following a section of the Hamps/Manifold Trail or on the Roaches.

## Saturday 27 September:

### **Calton Hill Quarry, nr. Buxton**

Leader: Dr Chris Arkwright

Meet at 10.00am at Miller's Dale Station Car Park, Grid Ref: SK137733 (parking fee payable). To investigate Carboniferous igneous intrusions and lavas and their associated limestones in the Buxton area. Overall length of walks about 5km, limestone succession and interbedded lavas in Miller's Dale Quarry then, driving into Tideswell for a dolerite quarry to examine lithology and thermal effect on surrounding country rocks. Packed lunch at picnic site in the quarry. After lunch drive to Calton Hill, park at SK112710 to examine the structure and lithology of a Visean volcanic complex and dolerite intrusion in the disused quarry.

For further information contact NSGGA Field Secretary **Gerald Ford**,

☎ 01630-673409 or e-mail: [g.ford@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:g.ford@ukonline.co.uk)

For contact with the **Field Secretary** on the day of a field trip the mobile phone number is 07789 826807 when there is a chance that it will be switched on

## Some Memories of the North Staffs Group of the Geologist's Association

In its earlier years the Group was fortunate in having some members who gave stalwart support. After the founding by John Myers, the committee was formed. Tom Purcell (teacher at Longton High Scholl) served as secretary for many years until ill-health forced him to retire, and J.T. Gleaves was the first treasurer. Other prominent members included J.C. Parrack of Leek High School (always accompanied by his wife 'Doll') and David Thomas who led many field meetings to the Cotswolds.

The Group was especially fortunate in having J.T. Wattison as a member. He had lived in Portugal for 26 years where he managed a pottery. While there he studied entomology and geology, and hundreds of his trilobite specimens have gone into museums throughout the world including the Natural History Museum, London. He returned to set up business in Shrewsbury in 1936. In later years he moved to Burslem and a visit to his house revealed an 'Aladdins Cave' of specimens, books, cabinets and curios of all description. The field meetings he led to Shropshire and to the Welsh Borderland proved rewarding to many a collector and he exhibited some fine material at the conversaciones.

J.C. (Jack) Parrack, who was chairman in 1953, had the first card programmes printed, and this continued until 1978.

The 1953 programme included a Members Evening for the exchange of specimens.

In May 1954 the Group held its first residential weekend meeting staying at the George Hotel at Birdlip in the Cotswolds. 12 members attended - J. Myers (leader), Mr. & Mrs. J.C. Parrack, Mr. & Mrs. T.S. Jones, Mr. & Mrs. D.O. Thomas, Mr. & Mrs. J.T. Wattison, Miss Cottier, J. Leighton and E.A. Watkin.

At this time the October meeting (the first of the winter when the meetings were held at the Arts Centre in the Brampton, Newcastle-under-Lyme) was always a Conversazione when members brought displays of specimens or other related geological material and all contributed to the refreshments organised by the ladies.

In November 1954, the Group paid a visit to the Geology Department at Keele University.

In May 1955 a second weekend meeting was held being led by J.C. Parrack at Whitby. Again 12 members attended, John

Cope and the two Miss Silvesters replacing Mrs. Wattison (then deceased), Mrs. Jones and John Myers from the previous year's party.

In 1955 Prof. F. Wolverson Cope became president and held this office until 1968 when the position was discontinued.

During the 1950s the Research Group spent a considerable time excavating at Ackers Crossing to locate the Red Rock Fault.

Some notable earlier field meetings

- Calton Hill - good collecting in geodes containing crystals of dog-tooth calcite, quartz and amethyst.
- Blockley - many visits to the brickworks where a large variety of fossils from Lower Lias were collected.
- Leighton Buzzard - 'Rainbow' sandstone collected from the Double Arches pit and *Turrillites* etc from the Sanden Cement quarry in the Lower Chalk.
- In September 1954 a field meeting to Ashover went over many of the features outlined in Himus & Sweeting's 'Elements of Field Geology'. The quarries yielded excellent collecting including some fine fluorite crystals.

Some problems have inevitably occurred on field meetings. Terry Jones, who was then field meetings secretary, had the misfortune to fall down Wainlode Cliff on the Severn which necessitated a leg in plaster for two months. He was later to fall into the beck near Ambleside while searching for graptolites in the Shelwith Beds. This time the consequences were less disastrous though he did take a lot of drying out!

In October 1977 a field meeting went to Aberystwyth to study geological structures along the coast. The circular stated that as usual the Group cannot accept responsibility should any accident occur. Insufficient research had been done on the tides and the Group was lucky to reach the coach further down the coast little worse than being wet up to the waist. We later learned that the lifeboat had been alerted.

Terry Jones and Ted Watkin

## East Midlands Geological Society Diary Dates

**Saturday 19 April**

***Midlands Influences on William Smith***

Speaker: Peter Banham

Indoor meetings take place in lecture theatre B3 of the Biology building at the University of Nottingham.

Secretary: Mrs Janet Slatter, 100 Main Street, Long Whatton, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE12 5DG

e-mail: [j.slatter@zoom.co.uk](mailto:j.slatter@zoom.co.uk). tel. no. 01509 843297

## Professor John Winchester retires



Professor John Winchester retired from Keele University on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008. He served on the NSGGA committee for 19 years and gave tremendous support throughout that time. He plans to move to Devon with his wife Vicky but intends to remain an NSGGA member. He will be leading a field trip to the Malvern Hills on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June.

We wish John and Vicky a happy retirement and look forward to seeing him whenever he is able to join us.

Pictured here with John are Peter Styles and Elizabeth Hallam.

## Honorary NSGGA Life Membership awarded to Ann Myatt

At the February meeting Elizabeth Hallam presented a certificate granting Honorary NSGGA Life membership to Ann Myatt, together with an engraved John Myers' Award medal.

2008 marks the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the NSGGA by John Myers. Ann Myatt is John Myers' daughter who, since 1997, has funded an annual award to final year Keele and Staffordshire University students in memory of her father who died in 1994.

This award is in recognition of her



continued support.

### SRIGS - Launch of the Churnet Valley Geotrail

After the success of the Hamps and Manifold Geotrail Project, a second leaflet has been prepared for a geological trail between Froghall and Alton in the Churnet Valley. The launch took place on Sunday 24 February and was attended by some 50 people, including NSGGA members, Staffs Wildlife Trust staff, Staffs Moorlands and local Tourist Information staff and members of the public.

The walk has been prepared by the team of Ian Stimpson, Richard Waller, Patrick Cossey, John Reynolds and Peter Floyd with funding from Staffordshire County Council under the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF). Rosie Duncan of Staffordshire University designed the artwork for the map and descriptive leaflet.

Richard Waller welcomed all present and thanked the numerous organisations who had made the development of the geotrail possible. Sue Lawley of Staffs Wildlife Trust explained that the geotrail had been named in memory of Ken Rout, who died last year. Ken was a founder member of the SRIGS group, an active member of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and a former NSGGA Chairman and long standing committee member. Ken's widow Phyllis formally cut the ribbon to launch the trail.

Ian Stimpson acted as the guide for the walk and gave a fascinating insight to the industrial history of the area and how it was heavily influenced by the underlying geology. The group were provided with a buffet lunch at the Fox and Goose at Foxt. For details of SRIGS and to view both the Churnet Valley and Hamps and Manifold trail leaflets visit the SRIGS website on <http://www.esci.keele.ac.uk/srigs/index.html>



The group listening to Ian Stimpson as he describes some of the industrial history of the Churnet Valley



Phyllis Rout cutting the tape to officially open the Churnet Valley Geotrail

### Ecton Hill Field Study Association reopens

The Field Study Centre at Ecton Hill Copper Mine has reopened after a gap of 6 years. The 2008 season begins in Mid March and aims to run 1 day "A" level Geology, Chemistry and Physics courses considering the geology and mining history of the Bronze Age copper mine. For further details visit their website at [www.ectonhillfsa.org.uk](http://www.ectonhillfsa.org.uk)

NSGGA has joined to give its support. Individual



members may wish to support the association; the annual subscription is a modest £5 per year.

The photograph shows one of the tutors Jane Essex with a group of Keele PGCE students below ground in the mine

## Northern Rocks - the North Pennines Festival of Geology and Landscape

**Saturday 24th May - Sunday 8th June 2008 inclusive**

The 2008 Festival will be the 5th Northern Rocks Festival - two weeks packed full of events, activities across the North Pennines AONB and UNESCO European & Global Geopark. From themed walks, exhibitions, and activities for kids to demonstrations, local heritage events and mine tours there'll be something for everyone! It celebrates the unique geology and landscape found within the AONB and is timed to coincide with European Geoparks Week - a pan-European festival celebrating the world-renowned geology found within the European Geoparks.

The North Pennines AONB Partnership holds a Gold Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) Award for its corporate office and tourism activities.

For more information visit [www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk) or [www.green-business.co.uk](http://www.green-business.co.uk) or contact:

Shane Harris, Sustainable Tourism & Communications Officer, North Pennines AONB Partnership, Weardale Business Centre, The Old Co-op Building, 1 Martin Street, Stanhope, Weardale' County Durham DL13 2UY ☎ 01388 528801 email: [shane@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:shane@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

## Black Country Geological Society Diary Dates 2008

**Saturday 19 April** - Field excursion to *Hanter Hill*.

Leaders: Sue Hay and Geoff Steel. Meet at 10.30am in the lay-by at Burlingjobb on the B4594 (SO251583). This will be a circular walk up, around and down Hanter Hill - about 4 miles total distance much over quite rough moor land. Bring a packed lunch and drink.

**Monday 28 April** - Lecture meeting at Dudley Museum, St James's Road, Dudley, 7.30 for 8.00pm start.

**Jan Zalasiewicz** (University of Leicester): *Extinctions Past and Present*

For further details contact BCGS Hon. Secretary: Sarah Worton, 158 Oakham Road, Oldbury B69 1QQ

Tel 01384 235946 or email: [sarah.worton@atkinsglobal.com](mailto:sarah.worton@atkinsglobal.com)

## Extract from Essex Group Newsletter

Mike Sandison of the Essex Group of the GA visited the Museum of Scottish Lead Mining last summer, with his permission I publish here his report that appeared in the Essex Group's Winter 2007/2008 Newsletter.

"I make the trip to Scotland several times a year, using the M74, and have often noticed the brown tourist sign at junction 14, to the Scottish Lead Mining Museum. On a trip last summer I decided to take a break there instead of at a service station. The museum is situated only about 8 miles from the motorway at the highest village in Scotland, Warnlockhead (1500' a.s.l), predictably near the Leadhills.

It is really worth a short detour. The museum has excellent displays covering all aspects of lead mining, including the underlying geology authoritatively presented by BGS Edinburgh. But this is only part of what is on offer. Tours into one of the original mines are available, led by knowledgeable guides, who paint a graphic picture of what life was like for the miners and their families – very hard and short. There is also a restored cottage showing the living conditions both in 1740 and 1890. The 1740 exhibit made a particular impression on me, as the conditions are not far removed from those in which we would today keep farm stock!

These mining families were quasi-slaves, as the operation of the truck system and payment in arrears once the ore had been extracted, was smelted and sold, meant that they were in perennial debt and therefore tied to the company. If they had any energy left they could borrow books for self improvement from the subscription library which one can also visit. This is the second oldest subscription library in the UK, having been founded in 1756.

I can thoroughly recommend a visit to this excellent presentation of lead mining and its associated social history. The complex is open from the earlier of Easter or April 1<sup>st</sup> to end October (and there is a good tea room as well).

Mike Sandison"

## Enquiry from Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery

Have you seen this label?



(not to scale)

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery are currently undertaking a large project on a collection previously owned by Sir John St. Aubyn, the 5<sup>th</sup> Baronet (1758 to 1839). Recently we secured a grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to enable the museum's natural history department to conduct a variety of work on this collection. Currently, there is much interest in the 'missing' elements of the mineral collection and the journey to their respective resting places. After his death, Sir John St. Aubyn's collection was split by the mineral dealer Isaiah Deck (1792-1853), and although an extensive collection was arranged for the Civil Military Library at Devonport (now at Plymouth City Museum), the remaining minerals were auctioned.

As part of the project, Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery is trying to locate other specimens from Sir John's mineral collection. We hope to locate as many specimens as we can so that Sir John's collection is fully documented. Our wish is to authenticate and photograph every specimen both in the museum and in other collections so that we can create an online digital database. Above is an example of the oldest label associated with Sir John St. Aubyn's mineral specimens. If you think you may have a Sir John St. Aubyn specimen or you have any information about the history of this collection, please contact Plymouth City Museum. We understand that you may not want to participate in this project, but we would like to reassure you that we would only want to authenticate and photograph your specimen. For more information about Sir John, his collection and the labels associated with his minerals, please visit our website or contact Jess Shepherd at the Plymouth City Museum on 01752 304774 or email [jessica.shepherd@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:jessica.shepherd@plymouth.gov.uk).

## NSGGA - Next Committee Meeting

- **Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> May at 7.00pm**  
in the School of Earth Sciences and Geography, Keele University

## Staffordshire RIGS Group

For details about the Group and meetings, contact:

**SRIGS Secretary: Sue Lawley**

c/o Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, The Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge, Stafford ST17 0WT

☎ 01889 880100 email: [slawley@staffswt.cix.co.uk](mailto:slawley@staffswt.cix.co.uk)

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### General Secretary: Eileen Fraser,

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### Executive Committee (honorary):

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

**Honorary Life Member: Ann Myatt****Executive Committee** (elected):

**Dr Lloyd Boardman; Dr Peter Floyd; David Osborn; Janet Osborn; Don Steward;  
John Reynolds.**

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

**Dean Rigby (Keele Geol. Soc), Nick Hulley**

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

Produced for the NSGGA by Mike Fereday 24 Brookside Close, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs, ST5 2HX

## NSGGA

### AGM FIELD REPORT - 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008

Date	Venue	Leader	No.
29 <sup>th</sup> March	Knutton Clay Quarry and Ibstock Brick, Parkhouse, Newcastle	Ibstock Staff	11
28/29 <sup>th</sup> April	Lake District Weekend.	Dr. Chris King Dr. Peter Floyd	22
19 <sup>th</sup> May	Ercall Quarries, Wellington (with Shropshire GS)	Chris Rayner	9
7 <sup>th</sup> June	Building Stones of Newcastle.	Dr. Peter Floyd	12
1 <sup>st</sup> July	Calton Hill Quarry, nr Buxton (postponed due to inclement weather)	Dr. Chris Arkwright	-
21 <sup>st</sup> July	Sedburgh and the Sedgwick Trail	Alan Diggles OUGS	7
18 <sup>th</sup> August	Lapworth Museum, (postponed).	Curator Jon Clatworthy	-
23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept.	Monsal Head, Derbys.	Dr. Fred Broadhurst	9

Thanks are due in particular to the leaders for giving so freely of their time and expertise and to the members for their support and who, by their various contributions add so much. Thanks for their support and who, by their various contributions add so much. Thanks also to Peter Floyd and Bob Fletcher for writing reports for the Lakes and Ercall Quarries outings respectively; a brief note follows about the remaining meetings.

#### Knutton Clay Quarry and Ibstock Brick, Parkhouse, Newcastle.

The visit in March to the Claypit where the Etruria marl was being excavated was perhaps not the most interesting geologically. However, the process of turning raw clay (with its inherent variability from the different benches) into a material with a uniform shrinkage and then through the various processes' at the factory at Parkhouse to produce a highly engineered product was impressive. As was the degree of automation in the works, producing some 54 million bricks a year. Thanks are due to the company and their staff who took us round for providing a fascinating incite into brick making.

#### Building Stones of Newcastle-under-Lyme (Trail Guide).

On a fine June evening Peter Floyd gave a much more detailed explanation of the building stones used, their origin and identification than can be contained in the guide. The variety was quite surprising, some being sourced from abroad. We certainly saw more rock types from more geological periods than you are ever likely to see in situ on a 'traditional' field trip.

#### Sedburgh and the Sedgwick Trail.

In our study of the geology of the area, Alan Diggles took the group firstly to the north of the town to a small quarry off the path to Winder Hill for rocks of the Silurian, part of the Coniston formation. On the return, in the beck, Settlebeck Gill flowed over a bed of conglomerate, deposited during the Devonian. The next location was a stream section to the NE of Sedburgh near Rawthey Bridge off the A683 for the oldest rock in the area from the Ordovician – the Cautley mudstone of the Dent inlier where a dyke of Lamprophyre was of interest. For the afternoon we then travelled to the E of Sedburgh on the A684 to Longstone Common for the Sedgwick Trail, opened in 1985 to commemorate the bicentenary of the birth of Adam Sedgwick. The exposures in the banks of the River Clough include the Dent fault line that Sedgwick was the first to discover and interpret. Finishing up in Sedburgh for a tea, to discover that it is also a 'book' town, what more could you want!

#### Monsal Head, Derbys.

Meeting in September at the picnic area at Monsal Head with its splendid views over the river Wye and Monsal Dale, Fred

Broadhurst took us first to the nearby Hob's House landslip with its exposures of the Hob's House Coral Band and Monsal Dale Limestones. After lunch we drove to the Magpie Mine, with its extensive surface remains from the lead mining industry. The afternoon walk followed a circular route across the limestone landscape via Deepdale, the Wye valley towards Ashford-in-the-Water and the Magpie Sough outfall before returning (uphill) to the cars, a fascinating day for both geology and archaeology.

Gerald Ford  
Field Secretary