



Geologists' Association - South Wales Group

Cymdeithas Y Daearegwyr - Grŵp De Cymru

Registered Charity Number 1054303

50 YEAR ARCHIVES 1960-2010 - 50th ANNIVERSARY 2010

This section includes a number of interesting documents, photos and facts that were generated during the preparation and celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary meeting, now gathered together for posterity.

The first meeting of the SWGA was held on 23 January 1960.

The fiftieth anniversary meeting was held on 23 January 2010.

Note: this version for the SWGA website is a slightly shortened version of the original compilation of 50th anniversary material.

1 Thoughts on the SWGA 50th anniversary, Oct 2006

2 Summary of research into founder members, late 2009

3 Some of our personal recollections of the South Wales Group of the GA, Heather and James (Jim) Chetcuti, November 2009

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10 A celebration of 50 years, January 1960-2010 Holiday Geology (text)

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13 Photo compilations by Dave Wellings of 23 Jan 2010 (slides print out)

Dear All

I've been having a think about the SWGA's 50th anniversary and had a read through Alun Thomas' history of the group and an article in the Welsh Geological Quarterly on our 10th anniversary. I thought it might be useful to circulate the rather confusing conception of the group as I understand it. You can all let me know whether or not you agree!

If you look at AJT's book, page 16, it seems that there were 2 meetings in late 1959 to suss out interest in a new group, one in Cardiff chaired by JGC Anderson and one in Swansea chaired by Brian Simpson. From these came a Preliminary Committee which met only once, on Friday 4 December 1959. This committee seems to have drawn up our constitution and set us up with the parent body as a local group. It looks like we were only the 3rd to be formed, with the N Staffs and the Midlands groups the only others already in existence.

The inaugural meeting was on Saturday 23 January 1960 in Cardiff. Doug Bassett was elected Founder Chairman and the first SWGA committee was elected. This was followed by a lecture from David Williams of Imperial College who was then the President of the GA.

Our first session was from 23 Jan 1960 to the first AGM on 5 April 1960. Our second session was 1960-61. Our 10th session was 1968-69, so the 20th was 1978-79, 30th 1988-89, and 40th 1998-99. Our 50th session will therefore be 2008-09 which will be Nigel's first year as President (2008-10). So we start our 50th session after the 49th AGM in March 2008 when I hand over to Nigel (or, more strictly, at the start of the autumn session in October 2008).

2008, of course, is also the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the parent body, so there's lot of scope to link in with them. As you probably know, the Geol Soc celebrates its 200th anniversary next year (2007) and are combining with the GA for a double celebration in 2007-8. They have a theme of local heroes which is something we can certainly exploit.

Our 50th AGM will be that at the end of our 50th session, in March 2009, halfway through the reign of President Nigel.

The 50th anniversary of our Inaugural meeting will be 23 January 2010 which will be part-way through our 51st session which will end at the 51st AGM in March 2010 when Nigel retires as President.

I think this agrees with what Geraint worked out at the last Committee meeting, so basically we have a jamboree beginning at the start of our 50th session (in autumn 2008) and celebrate right through to the 50th anniversary of our Inaugural meeting on 23 January 2010.

Perhaps we should make that date (or the Saturday nearest to it) a day of special lectures with big-name speakers in Cardiff (since that's where the 1st meeting was held) but maybe we could also beef up the programme for the whole of the 16 month period (or indeed the two years) and get more high profile speakers down.

We need to give some serious thought to cranking up the publicity machine a lot more for that period. We'll need a couple of people to take this on. We could also do with getting more younger or student members if we can (I know there are problems getting students to come to things like Saturday lectures when they need to work to pay off their loans). Otherwise we'll all be in our dotage and give the wrong impression of the group (or, rather, not the impression we want to give).

We could also think about doing something special for the Reunion in November 2008 or 2009 depending on whatever the parent body decides to do with it in those years (ie if it's in London or outside). Ought we to consider hosting it as another Geofest??? Perhaps not.

Summary of research into founder members, late 2009

Once the SWGA had decided to make a celebration on 23 January 2010 of the first meeting, to be followed by lunch in Cardiff, research was undertaken by the Secretary Lynda Garfield to try and identify the founder members.

After a lot of searching, it proved impossible to identify those who were at the first meeting, or who joined in 1960, despite former Secretary Alun Thomas' donation of his archives and lists of names. Lots of indications, but nothing definitive (and of course, still with us today).

So, it was decided to find those who were involved in the setting up of the Group in Dec 1959/Jan 1960. This included those on the preliminary committee, the first committee from Jan to March 1960, and those proposing the group/committee.

Of these, the one person definitely identified was Alun Thomas, who seconded the proposal of Douglas Bassett as founder chairman, Jan 1960 and who is the only person whom we could definitely identify as having been a member for the whole fifty years. He was invited, with his wife Anne (a member also) as a guest of honour.

The only other people who could be definitely identified as involved in the setting up and still with us today were George Askey (the first secretary), Frank Rhodes (now at Cornell University), and Basil Isaac. These were sent invitations to the 23 January event. George Askey and his wife accepted the invitation, Frank Rhodes did not reply, and Basil Isaac replied unable to attend.

A few other names were raised, but nothing definitive could be found.

There were several others who joined soon after the start in 1960 and who have been members continuously since, but these were not at the start. One member (John Davies) was present at the first meeting but has not been a member continuously since.

No one else on the current committee was able to add anything further to these results.

So, we had two guests of honour, Alun Thomas and George Askey, with their wives.

As a result of this research, it was agreed to make a special **50 year award** to **Alun Thomas** on account of his remarkable record of 50 years **membership and service**.

This was announced at the 50th anniversary meeting, and the presentation made to Alun at the 51st AGM on March 13 2010.

Some of our personal recollections of the South Wales Group of the G.A.

Heather and James Chetcuti

November 2009

We became members about 35+ years ago.

Our earliest recollections are from the time of the chairmanship Dr. M Brooks (early 1970s). These were heady days with lectures on Plate Tectonics, which was at the time a fairly recent paradigm shift in geological thinking. But we had young children and it was not always possible to be consistent members. On many occasions they did accompany us to lectures and on field meetings. Our field trips to Lavernock, Ogmore, Usk and Builth Wells must have impressed them as two went on to get degrees in Geology. The first edition of the Group's **'Geological Excursions in South Wales and the Forest of Dean'** edited by Dr. D. Bassett and Dr. M. Bassett (purchased for £1.75) also left a lasting impression with us trying to visit as many sites as we could.

It was probably during the chairmanship of Dr. R. Gayer (mid 1970s) that we became more consistent members of the Group. Dr. Gayer was also one of my course tutors in 1979/1980 on my Earth Science Degree course with the Open University.

I remember well John Perkins tenure as Chairman (early 1980s). He was also a friend and he gave me much encouragement with my studies eventually getting me to lecture on the Geology of New Zealand at one of his extra mural classes in 1984. My two other daughters were also avid fans of his going on his more exotic field trips like Iceland. Another field trip at the time is also imprinted in my memory, that taken by Dr. J. Baker and Peter Sheldon to the Ordovician Rocks in the Builth and Llandrindod area with Trilobites galore.

It was during the groups 25th anniversary celebrations (1984) and the tenure of Dr. J Cope that we realised that our wedding anniversary was also linked to the founding date of the group as we were married in 1959 and our wedding celebration has tracked that of the Group's. It was also at the 25th annual general meeting that the first Honorary Membership was awarded to Prof. D.R Owen for his services to the group and also Roland Parsons, treasurer, for 25 years service.

Other meetings which are easy to recall from the late 1980s was the meeting at the National Museum of Wales titled 'Dinosaurs from China' and 'The life and times of Dinosaurs' by Dr. Beverley Halstead and the introduction of 'Student Lectures' using venues outside of Cardiff and Swansea.

One evening (late 1989) I had a call from Alun Thomas, who was then Secretary, asking me on behalf of the committee if I would like to become a committee member. I accepted.

One of my first tasks was to try and foster the Group's image to the general public. After a few meetings it was decided to produce clothing like T shirts, sweat shirts, fleece jackets and hats with the Group's logo. The logo was produced in a form that could be embroidered onto the left breast of the clothing. At first a variety of clothes were produced for display and then they were made to order. The idea was a great success within the Group and then they also put on sale to non-group members at joint meetings, at the parent bodies meeting in London and at the Eisteddfod. One of my big surprises was to see one of our jackets being worn by a complete stranger at a mineral and gem exhibition in Cheltenham.

One of my other tasks was to advertise meetings for the Group and general public. I used to send fliers to all the local libraries and about ten local papers including the Brecon Times, the Newport Argos, the Swansea Gazette, the Western Mail and the South Wales Echo. I also sent fliers to BBC Wales Radio and television, Swansea Sound, Red Dragon Radio, ITV Wales and S4C. This had a high hit rate and attendance and membership did improve.

The biggest success of all came when Steve Howe did a field trip to Bendricks Beach. The headline with **`Dinosaur Foot prints`** was a big hit in some of the major newspapers and captured the imagination of the public. Close to 500 people turned up on the beach. Steve had to split them into groups and these were shared out with committee members helping out. By the end of the day Steve was hoarse and lost his voice.

I often had calls from the BBC and Swansea Sound but I usually passed these onto other group members like Dr Geraint Owen and Dr Bassett. I'm not sure if they knew where the original tip came from.

One of my other tasks was to organise the furniture and displays for the Group's special events. These included the Eisteddfod and the occasion of the first GA Parent body meeting at the National Museum of Wales, all very successful events.

Other field meetings that come to mind from the early 1990s was the Geology of Barry and Barry Island and a visit to the RRS Charles Darwin in Barry Dock taken by Alun Thomas, and the boat trip to Flat Holm Island taken by Steve Howe where we were dive bombed by nesting seagulls.

The celebration of 'Welsh Geology week' in July 1991 also springs to mind. I still have the 37 page **`From Giraldus Cambrensis to the Welsh Geology Week`** compiled by Dr. Douglas A. Bassett for the occasion.

The Committee was active and lively. The idea to attend the Bridgend Eisteddfod as the South Wales Group of the GA created extra work and a sub committee was formed which culminated in a successful if somewhat wet event.

The group also attended the Llanelli Eisteddfod but we combined with other similar groups in a separate Marquee, again attended well by the general public. At both events great emphasis was placed on activities to attract the younger age group. The introduction of Science week in March also created extra work with workshops at Cardiff University. The occasion of the GA's first visit to Wales for their annual reunion meeting in 2004 at the National Museum was very popular with geologists and the public alike.

Changes also took place to the structure of the Group by the applying for Charity Status, this resulting in the introduction of the title 'President' replacing the Chairman.

After about 10 years on the committee I resigned due to other commitments, not least of them being our wander lust for great geological adventures.

To America on the John Perkins trail to Utah and Northern Arizona, to Alaska, to South America and a Circum-navigation of Antarctica. The latter resulting in me giving a joint lecture on Antarctica at a Group meeting in Swansea.

Now we attend meetings when ever we can in between our annual trip to Malta and living in our caravan on the Gower Coast.



Media release

13 January 2010

For use before 22 January 2010

How Earth Made Us

Are you interested in Fossils, Rocks and Minerals?

On Saturday 23rd January Professor Iain Stewart, well known for his television appearances telling us about the earth, how it works, and recently, all about climate change, is coming to Cardiff to talk about his new tv series, **How Earth Made Us**.

In this talk Professor Stewart will explain that the earth is now regarded as a system which includes the atmosphere and the biosphere as well as the geology. He will also explain that climatic changes have not always been slow processes, they can be quite rapid events.

He suggests that ancient societies had a positive connection with their environment. He notes that some civilisations are located, precariously, on plate boundaries but they still survive despite the risk of earthquakes because of economic benefits brought by their location.

The talk is taking place on the 50th anniversary of the first meeting of the Geologists' Association-South Wales Group/Cymdeithas y Daearegwyr-Grŵp De Cymru, in the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, Main Building, University of Cardiff, Park Place, Cardiff at 11.00am.

Notes about the Geologists' Association-South Wales Group:

The Geologists' Association-South Wales Group/Cymdeithas y Daearegwyr-Grŵp De Cymru is celebrating its 50th anniversary on 23rd January. Members include professional and amateur geologists, students, and members of the general public who are all interested in geology. This includes the stuffy of volcanoes, earthquakes, fossils including dinosaurs, rocks and minerals.

During the winter months we hold talks in Swansea and Cardiff. During the summer months we go out and look at the rocks both in Wales and further afield. This year for instance the group has heard about the mineral and ore deposits of south-west England, in the summer months we looked at 450 million year old rocks in Carmarthenshire, and during October we visited open cast coal workings. You may have seen the group in action at the Woodland Fayre, Bute Park, Cardiff during the August Bank Holiday, where children enthusiastically hunted for fossils in a mound of waste coal shale.

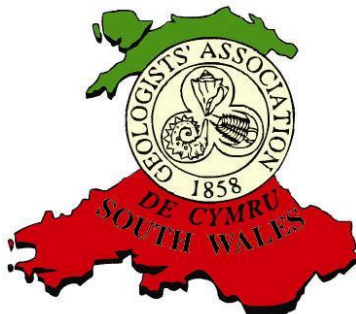
The group is a registered charity and open to all. Children are welcome with accompanying parents, If you want more information there are leaflets at the National Museum Wales in Cardiff, and our website is swga.org.uk

Press release contact (not to go in article) Nigel McGaw, President 01656 654439: Steve Howe, Field Secretary, 02920 573363

Geologists' Association South Wales Group. Reg. Char. No.1054303

GEOLOGISTS' ASSOCIATION - SOUTH WALES GROUP
CYMDEITHAS Y DAEAREGWYR - GRŴP DE CYMRU

Registered Charity Number 1054303



How Earth Made Us

Professor Iain Stewart

(University of Plymouth)

Saturday 23th January 2010

11.00 am

at the School of Earth and Ocean
Sciences,

Main Building, Park Place,
Cardiff University

Refreshments from 10.30

SWGA 50th anniversary lecture

ALL WELCOME

Contact 029 20891588 for more information

www.swga.org.uk

Geologists' Association–
Saturday 23rd January 2010

Roasted Butternut Squash, Sweet Chilli and Coriander Soup

Chicken Liver Parfait, Grape Chutney, Grilled Ciabatta Bread

LKB Prawn Cocktail, Granary Bread

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‘Gloucester Old Spot Pork’ Cumberland Sausage, Caramelized Onion Mash,  
Roasting Jus

Whole Grilled Plaice, Shrimp and Tomato Butter Sauce, New Potatoes

Sweet Pepper Tarte Tatin, Grilled Goat’s Cheese, Wild Rocket

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Crème Brulee

Caramelized Lemon Tart, Vanilla Mascarpone, Rosemary Syrup

Dark Chocolate Mousse, Amaretto Biscuits

Celebratory lunch menu

50th anniversary

Park Plaza Hotel, Greyfriars Road, Cardiff

2 courses	£13.50
2 courses + tea, coffee	£16.00
3 courses	£16.50
3 courses + tea, coffee	£19.00

GEOLOGISTS' ASSOCIATION, SOUTH WALES GROUP

50TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCH

TABLE SETTINGS

Table		
1	Nigel McGaw Prof Iain Stewart Alun Thomas Anne Thomas George Askey Jackie Askey	Lynda Garfield Dave Wellings Malcolm Shaw Jan Shaw Geraint Owen – not eating Wendy Owen – not eating
2	Prof Mike Bassett Dr John Davies Sue Davies Lynfa Lewis Mike Lees Alan Thomas	Dr Lesley Cherns Stephen Howe Sue Howe Mel Watkins Menna Bassett Sian Bassett
3	Andy Kendall Rhiannon Cottrell Gwen Moore Dr Dyfed Elis-Gruffydd Sian Elis-Gruffydd Mike Gregory	Rhian Kendall Jim Chetcuti Heather Chetcuti Hazel Trenbirth Paul Johnson Paul Booth
4	Margaret Davies Philip Morgan Howard Bartlett Caroline Davies John Bevan	Barbara Willis Janet Hiscott Linda Scott Mike Scott Jackie Bevan
5	John Dobson Mrs Dobson Cindy Howells Dr John Nudds Mr W.V. Croad	Eric Broadbent Anna Broadbent Mary Salter Mike Lewis Mari Lewis

56 in total, 54 eating

23 January 2010

Park Plaza Hotel, Cardiff

Geologists' Association - South Wales Group *Cymdeithas y Daearegwyr - Grŵp De Cymru*

Registered Charity Number 1054303



50th anniversary meeting 23 January 2010

The fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the Geologists' Association - South Wales Group / Cymdeithas y Daearegwyr – Grŵp De Cymru were held on 23 January 2010, 50 years to the day after the inaugural meeting on 23 January 1960.

The day started with tea, coffee and biscuits from 10.15am onwards, in the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, Cardiff University. The speaker, Professor Iain Stewart, arrived in very good time and set up his presentation, aided by Howard Bartlett from the department.

Members, guests and visitors moved to the Wallace Lecture Theatre, which started to fill up fast. By 11 am all the seats were full, people were sitting in the aisles and standing at the back, around 200 in total.



The Group's President, Nigel McGaw, welcomed everyone to this historic meeting, a BIG DAY for the Group, with a BIG SPEAKER.

Nigel explained how the Group, after a couple of preliminary meetings, held its inaugural meeting on 23 January 1960. He welcomed our honoured guests for the day, two people who had been involved in the actual starting up of the Group right at the beginning, Alun Thomas who had seconded Doug Bassett as the first/founder chairman, and George Askey the first secretary. He also referred to several long standing members who joined soon after the start.



George Askey, Nigel McGaw, Alun Thomas

At the inaugural meeting, Professor David Williams gave the first lecture, on mineral exploration. The first AGM was held in April 1960, and the first field meeting soon after along the Southerndown coast with around 80 people.

He said that there was not time to do justice to all the people involved and the events that had taken place over the years, but we are very grateful to our founding fathers, those who set the Group up, the BEDROCK of today's Group.

Over the years, membership has varied between 150 and 200, today it is around 180. In recent years, the Group has undertaken a wider range of activities, moving away from symposia and conferences towards more field visits, walks leaflets and field guides (eg *Walking the Rocks*), and more public events such as the Eisteddfod, Cardiff's *Out of the Woods* Festival, the GA reunion in Cardiff in 2004 and our own Geofest in 2008. The Group was rather more formal in the earlier days. There is a poster available with an outline of our first 50 years.

There is one person who has made an outstanding contribution over these 50 years. He's witnessed all of the 50 years, he was there right at the beginning, he's been a long standing member of the committee (33 years), secretary (23 years), Chairman (1990-1992), Vice Chairman (1988-1990), he's contributed in many more ways with lectures, field trips, publications, and is an Honorary Member (1990). The Group was delighted to make a SPECIAL 50 YEAR AWARD in recognition of this contribution, to our guest Alun Thomas. This will be presented at the forthcoming AGM in March.

The Group was also delighted to present Honorary Membership to Dr Geraint Owen in recognition of the long and distinguished service he has made to the Group over the years. The committee has benefited greatly from his knowledge and researches, and we hope this will continue in the future. Geraint is the 6th Honorary Member. The first Honorary Member was also an Owen, followed by other distinguished members. The President then presented a mounted scroll to Geraint:

“The Committee and members of the Geologists' Association South Wales Group have great pleasure in awarding Honorary Life Membership of the Group to:

Geraint Owen

In recognition of his outstanding support for and contributions to the Group in his capacity of Committee Member since 1988, Hon Field Secretary (1989-1990), Secretary (1990-2009), co author of *Walking the Rocks* and Walks Leaflets and in recognition to his many contributions to the interpretation and understanding of geology and the public understanding of science.”

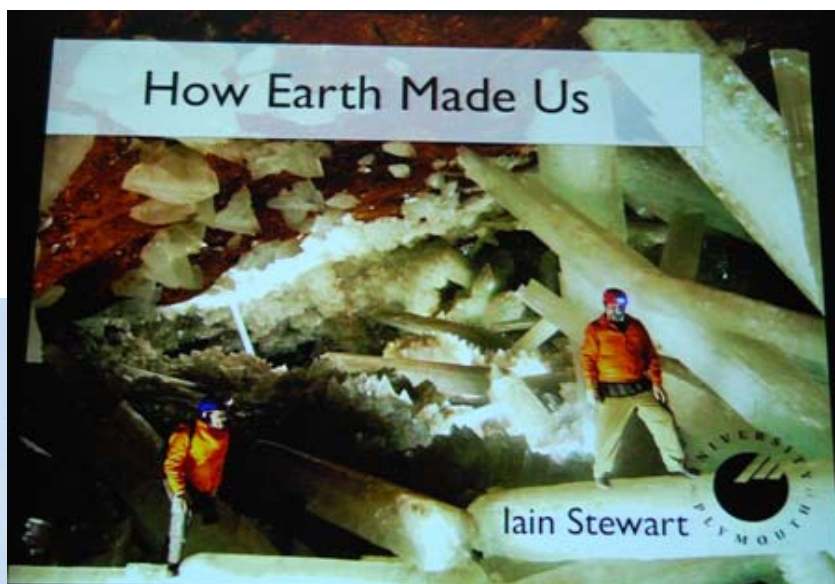


Geraint thanked the Group warmly, it was a tremendous honour, joining Alun [Thomas] and Mike [Bassett]. He felt really honoured and flattered, feeling his main success had been to devolve his responsibilities!!

The President introduced the guest speaker, Iain Stewart, on *How Earth Made Us*. He said that we are very grateful to Iain for coming along to help celebrate the day's occasion. 1964 was an auspicious date. In this year Iain was born, and Nigel graduated; since then Nigel's geological career has gone into terminal decline whereas Iain's has gone from strength to strength, and is still in its ascendancy. Iain graduated from the University of Strathclyde in 1986, then took his PhD at Bristol University in 1990, with research into earthquakes in Greece and Turkey. He taught at Brunel University for 12 years, 2 years at Glasgow University, and then in 2004 he moved to the University of Plymouth, since when he has also continued geoscience education as a TV presenter.

Iain has been bringing geology to people, through television, over the last 8 years (a list of the programmes was given). His own research is into geological hazards, and their effects on people and on history. His latest television series *How Earth Made Us* started the previous Tuesday. Iain was presented with the Geologists' Association Halstead Medal last year, for "work of outstanding merit to further the objects of the association and to promote geology".

Then followed a most interesting, informative, stunningly illustrated, entertaining and thought provoking presentation.



Iain Stewart started by admitting to a privileged position with minor celebratory status; he does now get asked to be involved with "events".

He wanted to talk to us about his new series, but to use this as a vehicle to think about broader issues. Firstly, there are problems with putting mainstream geology across to programme makers and people; we need to appreciate from the media side what they want from us – what is their agenda? Secondly, there are changes, issues, even "what is geology?"

The geoscience programme began with Earth Story a few years ago. In comparison with biology and other sciences, geology is relatively new [on television]. Our key point is that we have the planet, it's fantastic, and we can constantly surprise people about what it holds. There is a lack of knowledge about it even in people of high standing.

The "Earth System" – this is the interconnection between its various parts, including the lithosphere, atmosphere etc (all the different "spheres"), and if we alter one, then we affect the rest. Many geological departments now have staff who may not particularly hammer rocks, but who make a terrific contribution [to the study of the Earth]. In this big "Earth System", humans are there, as a part, a small part.

People in the street see themselves as central, with the planet supporting them. In reality it's the other way round; "interconnectivity".

Climate Change – this can be rapid. In his geological degree [ie 1980s] he was taught that there had been four glaciations. Now we recognise at least 20, with several smaller ones, and it's all very erratic. We now realise just how fast the climate can change. We do now have the detail for the climate over four times longer (c600,000 years) than humans have been on the earth (c150,000 years). But there is an issue in getting these details about climate change across to the public.

Ice cores of mid Greenland demonstrate temperature changes over time, including one occurrence when the climate warmed up very very fast. Why? We don't know, but it does happen.

Over the last 10,000 years human civilisation has been evident. This brings in "geodeterminism" - how humans have coped with climate change over this period of time, particularly abrupt changes.

Lots of graphs have been drawn over the last ten years, based on numerous different parameters, all show a variable climate, constantly changing, some changes have been rapid (over a period of 100 years or so). What happens when we include humans in this study? [we were shown one slide with many of these graphs on it, superimposed on each other] This slide shows an overall complexity of graphs, but it is very important.

This leads on to *How Earth Made Us*. The themes are Water, Air, Fire, Earth (ie deep earth, to 1km!). He sees the presenter needing to be "the viewer doing stuff" and therefore undergoing the experiences, eg Fire, the presenter walking through it!

Starting the programme with the stupendous Crystal Cave in Mexico, the aim was to hit people between the eyes, to make them realise how spectacular the earth is. Following this, there was an introduction [DEEP EARTH] to plate boundaries and how early civilisations started and/or developed along them. For example Bam, in Iran, a World Heritage site. This city is in the middle of nowhere, in the desert. An earthquake devastated it in 2003 [with photographs of before and after]. The city is right on top of a fault. The city originally developed where an aquifer comes out at the surface, this being a consequence of the fault. There are many many faults like this in Iran and Afghanistan, and many many people.

Examination of the Anatolia Fault shows a 20km stretch awaiting a fault, just south of Istanbul. The forecasts are for a 30% chance of a major earthquake in 30 years. Hagia Sofia, once a church, since a mosque and now a museum, has experienced and survived

several earthquakes over the centuries and will most probably survive the expected major earthquake when it comes. But other buildings in Istanbul are not designed to survive at all.

So, the geoscience has been done, we know where the plate boundaries and faults are. What do we do with this knowledge?

Moving onto WATER, there is much water around, but not much access to it. Humans essentially depend on the water that flows in rivers; there is ten times much water in rivers than we need. The problem is its distribution. Solutions are not always successful.

For example, in India, the British built canals, which have turned out to be a disaster as they have turned into stagnant stands of water breeding mosquitoes and spreading malaria. In contrast, the Khmer Empire, in a land of monsoonal rainfall, built canals, tunnels and had very good plumbing systems to control the supply of water. But in turn this led to a swelling of the population, which eventually imploded – their control of the water supply was too successful.

FIRE; humans were the first species to deliberately use fire, and in so doing changed the landscape. The sixteenth century saw the first energy crisis across much of the world, it was particularly acute in the UK, and so in the UK we turned to coal and the industrial revolution ensued. Then, in the late eighteenth century, we started exploiting oil and gas.

One issue is that we explore for oil etc, and for minerals, because society wants these. Perhaps we need to really look at what society wants. We were shown the town of Oily Rocks which lies 50 km out in the Caspian Sea on piers which have just grown and grown. The tar sands in Canada were also illustrated.

AIR and atmospheric circulation; we need to understand these. It is organised at the macro scale, for example the trade wind belt which was utilised by Columbus in sailing across to the Americas, returning further north along the belt of easterly winds. Polynesia is an interesting case; it had been thought that it must have been colonised from the Americas because of the prevailing westerly winds. But linguistic studies point to colonisation from the west, bit by bit, but how was this achieved against the prevailing winds? Now, it is realised that there are pulses of movement in the winds equivalent to the pulses of El Nino events. During El Nino events, the westerly winds slow or even reverse. The island people recognised this and they recognised that they could occasionally go eastwards knowing that in a few months the winds would change and they could return!

In addition to the El Nino event, the La Nina event is also important. For example the Anastazi people in north America collapsed very abruptly around 1280, when drought affected them, even though there had been periods when it had been very wet.

Around 1867-9 there was a “go west” phase in north America, to lands that were green and wet. Ten years later they were dry! The Colorado River has had very variable flow rates. One was very pronouncedly low around 1250 and the consequence seems to have been the drought which eventually led to the collapse of the Anastazi settlements. The Lake Mead Reservoir was developed after river flow measurements [of the Colorado River] in the early 1900s; these later turned out to be the highest for 1200 years! The Hoover Dam was built. But then, the flow decreased, a lot. Now, will Las Vegas be able to survive, will the Hoover dam survive, in the future?

A warmer climate should enhance El Nino, which would possibly lead to drier condition in western [north] America. We need to be mindful of the potential of these changes.

Geologists do have to think and imagine differently from other people.

LIMITS (programme 5): this focuses on the realisation that we, humans, are a force to be reckoned with. For example, a major mud flow in Indonesia which has resulted from an exploratory borehole in the area.

There is a postulation that the present interglacial is different from any other. 5-7,000 years ago both methane and carbon dioxide began to rise; in previous interglacials they had started to decrease at this stage. So it must be us. 5-7,000 years ago was the beginning of mass deforestation and agriculture. In the late 20th century, methane and carbon dioxide have increased even more. We are at a really important point.

Geology is a very interesting place, a very sensitive place. To drive society, geologists go and find things, an awful lot of our resources comes from the earth. Geologists understand the planet best, we should be looking after it.

There are difficult and opposing issues. Will economic profit or a greater understanding of the planet be the basic value in taking the human community into the future? Society needs to tell us.

In Svalbard, there is a multi million pound world seed bank project, under the earth and well protected, already in operation, supported from around the world. So some people are already worried and are taking action.

In energy, water, hazards, climate change, geoscientists have a central role to play. The knowledge we have, we can do a lot more with. We were challenged to be more positive and forthcoming about the evidence of geoscience.

The President allowed questions (starting off using his prerogative as President), during which even more revelations and thought provoking comments emerged.

Amongst these (there were more):

- The perception that carbon dioxide leads to heating is not so, it's orbital forcing that leads to in changes in temperature, with rises in carbon dioxide levels following about 800 years or so later. At least this can be shown for 20,000 through to 200 years ago, with melting ice amplifying this. Warmer water in the oceans can't hold carbon dioxide, which is released, so the carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere rises. But in the latter part of the twentieth century the output of carbon dioxide has increased and this in turn has driven a rise in temperature
- Reduce growth in those countries with the highest population and carbon dioxide footprint. Notably the USA! which has one of the highest such growths and footprints in the world.
- Why do people rebuild in exactly the same places after an earthquake, as they did before – for example in Bam?
- We must have a wider range of energy supplies. There is new low carbon technology. Society must adapt.
- Perhaps it is David Attenborough whom Iain would most like to sit next to on an aeroplane flight, David having given warnings that the population of the earth would be

around 12 billion if we all live as Kalahari Bushmen, but substantially less if we all live as we do in the western world.

- The proponent of the Gaia Earth hypothesis, James Lovelock, has suggested that the population of the earth could rise to nearly 20 billion but then fall to 1 billion by 2100.
- Are we pessimists or optimists?
- Educate women. Women then want fewer children, and want children later on in their lives.
- If we don't do these things, what then?

The President thanked the speaker at length, followed by Alun Thomas who gave a short account of a Welshman, an Englishman and a Scotsman. In brief, it was a Welshman (Professor David Williams) who gave the first lecture on January 23 1960, it was an Englishman (Professor John Knill) who gave the lecture on the occasion of the Group's 25th anniversary celebrations (at the 50th AGM in 1984) and undoubtedly, with Iain's accent, a Scotsman speaking at the Group's 50th celebrations on 23 January 2010.

The speaker was thanked again, with much applause.



Members attending the celebratory lunch made their way to the Laguna Restaurant at the Park Plaza Hotel on Greyfriars Road, all arriving not too late after the 1pm planned start.

There were 56 partaking, joined by two members of the late founder Chairman Doug Bassett's family, Menna and Sian.



Sian (on left) and Menna, with Sue Howe, Mike Bassett, Mer Watkins and Nigel McGaw

Eventually everyone sat down, and were served an excellent lunch, with both red and white wine.



After plenty of photos, taken by several members, it was time for the toast. The President, standing by the French doors into the restaurant's garden, pointed out that the building was once the office of the Glamorgan County Council, where he started work in 1964, his desk being right by where he was standing! The President delivered another speech, welcoming Menna and Sian in memory of the founding Chairman Doug Bassett, who had sadly died just two months previously. He presented Iain Stewart with a bottle of wine as a token of appreciation of his memorable talk, and presented Programme Secretary Steve Howe with a bottle of wine as a token of appreciation for all the work he had done in arranging such a successful and enjoyable day.



*Steve Howe,
Programme
Secretary*



*Secretary Lynda Garfield,
President Nigel McGaw,
Vice-President Malcolm Shaw*



Members, guests and friends then raised their glasses to toast the next fifty years of the Group.

Geologists' Association - South Wales Group

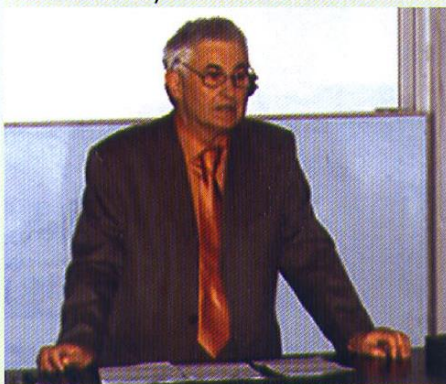
Cymdeithas y Daearegwyr - Grŵp De Cymru

50th Anniversary Meeting - 23 January 2010



The fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the Geologists' Association - South Wales Group / Cymdeithas y Daearegwyr - Grŵp De Cymru were held on 23 January 2010, 50 years to the day after the inaugural meeting on 23 January 1960.

The first part of the celebrations took place in the Wallace Lecture Theatre, Cardiff University. Following refreshments, around 200 members, guests and visitors filled the lecture room to overflowing, whereupon the Group's President, Nigel McGaw, welcomed everyone to this historic meet-



President, Nigel McGaw

ing, a BIG DAY for the Group, with a BIG SPEAKER.

Nigel explained how the Group, after a couple of preliminary meetings, held its inaugural meeting on 23 January 1960. He welcomed our honoured guests for the day, two people who had been involved in the actual starting up of the Group right at the beginning, Alun Thomas who had seconded Doug Bassett as the first/founder chairman, and George Askey the first secretary.

At the inaugural meeting, Professor David Williams of Imperial College, President of the Geologists' Association (1958-1960) gave the first lecture, on mineral exploration. The first AGM was held in April 1960, and the first field meeting soon after along the Southerndown coast with around 80 people.

Nigel said that there was not time to do justice to all the people involved and the events that had taken place over the years, but we are very grateful to our founding fathers, those who set the Group up, the BEDROCK of today's Group.

Over the years, membership has varied between 150 and 200. Today it is around 180. In recent years, the Group has undertaken a wider range of activities, moving away from symposia and conferences towards more field visits, interpretive leaflets and field guides (eg Walking the Rocks), and more public events such as the National Eisteddfod, Cardiff's Out of the Woods Festival, the GA reunion (held in Cardiff in 2004) and our own Geofest in 2008. A poster has been produced with a summary of our first 50 years activities.

One person has made an outstanding contribution over these 50 years, has witnessed all of the 50 years, was there right at the beginning, has been a long-standing member of the committee (33 years), including as secretary for (23 years), Chairman from (1990 to 1992), and Vice Chairman (from 1988 to 1990), has contributed in many more ways with lectures, field trips, and publications, and has been an Honorary Member (since 1990). The Group was delighted to make a SPECIAL 50-YEAR AWARD in recognition of this contribution, to our guest Mr. Alun J. Thomas. This will be presented at the forthcoming AGM in March.

The Group was also delighted to present Honorary Membership to Dr Geraint Owen in recognition of his long and distinguished service to the Group over the years. The committee has benefited greatly from his knowledge and researches, and we hope this will continue in the future. Geraint is the Group's 6th Honorary Member. The President presented a mounted scroll to Geraint:

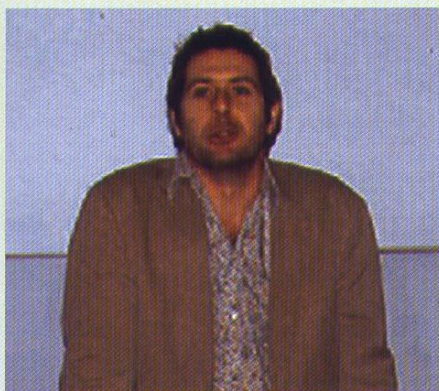
"The Committee and members of the Geologists' Association South Wales Group have great pleasure in award-



Dr. Geraint Owen receiving his award

ing Honorary Life Membership of the Group to: **Geraint Owen** - in recognition of his outstanding support for and contributions to the Group in his capacity of Committee Member since 1988, Hon Field Secretary (1989-1990), Secretary (1990-2009), co-author of Walking the Rocks and Walks Leaflets and in recognition of his many contributions to the interpretation and understanding of geology and the public understanding of science."

Geraint thanked the Group warmly. He said it was a tremendous honour, to joining the Group's other Honorary Members, Alun [Thomas] and Mike



Professor Iain Stewart

[Bassett]. He felt really honoured and flattered, feeling his main success had been to devolve his responsibilities!!

The President introduced the guest speaker, Professor Iain Stewart, to talk on 'How Earth Made Us'. The Group was very grateful to Iain for coming along to help celebrate the day's occasion. Iain has been bringing geology to people, through television, over the last eight years. His own research is into geological hazards, and their effects on people and on history. His latest television series How Earth Made Us started the previous Tuesday. Iain was presented with the Geologists' Association Halstead Medal last year, for "work of outstanding merit to further the objects of the association and to promote geology".

There followed a most interesting, informative, stunningly illustrated, entertaining and thought-provoking presentation.

Iain wanted to talk to us about his new series, and to use this as a vehicle to think about broader issues. Firstly, there are problems with putting mainstream geology across to programme makers and people; we need to appreciate what the media want from us and what their agenda is? Secondly, there are changes, issues, even "what is geology?"

Geoscience programmes began with Earth Story a few years ago. In comparison with biology and other sciences, geology is relatively new on television. Our key point is that geology describes our planet, which is fantastic, and we can constantly surprise people about what it holds.

Iain gave more about the reasons and the background for the series. He presented us with several challenges. Geologists are the people who understand the planet best, and should therefore be looking after it. We can do a lot more with the knowledge we have. We were challenged to be more positive and forthcoming about the evidence of geoscience. In energy, water, hazards, and climate change, geoscientists have a central role to play.

Climate change featured prominently, as to be expected. A new point was the postulation that the present interglacial is different from any other. 5-7,000 years ago both



Alun Thomas

methane and carbon dioxide began to rise; in previous interglacials they had started to decrease at this stage. 5-7,000 years ago was the beginning of mass deforestation and agriculture. In the late 20th century, methane and carbon dioxide have increased even more. We are at a really important point in time.



Members celebrating 50 years of the South Wales Group

Once the applause died down after Iain's talk, questions brought out even more interesting points, including the need to reduce growth in those countries with the highest population and carbon footprint - notably the USA! which has one of the highest such growths and footprints in the

Geologists' Association) who gave the lecture on the occasion of the Group's 25th anniversary celebrations and undoubtedly, with Iain's accent, a Scotsman speaking at the Group's 50th celebrations on 23 January 2010.

The speaker was thanked again, with much applause.

56 members went on to the second part of the day's celebrations, lunch at the Park Plaza Hotel. We were joined by two members of the late founder Chairman Doug Bassett's family, Menna and Sian. We were served an excellent lunch with wine.

After plenty of photos, it was time for the toast. The President welcomed Menna and Sian in memory of the founding Chairman Doug Bassett, who had sadly died just two months previously. He presented Iain Stewart with a bottle of wine as a token of appreciation of his memorable talk, and presented Programme Secretary Steve Howe with a bottle of wine as a token of appreciation for all the work he had done in arranging such a successful and enjoyable day.

Members, guests and friends then



Steve Howe, Programme Secretary

world. Why do people rebuild in exactly the same places after an earthquake, as they did before - for example Bam in Iran, a World Heritage site? The education of women is really important; educate women, women then want fewer children, later on in their lives.

The President thanked the speaker at length, followed by Alun Thomas who gave a short account of a Welshman, an Englishman and a Scotsman. In brief, it was a Welshman (Professor David Williams) who gave the first lecture on January 23 1960, it was an Englishman (Professor John Knill, also then President of the



Toasting the next fifty years of the Group

raised their glasses to toast the next fifty years of the Group.

L Garfield

A celebration of 50 years, January 1960-2010

- 1 This is only a brief look over the last 50 years, all I can do in the time available.

I'm concentrating where I can on photos, on people. If anyone thinks I've got anything wrong, or can identify people, or add a comment, please feel free to do so. Apologies if I leave something out.

Recommend anyone wanting more, to read Alun Thomas' account of 1992 (see table) – a masterly account of our first 30+ years.

This includes the start, briefly summarised here. Note over 100 people at the first meeting, to listen to Professor David Williams of Imperial College London, then the President 1958-1960 of the parent Geologists' Association.

I did meet him myself, a few years later, he was a Consultant to the firm I worked for, Rio Tinto Zinc, his expertise was the Pyrite Belt of Spain (published at least the early 1930s), and an article he wrote on Sedimentary Ore Deposits is highlighted on the table. He became the President of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy (IMM) 1960-61 and later, an Hon Fellow of the IMM. He was described as that "Great Student of Ore Deposits".

And note the first field visit, 80 people there!

- 2 Here is our Founder Chairman, Doug Bassett, who sadly died in November. I've only given a very short list of his achievements –see Alun Thomas' account and the Independent obituary on the table, for much more.
- 3 Here you are, our numbers in the first year, and the subscription rates.
66 joined at the first meeting, 150 by two months later. Cost 25p per year. The sub has raised slowly over the years, don't forget it's not risen for the last 8 years! The best value for what we get, anywhere.
- 4 This is the first dated, placed photo we have. TR Owen and Doug Bassett identifiable, anyone else? Ladies (well, those of a certain age, note the field gear, including the stockings, skirts, and seams!) Incidentally, the format of the Group's activities, a winter season of roughly monthly indoor meetings, mainly talks, with a summer season of outdoor activities, mainly walks, was established right at the beginning and has continued (with a few variations) since.
- 5 Here's a photo that could just have been taken on our first field excursion, anyone help??
- 6 And another field excursion, Aberaeron see table
- 7 I have tried to divide the slides up equally per decade, not totally possible, but here we have moved on to the 70s.
- 8 Hm, a bit short on the 70s. We think this is 1980. It's come to us as "Carb Lst, Swansea". Both Tom Sharpe and I think it could well be the field visit in 1980, led by TR Owen. Any help, place, date? It does raise a few points. One – the number of youngsters.
My first field visit with the Group was the excursion led by TR Owen (the only time I ever met him) in 1980, up the Swansea and Neath valleys, and I was immediately struck by the number of youngsters, with teachers taking their sixth form pupils. Compared with many of the previous field trips I had been on with other groups around the country (which shall be nameless) this one was like a breath of fresh air. What a marvellous society, thought I!! The number of young people! Indeed, in looking at the Archives, which Alun Thomas has recently passed on to me, and which I am slowly working my way through, I am particularly struck by the number of teachers who feature in the early years. What has happened since?

Second point – how we got to field trips. In the early days, an example of which is on the table, buses were laid on to pick up members at strategic points en route. The cost led this to transport mainly by cars, with car sharing encouraged. On this particular visit, a mini bus was laid on from Swansea University, to take us around.

- 9 1984 – we've reached the 25th anniversary, then celebrated in the 25th session, actually 1983-4 (confusing is it not?). Talk (GA President again), Honorary Membership instituted (T R Owen) and lunch with toasts to the Group, and a PGA part totally dedicated to the Group **Papers to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the South Wales Group.**
- 10 1984 again – hope people have identified themselves!
- 11 And 1985, thanks to Jim Chetcuti. Flat Holm. Jim and Heather have very kindly written a very interesting account of their memories of their time as members, since the 1970s, Hope you've read this – on the table.
Incidentally, Jim and Heather have realised that they were married in November 1959, just as this Group was setting itself up. So, they too have just celebrated 50 years together, and they have also both celebrated their 75th birthdays.
- 12 Another photo and a few recognisable characters. Brian Williams has been a very enthusiastic and supportive member over the years, he's addressed and led the Group on several occasions, and is taking us on another field excursion in April this year to Pembrokeshire. Please do come along.
- 13 Just to remind ourselves – the Group did hold quite a few symposia over the first 30 years. In the 1980s, there were at least 4 which were day long sessions, with write ups in the PGA under Mike Bassett's editorship.
- 14 And now the 1990s. The Charles Darwin ship, and NERC, closed its Barry Docks centre, soon after.. Quite a few people remember this visit. It was followed by a circuit of Barry Island, with Alun Thomas.

c1991 – first TR Owen memorial lecture – Frank Rhodes, who went on from a Professor at Swansea to Cornell University in USA, now an Emeritus President, who was the first vice president of the Group in 1960. He spoke at the lecture about Dicky Owen, and then about Darwin the geologist.
- 15 Over the years, we've held quite a few meetings with other groups in the area. This one is the OUGS.
- 16 Pwll y wrach – this actually helped celebrate the launch of a leaflet about the Pwll y Wrach site. And there was, over part of the site, a path which wheel chairs could access, opened shortly before, by Tanni Grey, now Tanni Grey Thompson.
Not too long after, the bridge was washed away by a extensive flood. It was rebuilt, I don't know it's state today. Duncan Hawley pointing out the Psammosteus Limestone.
John Cope, who's addressed and led the Group on numerous occasions.
- 17 Over many years, the Group has been represented at the GA annual Reunion in London by willing volunteers. For many years Lynfa Lewis and Mike Lees lugged a whole heavy pile of books, posters and a display up to and across London. This has been continued, particularly with Steve Howe, here in 2009. 1996 – can just see an excellent display by Mike Lees, showing a cross section of the geology across the South Wales coalfield.

- 18 I think the 1990s was the decade in which we increased our contact with the public, taking geology out to public venues, shows etc. Early in the decade there was Welsh Geology Week, with several members giving talks and leading field visits. It was the only time I got my son interested – Geology and Beer with Chris Lee, including a visit to a Brewery. I'll say no more.

Here was the 1998 Eisteddfod, a 9 day effort, with the emphasis on the Welsh language, a massive fundraising and volunteering effort by the Group. A small tent, but we had all these others inside with us. Quite cramped, but we did greet many visitors and answer lots of questions. I've included a photo of Gareth Davies (ignore me) who sadly died in November a few days before Doug Bassett. Gareth, a Welsh speaker, master minded the Group's effort to get us to the Eisteddfod.

- 19 We went to the Eisteddfod in 2000 at Llanelli, also several years at Kenfig Nature Reserve open day in the summer, Aberafan's beach festival, and then this. The parent GA decided to take its annual reunion out to the regions, and we volunteered to host one of the early regional events. Again, it was another massive effort for the Group, held in the National Museum. This shows only a small part, the whole hall behind was occupied by groups from around the country who normally go to London, this time they came to Wales. And it was not just the displays, we opened up the event to the public and led several field visits on the Sunday, held Rockwatch events, and more.
- 20 Publications, not all here – see the display on the table.
- 21 Three of our illustrious members deservedly winning a prize for Walking the Rocks.
- 22 RIGS. These were first around in the early-mid 1990s. A bit slow to get our minds around. But around 2000, Steve Howe took is on a series of Geoconservation field visits, eventually visiting every geological outcrop recorded within the Cardiff County boundary, with a report to the council recommending around 30 RIGS sites. The Group is now a major player in the South Wales RIGS project, with our own Rhian Hicks now the RIGS officer with the BGS.
- 23 Occasionally , we have been involved with site clearance, assisting others. I can remember Llanvirn outcrop near Llandeilo, Hawarden Nature Reserve (climbing over fences to get there and one member alas falling in the pond) and this. Possibly others.
- 24 This is a wonderful event. The Cardiff County Council's "Out of the Woods" Festival in Bute Park. The enthusiasm and determination of these youngsters to find themselves a fossil is delightful. Do come along – the next one is on August xxx?? This year. Bring along your youngsters (and older ones are allowed)
- 25 A few odds, just to remind ourselves that we're out in all weathers, some of us occasionally get stuck in the mud, Penarth festival where in a small room we greeted lots of visitors, and were given a lovely cake we needed almost a hammer to cut into! And others who ask lots of questions....
- 26 THE END. I can supply copies A4 size, put your name on the list on the table, price £1 to cover the cost of the ink.

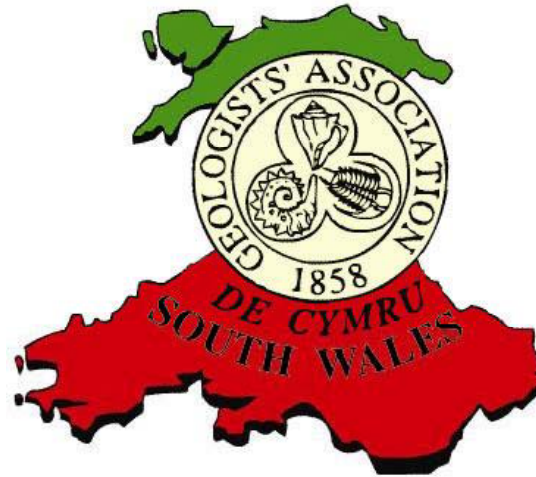
Just to say – many thanks to all those, especially Alun Thomas, who have supplied photos and answered questions for me.

Alun Thomas, what can I say. I've been looking into who was around at the beginning, 50 years ago, and of all that I have seen, Alun is the only member I can find who has been a continuous member for all that time (are some we know at the first talk, but not a member for 50 years). In January 1960, he seconded the proposal of Doug Bassett as the Founder Chairman, he was secretary 1966-1989 (23 years), Vice Chairman 1988-1990, Chairman 1990-92, a committee member 1964–1997, Honorary Member in 1990 and a fund of knowledge about the Group. Thanks, Alun. And thanks to all members, past and present.

As given at Holiday Geology January 2010 by the Secretary Lynda Garfield

See separate file for the slides shown

A celebration of 50 years, January 1960-2010



Key dates:

November 1959 **Preliminary meetings** in Swansea, Cardiff

December 4th 1959 **Preliminary committee meeting**

January 23rd 1960 **Inaugural meeting**, Department of Geology Cardiff (Newport Road),
1st committee (to April 1960), over 100 people attended.

Address by Professor DA Williams; **Prospecting for Minerals**

April 5th (Tues 7pm) University College Swansea, the **First AGM**, end of First Session.

April 9th (Saturday) First Field Excursion, about 80 members, along the **Ogmore-Southerndown Coast** - round Trwyn y Witch precisely at spring low tide – led by the First Field Excursion Secretary Trevor M. Thomas.



Douglas A. Bassett (1927– 2009)

Founder Chairman 1960-62

Editor 1965-1974

Honorary Member 1986

1st Session 1959-60:

Subscriptions received at the first Meeting in Cardiff on
23 January 1960

37 members at 5/-	£9 5s 0d
25 members at 2/- (Student)	£2 10s 0d
4 members at 2/- (Members of Parent Assoc.)	8s 0d

Membership end of 1st Session:

74 Members at 5/-
64 Members at 2/- (Student)
12 Members at 2/- (Members of Parent Assoc.)
Total 150



September 23-24 1961

Field Meeting, Saturday-
Sunday Weekend Meeting
to
The St Davids District

photo at **Newgale**

Leaders:

T.R.Owen (University
College of Swansea),
and

D.B. Norris
(Dynevor Grammar
School, Swansea).

Photo Alun Thomas



Archive photo – place? **Southerndown** date? people?

Could be April 1960, April 1965????



2-3 October 1965, Field Meeting, Saturday-Sunday Weekend Meeting, overnight stay at Cardigan town.

North Pembrokeshire and South Cardiganshire photo at **Aberaeron**
Leaders: Drs **Gilbert Kelling** and **Wallace Bloxam** (University College of Swansea).

Photo
Alun
Thomas



Photo
Alun
Thomas

18-20 October 1974, Field Meeting (at St. David's), Friday-Saturday Weekend Meeting
Structural and Sedimentological Techniques in Field Geology, Pembs; photo at **Porthclais**
Leaders: Drs **Paul L. Hancock** and **Brian P.J. Williams** (both University of Bristol)



Thought to be 5 July 1980, Field Meeting, Saturday
Geology of the Swansea and Neath valleys
Leader: Professor T. Richard Owen (University College of Swansea).

Photo
Alun Thomas

25th Anniversary 1984

The **25th anniversary** was celebrated during the 25th Session of the Group, 1983-4.

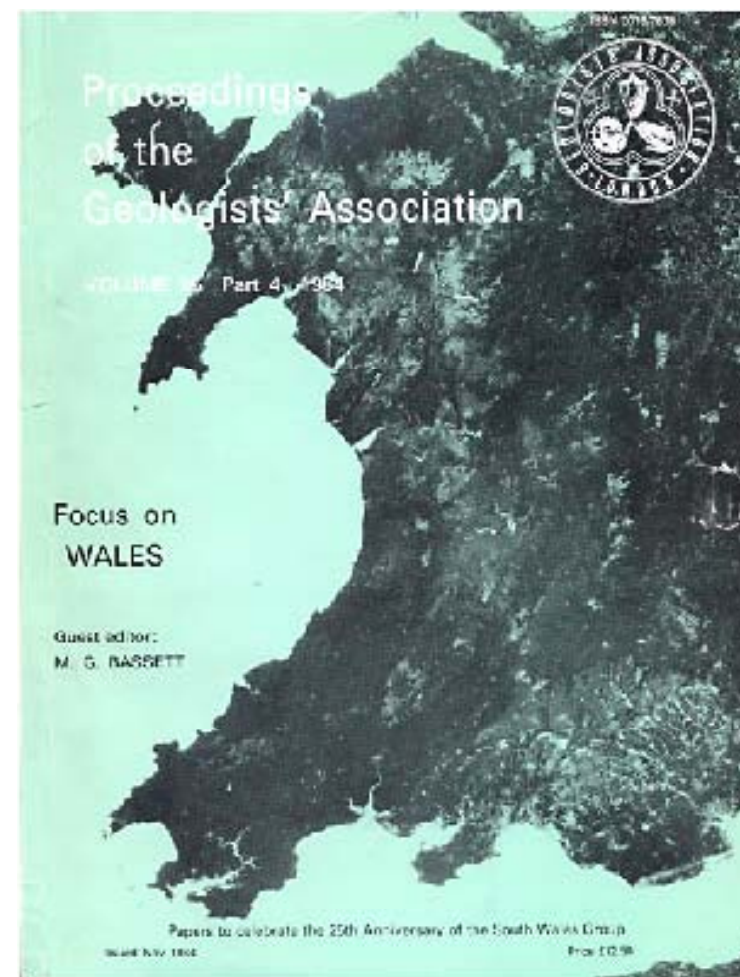
On 15 October 1983, *The Geologists' Association 125th Anniversary Lecture* **The Role of the Geologist in the Construction Industry** was given to the Group in Cardiff by Professor John L. Knill (Imperial College University of London and President The Geologists' Association).

On the occasion of the *Twenty Fifth Annual General Meeting* on 10 March 1984, it was celebrated by instituting the category of **Honorary Member** and installing as its first Honorary Member, *for services to the Group*, **Professor Thomas Richard 'Dick' Owen**, the Presentation being made by **Dr Douglas Bassett** (Founder Chairman).

A presentation was also made to Roland Parsons (Honorary Treasurer), *For 25 years continuous service* by Alun J. Thomas (Honorary Secretary).

Following the retiring chairman's address, **The Llangynog Inlier: New discoveries in the Carmarthen Area** by Dr John C.W. Cope (University College of Swansea), lunch (at the National Museum) was taken for all Past Chairmen and Committee Members. The toast **The Group** was given by Dr Douglas A. Bassett (Founder Chairman), with the response by Alan G. Thomas (incoming Chairman for 1984-86).

[Two years later in 1986 at the 27th AGM on 8 March **Dr Douglas Bassett** was similarly to accept the second Honorary Membership presented to him by **Alan G. Thomas** (13th Chairman).]



Another highlight was the publication by the Geologists' Association as **Papers to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the South Wales Group** Bassett, M.G. (ed.), 1984, **Focus on WALES**, *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, Vol. **95**, pt.4, pp.289-398. These were based on papers read at 3 of the Group's symposia [11.12.1982, 03.12.1983, 14.01.1984].



Photo
Alun
Thomas

18-20 May 1984, Field Meeting, Weekend Meeting
North Pembrokeshire; photo off St David's on way to **Ramsey Island**
Leaders: Drs **Richard E. Bevins** and **Richard M. Owens** (both National Museum of Wales)



1985, Field Meeting
Flat Holm

Photo
Jim
Chetcuti



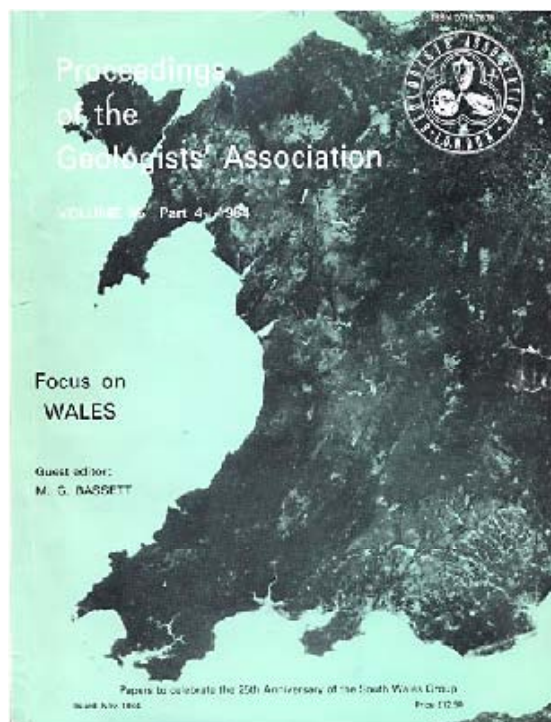
27 October 1985, Field Meeting, Sunday, with West of England GA

photo at **Clevedon**

Upper Palaeozoic and Mesozoic Structure and Sedimentology of the Clevedon and Portishead Coast

Leaders: Drs **Brian P.J. Williams** and **Paul L. Hancock** (both University of Bristol)

Photo Alun
Thomas



SYMPOSIA

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1960 The geology of the Arctic and Antarctic Regions, | |
| 1961 Soils | 1962 South Wales Carboniferous |
| 1967 Economic geology | 1968 Wrens Nest Dudley |
| 1968 Palaeontology | 1969 The Irish Sea |
| 1973 Bristol Channel | 1974 Mineral Resources and the "Energy Gap" |
| 1976 Educational use of sites of geological interest | |
| 1978 Aspects of Welsh palaeontology | |

Then 4, between 1982 and 1986, each lasting a day, involving between 6 and 16 speakers

December 1982 **The geological evolution of Wales** } All three published by the Geologists' Association as **Focus on WALES**

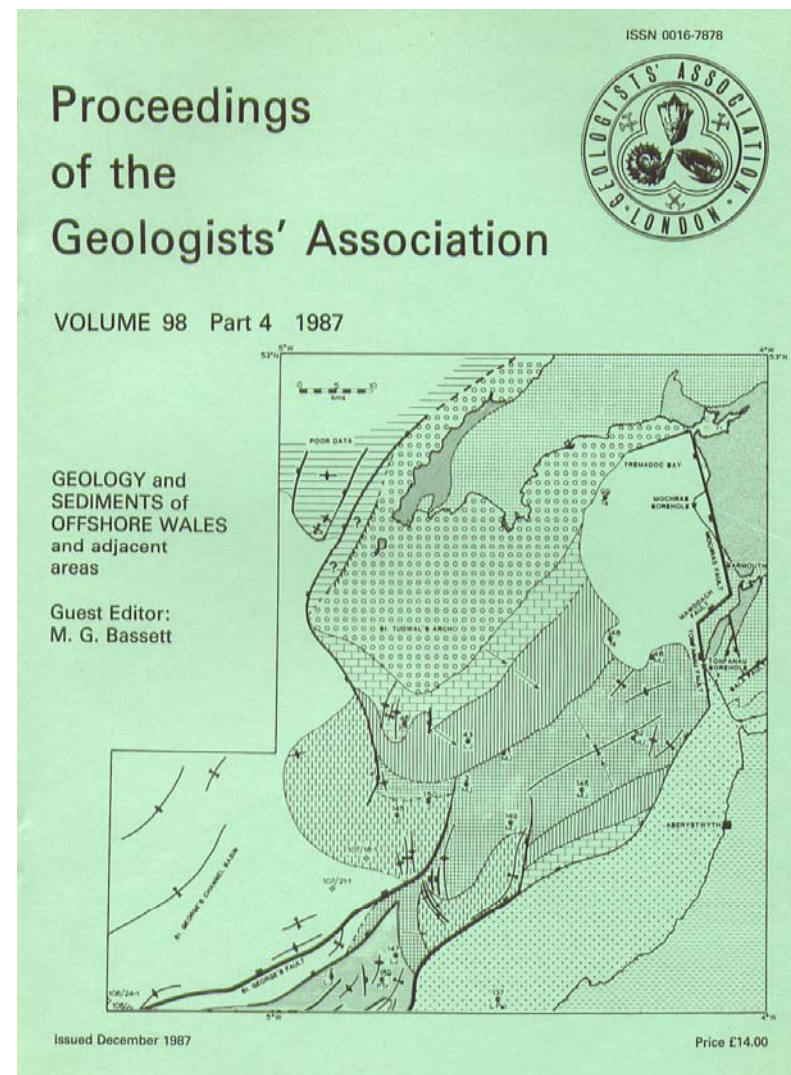
December 1983 **Lower Palaeozoic Wales** } in *Proc. Geol. Ass.* 95, 1984, comprising the entire Part 4 of that volume.

January 1984 **Upper Palaeozoic Wales** }

February 1986 **Geology and sediments of Offshore Wales and adjacent areas** } Published by the Geologists' Association as **GEOLOGY and SEDIMENTS of OFFSHORE WALES and adjacent areas** in *Proc. Geol. Ass.*, 98, 1987 part4 in its entirety

1989 **Palaeontology of Welsh fossils**

1990 **Nice Weather for Fossils?** 22 August, Wednesday, Swansea Mason Conference, Symposium at the BAAS sponsored by SWGA





3 November 1990, Field Meeting, Saturday

Geology of Barry and Barry Island and Visit to R.R.S. 'Charles Darwin' in Barry Dock

Leader: **Alun J. Thomas** (late National Museum of Wales Schools Service)

Photo Alun
Thomas



14 April 1991, Field Meeting, Sunday, Joint Meeting with Open University Geological Society
Upper Carboniferous Geology of Carmarthen Bay photos at **Marros Sands**
 Leader: **Dr H. Geraint Owen** (University College of Swansea)

Photos
 Alun
 Thomas



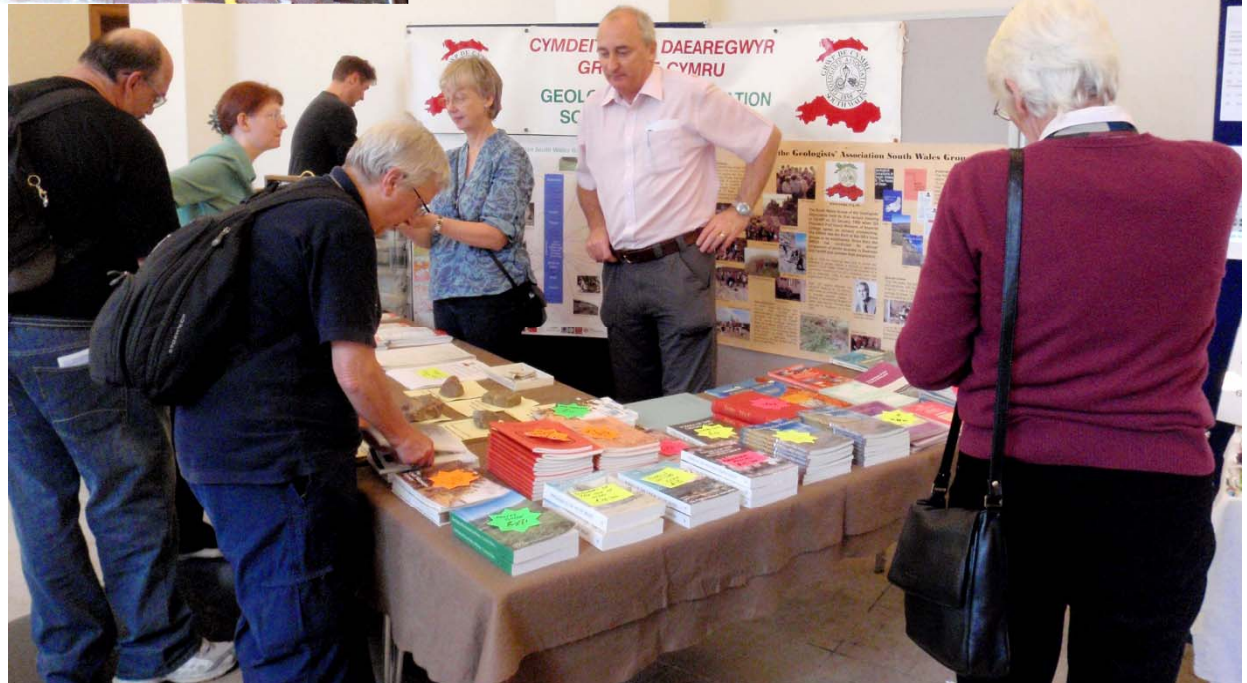
30 November 1991, Field Meeting, Saturday
Old Red Sandstone of the Talgarth Area, photo at **Pwll y Wrach**
Leader: **Duncan Hawley** (Brecon Naturalists' Trust)

Photos
Alun
Thomas



November 1996

**Group displays at the GA Reunion,
University College, London**



November 2009



Geologists' Association – South Wales Group
 Russell Society Wales and West branch
 Geological Society South Wales group
 RIGS
 British Geological Survey
 Feature on David Davies

Daeareg yng Nghymru



Gareth Davies
 1934-2009
 President 1998-2000



Photos
 Lynda Garfield

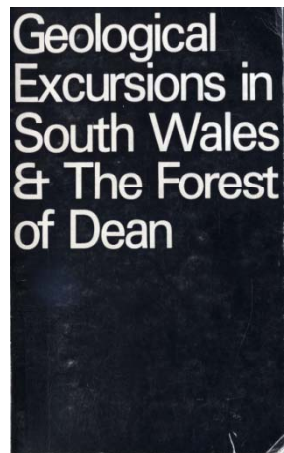
August 1998, **Daeareg yng Nghymru** : stand at the **Eisteddfod Genedlaethol**, Pencoed

Geofest 2004

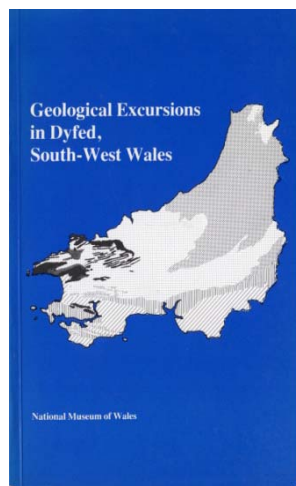


One of our most ambitious and successful events was in November 2004 when the Group hosted the GA Reunion in Cardiff, turning it into a weekend of family activities and fieldtrips called Geofest@Cardiff.

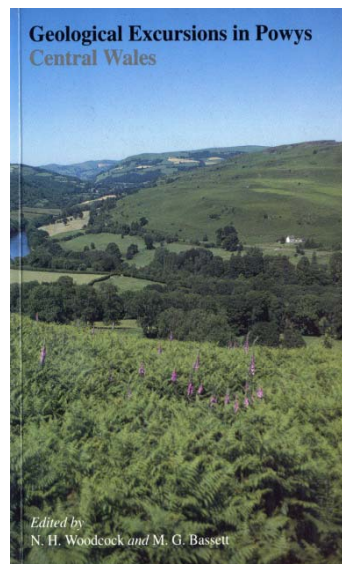




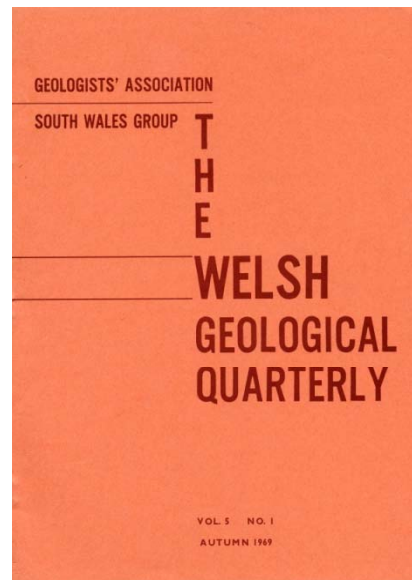
1971



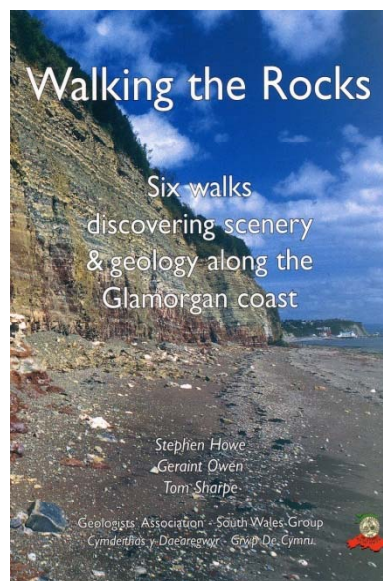
1982



1993



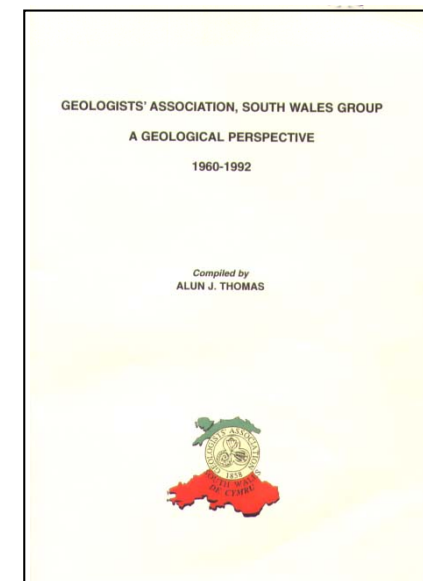
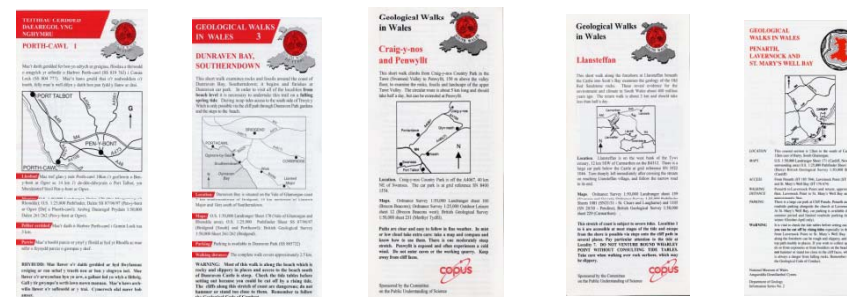
1965-70

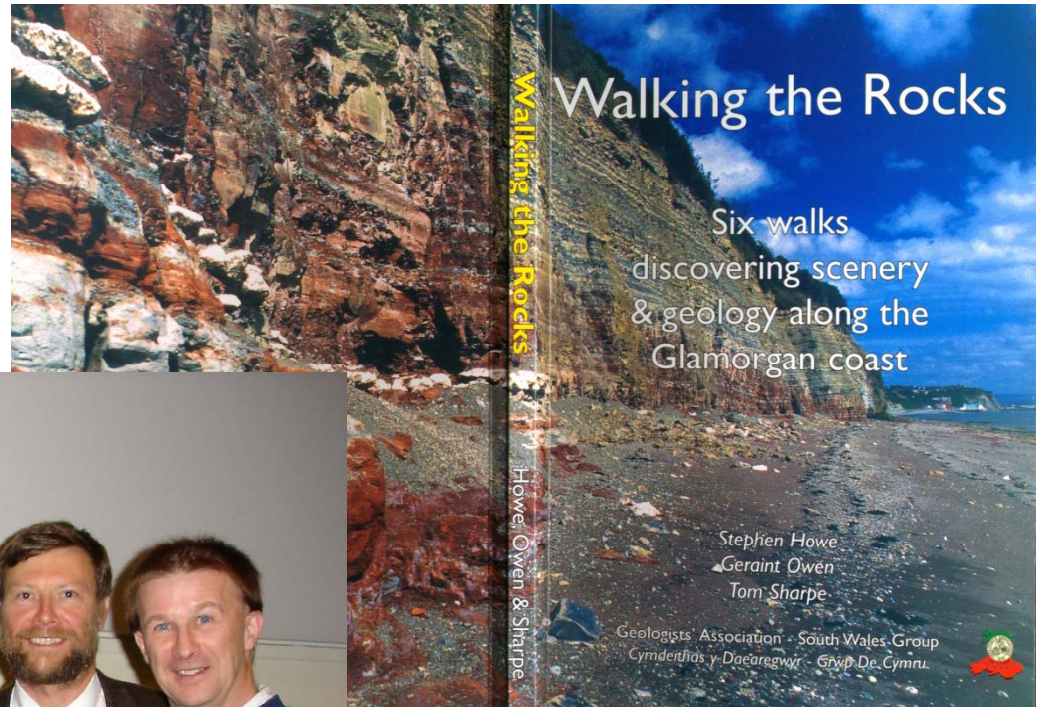


2004

Publications

The first publication of the Group was the *Welsh Geological Quarterly* which ran for 15 issues between 1965 and 1969. Since then, the focus has been on producing local field guides and leaflets. Our *Geological walks in Wales* series of leaflets began in 1991 and continues, with 20 leaflets produced to date.



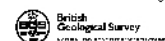
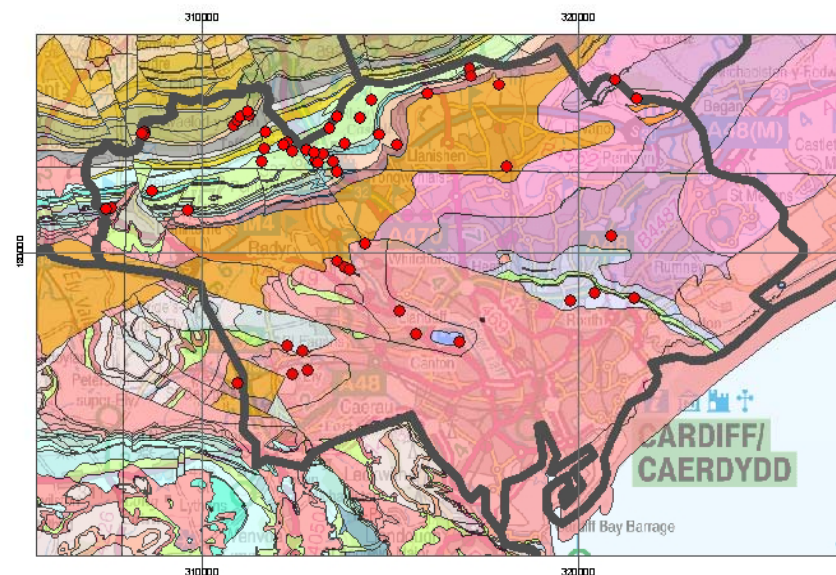


December 2005

Steve Howe, Tom Sharpe, Geraint Owen receiving the ENI Geological Challenge Award
for **Walking the Rocks**, from Richard Fortey at the Geological Society London



RIGS fieldwork, Creigiau, Cardiff 2005



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RIGS fieldwork, Gwaelod y Garth, quarry, 2008



Geoconservation

In recent years, the Group has become more involved with geoconservation, beginning with a geological site survey for Cardiff County Council. Fieldtrips identified about 30 potential RIGS within the Cardiff area.

The Group is now an active partner in the South Wales RIGS project, a Welsh Assembly Government Aggregate Levy Sustainability Funded project led by BGS Cardiff Office.

Project Partners	
	South Wales Geologists Association
	British Geological Survey
	Cardiff University
	National Museum of Wales
	Countdown Council for Wales
	The Geological Society
	Forest Fawr Geopark
	Brecon Beacons National Park

© South Wales RIGS 2008
Site written and maintained by the South Wales Geologists Association



October 8th 2008
Site clearance
Wernddu

Photos
Dave Wellings





August 2007, 2008, 2009
Out of the Woods Festival
Bute Park, Cardiff

Photo
Tom Sharpe



Llynau Cregennen,
mid Wales, 2004



Nigel in discussion, Devon, 2005



Spot the dragons



Llanelli 2000



Penarth Festival
2008



Gash Breccias, Bullslaughter Bay
2008



Writing the final report on the Eisteddfod. Russell Society and G.A



50 years of the Geologists' Association South Wales Group

Fieldtrips

Fieldtrips have always been an important part of the Group's programme. The first field meeting was held on 9 April 1960. Trevor Thomas, a geologist working for the Ministry of Housing in Cardiff, led the Group to localities in the Vale of Glamorgan. Three more excursions, to the Vale of Neath, Chepstow, and the Llandeilo-Llandovery area, were also held in the spring of 1960.



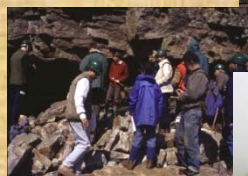
1961 Newgale



1965 Aberaeron



1984 Clevedon



1991 Marros



1974 Porthclais



2007 Nash Point



2006 Flat Holm



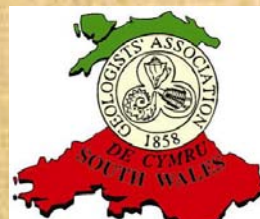
2005 Black Mountains



2005 Newport



2009 Burringtoncombe



www.swga.org.uk

The South Wales Group of the Geologists' Association held its first lecture meeting in Cardiff on 23 January 1960 when GA President Prof David Williams of Imperial College spoke on mineral prospecting. The SWGA was the third of the GA's local groups to be established. Since then, the SWGA has continued its annual programme of winter lectures in Swansea and Cardiff and summer field excursions.

Late in 1959 two meetings were held in Cardiff and Swansea to gauge interest in forming a geological group in South Wales. These led to the formation of a committee, chaired by Prof J.G.C Anderson, which met on 4 December 1959 to plan the structure and organisation of the group.

Over 100 people attended the inaugural meeting on 23 January 1960, when a committee chaired by Dr Douglas Bassett, Keeper of Geology in the National Museum of Wales, was elected. The first AGM was held in Swansea on 5 April 1960.



Douglas A. Bassett, Chairman 1960-62

RIGS fieldwork, Creigiau, Cardiff 2005



Geofest 2008

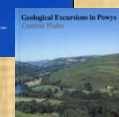


Geological Excursions in South Wales & The Forest of Dean

1971



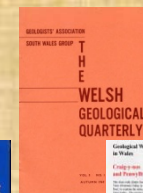
1982



1993



2004



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In 2005, *Walking the Rocks* won the ENI Geological Challenge Award.

Special events

Over the years, the Group has organised many conferences and symposia, with the first, on the geology of the Arctic and Antarctic, held in Cardiff in November 1960. Some, on the geology of Wales, have been published as thematic issues of the *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*.



The Group regularly brings a display to the GA Reunion and has a stand or runs activities at various events around South Wales, bringing geology to the wider public.



One of our most ambitious and successful events was in November 2004 when the Group hosted the GA Reunion in Cardiff, turning it into a weekend of family activities and fieldtrips called Geofest@Cardiff.

In 2008, over 1700 people attended a one-day Geofest organised by the Group in Cardiff as our contribution to the 150th anniversary of the GA.



Geofest 2004 fieldtrip, Big Pit

Jackie Askey

George Askey

Photo's By Dave Wellings



Anne Thomas



Paul Booth

Rhian Kendall



Paul Johnson

Janet Hiscott



Anniversary Dinner at the Park Plaza Hotel
Cardiff on the 23 January 2010.
Celebrating the Geologists' Association -
South Wales Group first meeting in 1960.



Nigel McGaw bestowing Honorary membership to Geraint Owen.



Prof Iain Stewart



Saturday 23 January 2010, Cardiff University, Geologists' Association, South Wales Group, 50th Anniversary Lecture by Prof Iain Stewart, of the University of Plymouth, on How Earth Made Us.

Photo's By Dave Wellings



Lynfa Lewis

Mike Lees



Sue Howe

Mike Bassett

Mel Watkins

Sian and Menna Bassett

Nigel McGaw

Anniversary Dinner at the Park Plaza Hotel Cardiff on the 23 January 2010.
Celebrating the Geologists' Association - South Wales Group first meeting on 23 January 1960.



Nigel McGaw

Prof Iain Stewart

Alun Thomas

Geraint Owen

Wendy Owen



Alan Thomas

Lesley Cherns

Sue Davies

Lynfa Lewis



Mike Lees

Lesley Cherns

Stephen Howe

Sue Howe



Photo's By Dave Wellings

Sian Bassett



John Davies

Sue Davies

Rhian Kendall

Andy Kendall



Anniversary Dinner at the Park Plaza Hotel Cardiff on the 23 Jan 2010.
Celebrating the Geologists' Association - South Wales Group first meeting in 1960.

Photo's By Dave Wellings.



George Askey

Nigel McGaw

Alun Thomas



George Askey

Jackie Askey

Nigel McGaw

Malcolm Shaw



Lynda Garfield

Nigel McGaw

Malcolm Shaw



Andy Kendall

Lynda Garfield

Sian Elis-Gruffydd

Janice Shaw

Rhiannon Cottrell



Park Plaza Hotel, Cardiff, 23 January 2010.

Photos By Dave Wellings

Park Plaza Hotel, Cardiff, 23 January 2010.



Jim and Heather Chetcuti

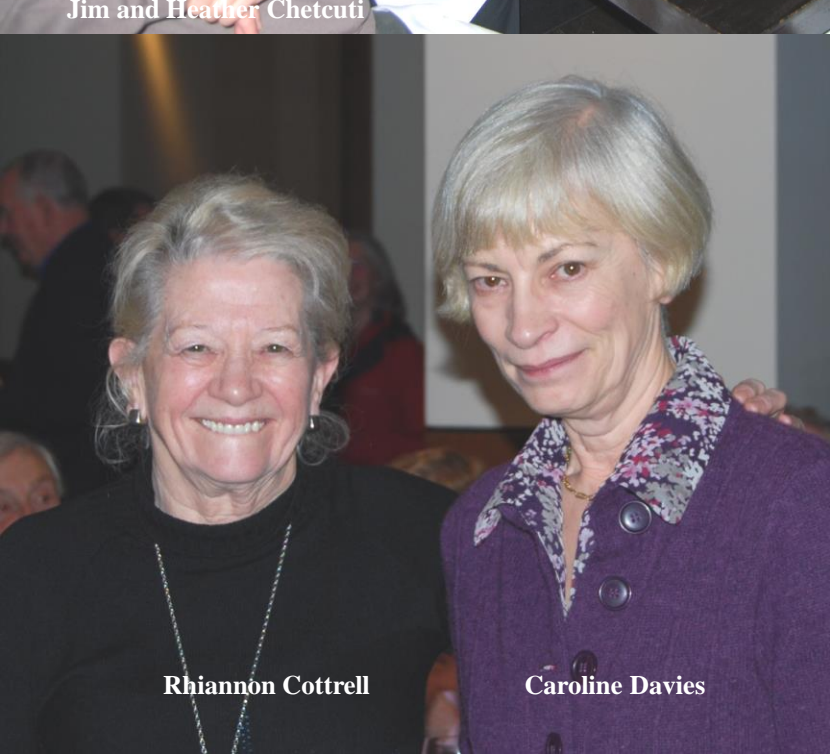
Gwen Moore

Sian and Dyfed Elis-Gruffydd



Lynda Garfield

Nigel McGaw



Rhiannon Cottrell

Caroline Davies



Barbara Willis

Jackie and John Began

Mike Scott

Howard Bartlett

Linda Scott



Mary Salter

Anna Broadbent

Eric Broadbent

William Croad

John Nudds

Cindy Howells
Mhari Dobson

Anniversary Dinner at the Park Plaza Hotel Cardiff on the 23 Jan 2010.
Celebrating the Geologists' Association - South Wales Group first meeting on 23 Jan 1960.

Photo's by Dave Wellings.

Jim Chetcuti

Heather Chetcuti



Mike Gregory

Mike Scott

Prof Iain Stewart



Anniversary Dinner at the Park Plaza Hotel Cardiff on the 23 Jan 2010.
Celebrating the Geologists' Association - South Wales Group
first meeting on 23 Jan 1960.



Barbara Willis

Jackie Bevan

John Bevan



Cindy Howells

John Nudds

Paul Johnson

Hazel Trenbirth

