

December 2015



Fifty-seventh session

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Greetings
Best wishes for the New Year to all our Members
 from
SWGA Committee

WINTER MEETINGS

by **Stephen Howe** - Programme Secretary

Saturday 9th January: Holiday Geology

The second half of the Winter indoor session kicks off with our annual Holiday Geology meeting at the National Museum Cardiff on Saturday 9th January. I have received a number of offers of talks but am always hopeful of more so if there is anybody else who would like, or would be willing, to give a short talk please let me know, preferably by 1st January. Likewise,

although we will not be able to provide a buffet lunch this year we will be providing teas and coffee, which we need to order from the Museum caterers. So, in order to ensure that we have enough refreshments, can you please let me know by 1st January if you are definitely or likely to be coming on the day.

Saturday 23rd January, Swansea University

Hayden Bailey, GA President

January's lecture takes place on Saturday 23rd January in Swansea when Hayden Bailey, will deliver the T.R.Owen Memorial Lecture on Forensic Micropaleontology. As Hayden will explain in his talk, chalk is a very unusual rock. It's dominantly biogenic, being formed from the microscopic remains of minute golden brown algae (coccoliths), other microfossils (foraminifera, ostracods, calcispheres) and fragmentary remains of macrofossils (bivalve molluscs, echinoderms, belemnites). Whenever and however it is used by man it retains a trace of this biogenic origin and, with careful research, we can use this trace like a fingerprint, tracking it back to its source. Such provenance studies have curious applications in both the fine art world and in criminal investigations.

Saturday 20th February, Cardiff University

Roy Starkey

February's meeting takes place on Saturday 17th February in Cardiff when Roy Starkey will talk about Minerals and Gems of the Cairngorms. The Cairngorms are the most extensive area of high mountain terrain in Britain. The area has given its name to gem quality smoky quartz, but has also produced spectacular specimens of beryl and topaz. In Victorian times, hunting for crystals was both a popular pastime and a "cottage industry", but nowadays the area is a National Park and few fine specimens have come to light in recent years. In 1811 it was reported that these "Cairngorm Stones" were so much sought after, that a number of the inhabitants, not only of Aberdeenshire, but of the counties of Perth and Inverness, flocked to these mountains,

in whole families, during the summer season, in quest of gems; and purchasers from London, who were well acquainted with their value, came frequently to buy the precious stones from these poor people. The profits of the finders or miners were extremely variable because the success rate was relatively low. Huge amounts of effort were expended in the search and records suggest that by the early 1800s, the Cairngorm diggers had already trenched more than twenty acres to a depth of from five to six feet. It is a recorded fact that Queen Victoria ascended Beinn a' Bhuid on 6 September 1850 and collected specimens of Cairngorm quartz. This talk will review the fascinating history of "Cairngorm stones", illustrated by images of notable specimens and explorations over the past 25 years or so.

Saturday 19th March, Swansea University

Rhian Kendall

The final talk of the winter session, and our AGM, takes place on Saturday 19th March in Swansea when our retiring President, Rhian Kendall, will deliver a talk entitled From Rocks to Paper: geological mapping in the past, present and future. In her talk Rhian will delve into the BGS archives to see how geologists worked in the past and will describe the methods used today before discussing how geological information is likely to be accessed in the future.

Please remember that the meeting starts with the AGM at 10.30am and not 11.00am as usual.

All normal Saturday meetings start at 11.00am. Tea and coffee are served from about 45 minutes before the start of each meeting.



Field Meetings 2016:

The summer field meeting programme is beginning to take shape and below are some dates for your diary:

Saturday 23rd April: The Lliw Valley led by Geraint Owen

Saturday/Sunday 7th/8th May: The Vale of Glamorgan. A weekend excursion arranged by the London GA

Saturday 21st May: Penarth Alabaster led by Mike Statham. This is a joint meeting with the Welsh Stone Forum.

Saturday 25th June: Penwyllt and area led by Gareth George

Saturday/Sunday 16th/17th July:

Rockwatch weekend. Cribarth and Blaenafon.

Saturday 23rd July: tbc

Saturday 20th August: tbc

Saturday 17th September: tbc

Saturday 8th October: The Marginal Jurassic of Ogmore and Dunraven led by Peter Hodges.

Please note that all tbc dates are provisional. John Cope is looking into the possibility of leading a weekend excursion to the Dorset coast, possibly in mid May, but as you can see there are still a number of gaps so if anybody has any ideas for a field meeting location and/or a potential leader then please let me know.

Stephen



Safety Policy

Although full Risk Assessments are undertaken prior to each field meeting members are reminded that they attend field excursions at their own risk. They are expected to take reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of themselves and other participants and to behave in a responsible manner at all times. The Group has a Safety Policy and Safety Fieldwork Code that all participants should have read prior to attending a meeting. Copies can be found on the Group's web site and a resume can be found on the reverse of the Summer Field Meeting card.



From the Committee

Committee Membership: there will be 2 vacancies for ordinary members after the AGM in March. If you would like to get involved, please contact Janet, Group Secretary, at least 2 weeks before the meeting. Your nomination needs to be supported by 2 members of SWGA.

Group profile: the committee would like to raise our profile by attending a variety of events to raise awareness of our existence and share the wonders of geology with a wide audience. If you know of any appropriate event, please let one of the committee know well in advance so we can consider the feasibility of putting on a display stall.

Walks Leaflets: we are aware that many of the details in these walks are now out-of-date so we plan to revise them as and when we can.

Keeping in touch: remember that the Group has a Facebook page, a Twitter account and a website. If you would like to participate in either the Twitter and / or the Facebook activity, contact Rhian who can assist you.



Other Items of Interest

Cardiff University - Public Events: Their series of monthly lectures about Isotopes and their relationship to, for example, the origins of life, archaeology, solar system, extinctions, continues. Full details can be found on the website:

[http://sites.cardiff.ac.uk/events/category/series/
isotopes-in-the-earth-sciences/](http://sites.cardiff.ac.uk/events/category/series/isotopes-in-the-earth-sciences/)

Out of the Woods Festival

Here is a date for next year's diary. The annual Out of the Woods Festival, run by Cardiff Parks Department, will take place on Saturday 20th August 2016 in Sophia Gardens, Cardiff. The Group will be taking part again with its usual fossil bash activity and we will be seeking volunteers to help out closer to the date so watch this space!

Publications:

Many of you may well already have a copy of 'The Geology of South Wales: A Field Guide' by Gareth George that was published in 2008. Gareth has now produced a 2nd Edition in full colour and with new chapters on field aspects of stratigraphy, sedimentology, hard rocks/structural geology and new and updated itineraries. Copies cost £18.75 and should be available from the National Museum Cardiff shop soon or post free directly from Gareth. Gareth also has a second excellent South Wales related publication: 'Aspects of the Sedimentology of South Wales' that has just been published and is also available direct from the author for £18.75. Enquires can be sent to Gareth at gareth@geoserve.co.uk.



Other Geological Organisations

- Russell Society, Wales and West Branch: Tom Cotterell. Tel: 01594 845935 before 9 pm
- Welsh Stone Forum (Ffowr Cerrig Cymru): Tim Palmer tjp@aber.ac.uk or www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/welshstoneforum
- U3A South Wales Geology Group: Nigel McGaw. Tel: 01656 654439
- Open University Geological Society: Janet Hiscott ougs.org.uk/severnside
- West Wales Geology Society: www.westwalesgeolsoc.org.uk
- South East Wales RIGS : <http://sewrigs.wordpress.com/>