



Registered Charity Number 1054303

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March 2011

Fifty-first Session 2010-2011

We have had fantastic winter of lectures with Larry Thomas talking about his work as a coal geologist and David Siveter wowing us with photos of the most beautiful fossils from China. Further afield, Tom Sharpe told the story of geologists work at the poles. John Heimstra talked about the latest work on reconstructing the last British ice sheet and Susan Marriot talked about the Townsend Tuff and the associated beasties which left their tracks and trails.



AGM 2011

On the **19th of March** we once again hold our AGM. This will be held at 10.30 am in the **Main Theatre, Wallace Building, Swansea University**.

The Annual General Meeting will be followed by Chris Berry (Cardiff University) who will talk on Devonian trees and forests in Svalbard and New York State: newest insights into the earliest forest ecosystems.

Outdoor Meetings 2011



Saturday 9th April

The building stones of Llantwit Major
Leader: Jana Horak

Meet at 2.00pm at St Illtyd's Church, Llantwit Major [ST 966 687]. We will be spending the afternoon looking at the building stones of this old church and some of the other old buildings in the town. For further information, check details please contact Jana Horak at jana.horak@museumwales.ac.uk

This is a joint meeting with the Welsh Stone Forum



Sunday 22nd May

Three Cliffs Bay, Gower
Leader: John Davies

Meet at 10.30am at the car park at Parkmill (SS 551 892). The excursion will be to examine the Old Red Sandstone and Carboniferous Limestone successions of the Three cliffs Bay and the Pennard valley as well as the local structure and scenery. Bring a packed lunch.



Saturday 18th June

The minerals of Sully Island

Leaders: Lynda Garfield and Dave Wellings

Meet at 11.30 at the Captain's Wife car park at Swanbridge (ST 167 675). Please note that there is a £1 parking charge. The excursion will entail crossing the causeway to Sully Island and scrambling over rough ground so strong footwear is essential. Bring a packed lunch.

Note: If the weather is bad then the venue will be changed but will stay in the Sully area.

This is a joint meeting with the Russell Society South Wales Branch



**Saturday 23rd July
Mineral riches of the Black
Mountain**

Leader: Alan Bowring

Meet at 10.00am at the Black Mountain Centre in Brynaman (SN 714 143). This is at the mini-roundabout where the A4068 and A4069 meet. The excursion will involve a circular walk up the along the Twrch valley to examine the exploitation of the Twrch Sandstone, Coal and ironstone and also the karst scenery.

Please note that the area is remote and strong footwear, waterproof clothing and food and water provisions are essential.

**Saturday 20th August
Porth Clais to Caerfai Bay,
Pembrokeshire**

Leader: Sid Howells

This is the pre-Ramsey island excursion for those who wish to make a weekend of it in Pembrokeshire. Anybody who is not coming to Ramsey but would like to join just this excursion would be very welcome. Meet at 13.00 in the courtyard of the Tourist Information Centre in St David's (car parking available nearby) for a circular walk of about 7km to view geological features of the coastline between Porth Clais and Caerfai Bay (Precambrian/Cambrian & Quaternary deposits).



**Sunday 21st August
Ramsey Island**

Leader: Sid Howells

Meet at 9.30am at St Justinian's lifeboat station near St Davids (SM 724 253). Parking is limited so you may like to consider travelling by the 9.00am Celtic Coaster bus from St Davids (http://st.davidsinfo.org.uk/coastal_buses_summer.htm). Bring a packed lunch. The excursion will take the 10.00am sailing for the island and then spend all day on the island looking at the geology. At 4.15pm we will take a 1 1/2 hour cruise around the island to see many geological features that cannot

be seen from land returning to St Justinian's at 5.45pm. The cost for the boat fare and landing fee is £35, concession £33 and child £17. For RSPB members it is £31/£29/£15. Note: All bookings with boat fares must be sent to the Field Meeting Secretary at least two weeks before the meeting and the excursion will be limited to 32 people.

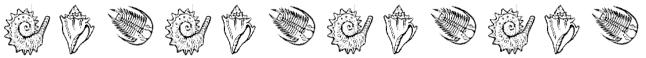
Advanced notice....

**Saturday 17th September
Vallis Vale and Tedbury Camp, Mendips**

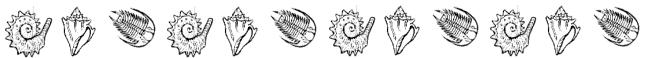
Leader: Alan Holliday

**Saturday 15th October
Pendine –Amroth coastal section**

Leader: Geraint Owen



From time to time, for reasons beyond the control of the Group, meetings do unfortunately have to be cancelled. If such a situation has arisen then every attempt will be made to put this information on the web site.



News from the committee

– by Lynda Garfield

The committee is anxious to keep members informed about what it does. So, here's the first note about recent committee meetings: We meet four times a year, currently on a Monday evening at the Tondu wildlife office. Obviously, we look after the usual business; Steve Howe makes sure the programme runs smoothly, Hazel Trenbirth makes sure we have paid our bills, cashed cheques, and have enough money to carry out the programme, Mike Gregory makes sure members pay their subs, Rhian Kendall looks after the newsletter, website, our publications and RIGS, Lynda Garfield writes the agenda and the minutes, Malcolm Shaw keeps us all in order, and all (with Geraint Owen, Lynfa Lewis, Mike Smith, Tom

Sharpe, Janet Hiscott, Lesley Cherns, John Davies and Nigel McGaw) ensure that the group functions as it should, legally and effectively.

One of our recent concerns has been the matter raised at the last AGM, how to engage more with younger people. This has been discussed at length, with the valued input also of member Brian Drew. At the moment, the committee is looking at a further Rockwatch event during the year in South Wales (Janet Hiscott), Janet is also going to send details of our programme to secondary schools that offer geology.

Towards the end of last year, the Group responded to a Welsh Assembly Government consultation document “*A Living Wales – a new framework for our environment, our country side and our seas*”. President Malcolm Shaw worked hard on the response, a summary of which follows.

SWGA response to “A Living Wales”

“A Living Wales – a new framework for our environment, our country side and our seas”: a response to the Welsh Assembly Government Consultation Document from the Geologists’ Association – South Wales Group

Summary

Committed to earth science and geoheritage in South Wales, the Geologists’ Association - South Wales Group (SWGA) expresses its disappointment that the *A Living Wales* Consultation Document does not adequately address the importance of geosciences to both wildlife and people. The wildlife world is in equal measure dependent on a physical world of geological and geomorphological events and structures; in other words, on geodiversity. Whilst some recent WAG documents recognise, at least in part, the relevance of geodiversity, this is not reflected in *A Living Wales*.

Using the terms biodiversity and geodiversity within future iterations of *A Living Wales* would help establish in the public consciousness that nature has two coexisting parts, living and non-living, which

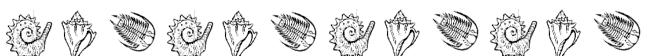
are equally supportive of a holistic approach to conservation.

SGWA committee, Help Needed!

At each AGM, vacancies do arise for new committee members. If any member is interested in serving on the committee, please do get in touch with the Secretary. In particular, the Group is in need of a Publicity Officer, someone who can publicise our events and take a lead in seeking new members. The committee has lots of ideas, but we are in need of people to help. If any member is interested but does not wish to be on the committee, this could be accommodated.

Photography

Anyone who has been to Holiday Geology in recent years will have been aware of the stunning photos of member Malcolm Nugent. Last November, Malcolm won the (parent) GA photo competition, announced at the GA reunion in London. Congratulations to Malcolm, who brought along his winning photo to Holiday Geology in January.



Drwhoite – Lynda Garfield

Anyone come across Drwhoite? On a recent visit to Taffs Well Quarry with the Russell Society, someone mentioned a “soft” rock, a rock that compressed when you put your finger on it.

From a short distance away, it looks just like calcite mineralisation on the surface; there is a lot of calcite veining in the quarry, so nothing remarkable. But when you get up close, it is soft, and looks like some form of paper maché sprayed on the rock surface.

We had been told by the manager that Dr Who had been filming in the quarry, using some of the cave sized cavities uncovered by recent quarrying, and that he was due to come again soon. So we assume that the soft rock is something to do with Dr Who!

Other Organisations Events



Fforest Fawr Geopark Festival

The sixth annual Fforest Fawr Geopark Festival starts on Saturday 21st May. As in previous years it sees 16 days of walks and talks across the western half of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Most of the walks have a geological flavour but there's often a mix of wildlife, history and archaeology thrown in too. Everything from the building stones of Llandovery to the legacy of our ancestors on the moors above the taff valley, from Pen-y-crug at Brecon to Penwyllt and ravines at Brynaman. The organisers are asking for a modest donation from each adult walker this year to help offset costs. A number of the walk leaders will be well-known to members of the SWGA. We had lots of positive feedback from participants in last year's festival and we're hoping for equally good weather this time! Check out the website at www.ffaforestfawrgeopark.org for further details or give Geopark development officer **Alan Bowring 01874 620415**.

 **Cardiff Naturalists' Society**
Sun 15 May 10.00.
Penwyllt Flowers, Caves, Limestone Pavements and Ex-industrial Landscapes, Andy Kendall & Bruce McDonald

For those of you able to attend the recent BCRA event you will have seen something of the limestone scenery at Penwyllt. On this CNS trip we plan to visit the same areas to start with, but then make our way up onto the top of the hills to see the limestone pavement areas as well. This is not just a geology walk so we will also be looking at the old Penwyllt Brickworks and the plant life that covers the different rock types. For those not on the previous trip this will include a full summary of the previously visited areas, for those who were there will

be more time to see more of the surface features and exposures

For more information about the Cardiff Nats', please visit their website: <http://www.cardiffnaturalists.org.uk>.



Cardiff Scientific Society 23 March The Colour of Fossil Birds and Dinosaurs from China, Professor Mike

Benton (Bristol)

Reardon Smith Lecture Theatre, National Museum Wales.

Free but booking essential tel 02920 573148

There will be a Geology Exhibition at the Three Counties show this year on June 17 - 19, 2011. This is being sponsored by the GA, Hereford & Worcester Earth Heritage Trust and Gloucestershire Geology Trust from Nigel McGaw



Other Geological Organisations

There are a number of other organisations offering geological courses and trips. These include:

- Cardiff University Centre for Lifelong Learning: www.cardiff.ac.uk/learn
- Swansea University Department of Adult Continuing Education from 01792-295786 or www.swansea.ac.uk/dace.
- You can get details of Russell Society Wales and West Branch activities from Tom Cotterell (01594-845935, before 9 pm).
- U3A South Wales Geology Group from Nigel McGaw (01656-654439).
- Welsh Stone Forum (Fforwm Cerrig Cymru) from Tim Palmer (tjp@aber.ac.uk)
- Open University Geological Society Contact: Janet Hiscott. www.ougs.org/severnside