

## November 2013



Fifty-Fifth Session 2013-2014



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Lesley Cherns	John Davies	Tom Sharpe	Nigel McGaw
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			Charlotte West

**MEETINGS UPDATE – Stephen Howe**

The last field excursion of the year, led by Alan Bowring of the Fforest Fawr Geopark to Mynydd Llangynidr, took place on 21st September. I was unfortunately unable to attend this meeting so Nigel McGaw kindly took over the role of Meeting Coordinator. He reported that although not blessed with brilliant weather it was a very good day and thoroughly enjoyed by the 17 members who attended.

The first indoor meeting of the 2013/14 session got off to a flying start on 26th October when an amazing 61 people came to hear Ian Skilling from the University of South Wales deliver a fascinating and beautifully illustrated lecture on *Hot and Cold: volcanic eruptions beneath ice*. Mainly illustrated with examples from Iceland I am sure that there were many present, like myself, who felt that it should really be a 'must visit' site for all geologists. Perhaps if we had enough interest we could persuade Ian to lead an excursion!

By the time you get this Newsletter we will have had our second indoor meeting where Prof Brian Williams will have lectured us on *The Last Great Ice Age: the Permo-Carboniferous of Gondwana*. It is at this meeting that Brian will have been presented with his Honorary Membership of the Group in acknowledgement of all that he has done for us over the years.

**CHANGE OF DATE**

Please note that the T.R.Owen lecture by Prof. Andy Gale scheduled for Saturday 14th December has had to be moved and will now take place a week earlier **on Saturday, 7th December**. The meeting is still in Swansea and, being the last meeting before Christmas, will be preceded by mince pies and other festive foods. His talk, on the *Evolution and history of starfishes*, should be a fascinating insight into this group of animals that at times produce such spectacular fossils.

## Winter Session 2013/2014

Stephen Howe



After the Christmas festivities the New Year starts with our annual **Holiday Geology** meeting, in the National Museum, Cardiff on **Saturday 11th January**. The meeting will run from 11.00am – 4.00pm and a buffet lunch will be provided for which there will be a £4 charge. Please see elsewhere in this Newsletter for further details.



The first lecture of 2014 takes place on **Saturday 25th January**, in Cardiff, when Dr Bob Owens will bring us up to date on *The Geology of Mars*, including no doubt information gleaned from the exploits of the Mars rover.



Our joint meeting with the Geological Society, South Wales Group, takes place on **Saturday 22nd February** in Swansea when Prof Joe Cartwright will enlighten us on *Fracking: mythology, propaganda and geomechanics*. This topic is very much a hot issue at the moment and there are a lot of uninformed opinions being banded about so this is a chance to hear the broader picture



**Holiday Geology:** Our annual Holiday Geology meeting takes place in the National Museum, Cardiff on **Saturday 11th January**. Once again the meeting will take place in the Oriel Suite of rooms that are accessed through the museum restaurant. Directional signs will be present to ensure that you don't get lost! The meeting starts at 11.00am and will finish about 4.00pm but there will be tea and coffee before the meeting starts as usual. Entry to the museum is via the museum's main door anytime after 10.00am.

The programme will be as usual with 8 to 10 short talks, a buffet lunch and a number of displays and a sales stand. There will be a charge for the buffet lunch of £4/head, payable on the day. However, the food has to be ordered in advance so it is essential that you book your place by Monday 6th January

from an acknowledged expert in this field.



Our final indoor meeting of the winter, and AGM, takes place in Swansea on **Saturday 22nd March** when our retiring President, Dr Geraint Owen, will entertain us with a talk on *The World of Geology*. He is being a little bit mysterious about the content at the moment so you will need to come along to find out what it contains. Geraint has spoken to the Group on many former occasions so you can be sure of something of interest and a fitting finale to his term as President. Please remember that the lecture starts at 11.00am as usual but that the AGM commences at 10.30am.

Unless otherwise stated, all lectures start at 11.00 with coffee and tea served from 10.30. (The main exceptions are the AGM and Holiday Geology). The Swansea University venue is the Wallace Building (Department of Geography); the Cardiff University venue is the Wallace Lecture Theatre in the Main Building, Cardiff University.



at the latest by contacting the Programmes Secretary (steve.howe@museumwales.ac.uk or tel. 02920 573363).

This is very much your meeting and, as always, it is dependent upon members volunteering to talk on any topic that they wish. To date Stephen has received offers of 3 talks, including an extended one from Howard Bartlett on his further adventures in China. However, more are still needed! As you will know from former meetings local is of as much interest as the exotic so if you can offer a talk can you let Stephen know before the meeting please so that he has time to sort out the programme (steve.howe@museumwales.ac.uk).

(see later note about the raffle)

## Other items of interest

### Old Red Sandstone Symposium



#### 'It's not Old, it's not Red and it's not all Sandstone'

A four-day symposium on the Old Red Sandstone of the south-western Province will take place in Brecon from **1st-4th October 2014**.

The symposium will pull together the latest research on this subject. The meeting will take place in the Elim Centre, Brecon and will consist of two days of talks on 1st/2nd October, a field meeting on 3rd October and a public open day on 4th October.

Convened by Dr John Davies, and hosted by the Fforest Fawr Geopark, our Group is one of many involved participating bodies and a number of our members are on the organising committee. Generous grants have already been obtained from the Palaeontological Association and Geologists' Association parent body. More details will follow in due course but put the dates in your diaries now!



### South East Wales RIGS



A major step has been taken in the establishment of the SE Wales RIGS Group. At a meeting on 20 November 2013, the Constitution was approved and some of the officers appointed. Nigel McGaw is the Chairman, Adrian Humpage is the Secretary and Dilys Harlow and Marnix Roels are committee members. Unfortunately the post of Treasurer and one committee member remain unfilled and volunteers are urgently required to come forward to complete the team.

The next meeting is provisionally set for the **12 March 2014** with the venue in the Merthyr area. Adrian has agreed to give an overview talk on the role of RIGS to be followed by an open discussion on the way forward for the Group so if you have an interest in geoconservation please come along and support the Group. For further information on RIGS, future meetings and in particular if you are willing to volunteer for the post of Treasurer, please contact Nigel McGaw on 01656 654439 or email at [nimar@nmcgaw.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:nimar@nmcgaw.freeserve.co.uk)



### Membership matters

#### Data Protection Act

The Group keeps computerised and/or paper listings of members' names, contact details, membership, and Gift Aid declarations. These are used only within the SWGA for maintaining the membership, mailings, Gift Aid reclamations, an annual list of members, general administration, and matters relating to the carrying out of the Group's activities (may also include non-members and historical records). Please let the Membership Secretary know if you do not want your details kept on a computer listing, or if you do not wish to be on the annual list of members, or if you want to know the full details of the information the Group keeps about you.

#### Keeping in Touch with you

If you have an email address, please consider letting us have it – tell Mike, the membership secretary. As you may have noticed, the programme is quite often subject to change and Stephen will always send out a message to everyone on the circulation list. He also reminds members of forthcoming meetings and sends out other items of interest such as events run by other geological organisations. Providing us with your email does not mean you have to receive the Newsletter electronically but it would help us to contact you when arrangements have to change, sometimes at short notice.



### Presentation to our new Honorary Member – Prof Brian Williams

Unfortunately Brian was unable to be present at the last AGM to receive his Honorary Membership. However, he was able to be with us for the meeting on November 23rd in Cardiff. The photo shows President Geraint Owen presenting Brian with his citation, in recognition of his support and contribution to the Group for over 40 years by running field trips, giving lectures, writing for publications, generously donating books, and also in recognition of his part in the interpretation of the geology of Wales and the oil industry.

After receiving his award, Brian went on to deliver the morning's lecture, an excellent talk on *Bergs to ergs: the icehouse world of the Permo-Carboniferous*.



### Christmas raffle – Holiday Geology

As in previous years, there will be a raffle at this year's Holiday Geology. Please bring along with you on the day any items you are willing to donate as prizes for the raffle (unwanted Christmas presents?).

### Other Geological Organisations

- Russell Society, Wales and West Branch, details of activities from Tom Cotterell. Tel: 01594 845935 before 9 pm
- Welsh Stone Forum (Fforwm Cerrig Cymru) details from Tim Palmer. tjp@aber.ac.uk [www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/welshstoneforum](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/welshstoneforum)
- U3A South Wales Geology Group details from Nigel McGaw. Tel: 01656 654439
- Open University Geological Society Contact: Janet Hiscott [ougs.org.uk/severnside](http://ougs.org.uk/severnside)
- West Wales Geology Society [www.westwalesgeolsoc.org.uk](http://www.westwalesgeolsoc.org.uk)

