



Registered Charity Number 1054303

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## September 2007

## Forty-ninth Session 2007-2008

Welcome to the Autumn/winter season of our forty-ninth session. We have had a very successful summer programme, despite the weather. We visited Clearwell and Tintern to see Carboniferous limestones, the Tywi Lineament for volcanic landscapes of the Ordovician. Back to the Carboniferous to see the Coal Measures and Millstone Grits at Nant Helen and Pontneddfechan. The Middle Usk Valley trip examined glacial landforms, whilst the Westbury trip had us rummaging, enthusiastically, for vertebrate fossils at this famous site. Sedimentology at Ogmore by Sea and Nash gave a fascinating insight into previously unnoticed features of this familiar site.

This newsletter is packed with events organised for our indoor season. It looks like its going to be a fascinating programme, perfect to tempt you to renew your subscriptions! See you there. Rhian



We have one more meeting left of our field programme this will be on **Saturday 27th October 2007. The geology and scenery of the Carboniferous rocks of the Tenby area. It's a full day, lead by Sid Howells (Countryside Council for Wales)**

Meet at 10.30am at the Butts Field car park, Tenby (SN 132 032). This excursion gives us the opportunity to study various aspects of the Carboniferous Limestone and Millstone Grit sequences at Tenby. Aspects of structural and engineering geology (coastal protection) will also be covered. This is an excursion by foot and will involve a walk of several miles with some moderate gradients on beach, rocky shore and coast path.



## Winter Programme

### Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October (Cardiff)

*The Gash Breccia Problem*

Peter Walsh (University of Silesia)

**Joint meeting with the Russell Society**

The Gash Breccias contained in the Carboniferous Limestone of the Pembroke Peninsula are a problem because there are serious objections to the interpretations about their mode of origin in the only two extensive previous studies - by Ernest Dixon (1921) and Trevor Thomas (1971). The former thought that they were the products of cave roof collapse, the latter that they were tectonic breccias. Furthermore, while many accept that they

are of Triassic age, on account of the red sediment often present in the breccia interstices, this has never been confirmed and, theoretically, they could be of any age from Mississippian to Pliocene. Previous notions about their age and origins are reconsidered and some new ideas will be discussed.

**Saturday/Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> November  
Geologists' Association Annual  
Reunion (World Museum, Liverpool)**

Members of the group usually attend this annual event and the South Wales Group usually has a stand. It's always a fun couple of days with a chance to catch up with old friends and make some new ones. If you would like to go, you can get details from the Geologists Association website or contact me and I'll put you in touch with people who are going from our group.

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November (Swansea)  
The T.R.Owen Memorial Lecture**

*Pterosaurs: Dragons of the air*  
David Unwin (University of Leicester)  
Pterosaurs, flying reptiles, were first discovered in the late 1700's but, until recently, their biology, relationships and history remained only poorly understood. Now, new finds combined with new research techniques have revealed the complex behaviors, remarkable diversity and superb flight ability of these extraordinary creatures that ruled the Mesozoic skies.

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> December (Cardiff)**  
*The Quaternary deposits of the Upper Usk Basin.* Adrian Humpage (British Geological Survey)

**2008**

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> January (National  
Museum, Cardiff)**

*Holiday Geology*  
11.00am – 4.00pm

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January (Swansea)**

*Dorset's Diana, Mary Anning(1799-1847) of Lyme Regis; "the greatest fossilist the world ever knew"?* Hugh Torrens (Crewe)  
Mary Anning junior was a) female and b) orphaned at the age of 10. She was of working class, uneducated, Devon origins. She was moreover a dissenter who published nothing and traveled little. Her life is thus a) difficult but b) fascinating. The lecture will attempt to explore both these problems and her extraordinary achievements.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February (Cardiff)**

*The Fishguard District from the Ordovician to today; new insights from the survey of BGS map sheet 210*  
Huw Sheppard (British Geological Survey)

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March (Swansea)**

**AGM and Presidential Address**  
*John MacCulloch and William Smith: the men and their maps.* Tom Sharpe  
The beginnings of geological map-making in Britain 200 years ago were fraught for the men behind them. Smith struggled to make a living as he worked single-handedly to produce his map of the strata of England and Wales. He saw it published and then rapidly overtaken by the corporate venture of the new Geological Society. To cap it all, he found himself sent to prison. MacCulloch, on the other hand, had the advantage of a Government expense account while mapping Scotland, but became embroiled in financial disputes and personal jealousies, and even threatened to shoot himself. His map was not published until after he had died. In this talk we will look at the people, the personalities and the remarkable stories behind these first maps.



## Other Events

### **Forthcoming geology courses and fieldtrips led by Tom Sharpe:**

**Brecon Beacons Fforest Fawr Geopark weekend** field school organised by the University of Bristol. 29-30 September 2007. For further details contact Barbara Perks, tel 0117 954 5438 email [earth-ce@bris.ac.uk](mailto:earth-ce@bris.ac.uk)

**The volcanoes of Lanzarote, Canary Islands study tour** 20-27 April 2008 organised by the University of Bristol. For further details contact Barbara Perks, tel 0117 954 5438 email [earth-ce@bris.ac.uk](mailto:earth-ce@bris.ac.uk)

The Lifelong Learning Dept at Bristol have other courses and field trips, including **Field schools:** Geology of the Lulworth Coast, Renewable Energys and Carmarthen to Llansteffan, **Lecture series:** on Geology of the Clevedon Area, Geology and Water, Precambrian Geology at Charnwood Forest and the Evolution of Plants. **Study tours:** to Pompeii and Herculaneum, Tertiary magnetism of E Ulster, Santorini: living with a volcano and Wester Brittany: A view of Deep Crust. Go to [www.gly.bris.ac.uk/ce](http://www.gly.bris.ac.uk/ce) for more information.

**Geology of Britain's mountains.** Six linked dayschools 10am-1pm on Saturdays 13 October, 24 November, 8 December 2007, 19 January 2008, 9 February and 8 March, plus one meeting from 10am-12 noon on Saturday 5 April 2008. Meetings at Cardiff Centre for Lifelong Learning, Senghennydd Road, Cardiff

There is also

**Geology of mineral resources** by Gordon Kingston, 10 weekly meetings Tuesdays from 7-9pm starting 15 January

2008 at the Cardiff Centre for Lifelong Learning, Senghennydd Road, Cardiff

Contact: Cardiff Centre for Lifelong Learning, Senghennydd Road, Cardiff CF24 4AG tel 029 20 870000  
Email [LEARN@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:LEARN@cardiff.ac.uk)  
[www.cardiff.ac.uk/learn](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/learn)

- 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);
- **Swansea University Department of Adult Continuing Education** from 01792-295786 or [www.swansea.ac.uk/dace](http://www.swansea.ac.uk/dace).
- **Rockwatch** is a nationwide club for young geologists. It is the junior club of the Geologists' Association. You can get more information at [www.rockwatch.org.uk](http://www.rockwatch.org.uk)

### **Geoconservation Days**

The Geoconservation days are running again. These take the form of a series of field trips looking at the geological sites of interest around Cardiff. Group members, under the leadership of Steve Howe, have been involved in investigating geological exposures such as old quarries, clay pits, railway and road cuttings, and river banks in and around Cardiff. The reason being to try and identify important exposures of rocks, and rock structures, so that these can be positively identified, assessed as to their importance, and possibly made into RIGS sites. We are in the final stages of this study, revisiting the most interesting sites to gather more detailed information.

If you'd like to take part, please contact Steve ([Steve.Howe@museumwales.ac.uk](mailto:Steve.Howe@museumwales.ac.uk)) or myself for the latest dates and where we are meeting.



## News

### ***Eisteddfod 2008 – Cardiff***

Lynfa Lewis hopes to put on a geology display at the 2008 Eisteddfod in Cardiff. If you feel that you can help with any of these events; with their preparation or on the day, please don't hesitate to let any on the committee know, especially if you are a Welsh speaker.

### ***Website***

Our website, continues to grow with field trip write ups and photos in the news section and more walks leaflets being added in the last couple of years. There's even a forum where you can upload information that you might like to share. If there is anything that you would like to see added, please let us know.

[www.swga.org.uk](http://www.swga.org.uk).

### ***Emailed Newsletters***

We have had a good response to our request for people to receive their newsletter by email. With ever increasing postage costs, this obviously helps us a lot. If you would like to receive your newsletter in this way, please email me [webmaster@swga.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@swga.org.uk). The latest version of the newsletter is always available on the website in the "Events" section.

### ***Books wanted***

Do you have any geology books or maps you would like to donate to a worthy cause? The SWGA is collecting geology books and maps for sale to raise funds for our forthcoming 50th anniversary events. We had a sale at our holiday geology meeting in Swansea in January this year and plan to do the same in January 2008. We may also take some to sell at the Reunion in Liverpool on 3-4 November 2007, if we can. If you have any books you would like to pass on, then please contact Tom Sharpe on 029 20 573 265 or email [tom.sharpe@museumwales.ac.uk](mailto:tom.sharpe@museumwales.ac.uk)



That's all for now. You can take a look at our website for information on our programme and any last minute updates. [www.swga.org.uk](http://www.swga.org.uk). If you have anything that you would like to put into the next newsletter or onto our website, please let us know. The committee are also hard at work planning events for our 50 years celebrations. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let us know. Don't forget those subscription renewals!

Look forward to seeing you across at the winter meets.

**Rhian Kendall 07963 732276; [webmaster@swga.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@swga.org.uk)**