

September 2013**Fifty-Fourth Session 2012-2013**

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Lesley Cherns	John Davies	Tom Sharpe	Nigel McGaw	Cindy Howells	Charlotte West



As usual, the events for the Group are organised by Stephen Howe. What follows are his comments on the past and future programme

Field Meetings Summer 2013

This summer's field meetings have been very well attended and we have enjoyed some excellent weather. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control, the Cotswold Water Park meeting in July had to be cancelled at the last minute but Allan Cuthbertson came to our rescue and kindly volunteered to lead an excursion to Kenfig and Sker Rock, where he had us debating whether or not the dome-like structures that he and Ann had found in the Trias were stromatolites. As usual Allan had gone to a lot of trouble and the excursion included an open air lecture, with illustrations and hand specimens, in glorious weather overlooking Kenfig beach that the 24 participants

thoroughly enjoyed.

The August excursion to Freshwater West and West Angle Bay in Pembrokeshire also enjoyed superb weather. Despite coinciding with the Bank Holiday weekend 27 members attended and enjoyed a lovely day with John Nudds and Cindy Howells looking at the succession from the Ordovician up into the Pembrokeshire Limestone Group (Carboniferous). They also managed to time our arrival at West Angle to coincide with a fly past of an old Catalina Flying Boat!

Please note that the excursion to Llyn Brianne scheduled for Saturday 26th October has had to be postponed until next year and that the first lecture of the indoor session now takes place on this date.

Summer Field Meetings 2014

It is the time of year that I start turning my attention to compiling the field meeting programme for next summer. I am always looking for new ideas of where to go and

possible leaders so if anybody has any suggestions of localities that they think it would be interesting to visit and/or a possible leader could you please let me know.

Last event of the summer programme 2013



Saturday 21st September: Mynydd Llangynidr, near Trefil

Leader: Alan Bowring (Fforest Fawr Geopark)

Mynydd Llangynidr is a world-class interstratal karst site as recently recognised by its SSSI designation. The excursion will entail walking a circuit of many of the more interesting karstic features from Trefil, north past Llyn y Garn-fawr and Chartist Cave, passing from the Twrch Sandstone onto the limestone outcrop, and to the Neath Disturbance before heading back south in a circular fashion. The walk is approximately 9.5km/6miles although it can be

varied on the day according to the weather and the inclinations of the group! We should be back at the cars for between 4pm and 5pm.

Meet at Trefil (SO 122 128) for a 10am start. To get there, turn right up the sweeping hill in the heart of Trefil village and park where the northwestern end of the former tram road (modern bridleway) meets the road at the top corner. Much of the area lies at around 1700ft /530m above sea level and is very exposed so it is essential to come prepared for inclement weather. A packed lunch is also required.

Safety Policy

All participants in field events must be aware of our safety rules and regulations. Copies of this can be found on our website or from a Committee Member at a field meeting.



Winter Session 2013/2014



The winter programme gets off to a chilly start in Swansea on **Saturday 26th October** when Ian Skilling (University of South Wales) will deliver a lecture entitled *Hot and Cold: volcanic eruptions beneath ice*. With the impact such eruptions can have on our everyday life, such as the chaos caused to air traffic in northern Europe the other year, this should be a fascinating start to the session.



The cold theme continues at the meeting in Cardiff on **Saturday 20th October** when Brian Williams will talk to us on *The Last Great Ice Age: the Permo-Carboniferous of Gondwana*. At this meeting Brian will be presented with his Honorary

membership of the Group in recognition of all that he has done for us over the years.



The final meeting of 2013 is in Swansea on **Saturday 14th December** when Andy Gale will deliver the T.R.Owen memorial Lecture on the *Evolution and history of starfishes*. This was the talk that Andy was due to give last year before the snow put an end to his visit. Being the pre-Christmas lecture you can expect mince pies and Christmas Cake with your tea and coffee!



The New Year begins with our annual **Holiday Geology** meeting in the National Museum Cardiff on **Saturday 11th January**. This is always a very popular day when you get the chance to give short

presentations about your excursions at home and abroad or things of interest that you have seen over the preceding year. The content of this day is very much in the hands of our members so this is my first request for volunteers to give a short talk/slide show on the day. I have had a couple of offers so far, including a China update from Howard Bartlett, but I need at least 8 to 10 speakers to fill the day so don't be shy, volunteer! Another reminder will go out with the next Newsletter.

A buffet lunch and a welcome tea and coffee will be provided but there will be a charge of £4/head to help cover the costs. I need to book the refreshments before Christmas so can you please book your place by Wednesday 18th December. Please send your booking to steve.howe@museumwales.ac.uk



The first lecture meeting of the New Year takes place on **Saturday 25th January** in Cardiff when Bob Owens will talk on *The Geology of Mars*. With the fascinating data coming from the Mars Rover this will be a great chance to get up to date with the interpretation of the geological history of this amazing planet.



We come back down to earth and also onto the hot topic of fracking at our joint meeting with the South Wales Group of the Geological Society on **Saturday 22nd February** in Swansea, when Joe

Cartwright will talk on *Fracking: mythology, propaganda and geomechanics*. The talk will outline the scientific background to fracking, and try to probe beneath the mythology and propaganda that has abounded in recent years as part of the public debate on the rights and wrongs of this technology.



The final indoor meeting of the session, our AGM, takes place in Cardiff on **Saturday 22nd March** and is followed by the President's Address. Geraint has chosen the wide ranging topic of *The World of Geology*. The actual content is a bit of a mystery at the moment but, as is to be expected from Geraint, it is bound to be a fascinating and enjoyable end to the indoor session and to his term as President.

Stephen

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.



Other events of interest

Festival of Geology

The GA's Annual Reunion, now called the Festival of Geology, will take place on Saturday 2nd November 2013 at University College, London. The Group will be present as usual and we will be looking for volunteers to help man the stand during the day. The event runs from 10.00am – 4.00pm and as well as all the local group stands there are free lectures, an option of field meetings for the following day if people wish to stay for the weekend and

the chance to pick up a bargain at one of the many commercial stalls. The Group will cover the travel costs of volunteers who man the stand so if anybody is interested in helping out could you please contact the Secretary as soon as possible.

The Maisemore Event 2013

This annual event is jointly organised by the Russell Society Wales and West Branch and the Cheltenham Mineral & Geological Society will take place in Maisemore Village Hall, Maisemore, Gloucs. on 20th October 2013, 10.30 – 16.00. The theme is Carboniferous

Coalfields. There are 3 speakers: Tom Sharpe – Geology of the Coal Measures; Dr Stephen Plant – The mineralogy of the South Wales Coalfield; Dr Chris Cleal – Fossil plants of the Coal Measures.

Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available and a buffet lunch. Microscopes and UV

lamps will be on hand for use by all. The day is free but a donation towards costs would be appreciated. If possible, please let Marashean know you will be attending. She can be contacted on marashean@talktalk.net or on 01452 618015



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.

Membership subscriptions

It's that time of year again when we need to pay our subscriptions. If you completed a standing order form last year, you don't need to do anything. If you did not, its time to send your payment in. A membership form is enclosed with all paper versions of this Newsletter. An electronic copy can be found on the website.



A word of thanks from new Honorary Member – Howard Bartlett

I thank you for the award of Honorary Life Membership of the group. This will take pride of place alongside my 25 and 40 year service awards from Cardiff University and my two Stephan Farrell awards from my former School/Department of Earth Sciences. I've been a member of the group for longer than I was staff of Cardiff University. I promise you some exciting, stunning photographs from my next China trip this year.



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
- U3A South Wales Geology Group details from Nigel McGaw. Tel: 01656 654439
- Open University Geological Society Contact: Janet Hiscott ougs.org.uk/sevenside
- West Wales Geology Society www.westwalesgeolsoc.org.uk