

UKRIGS NEWSLETTER



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By RIGS for RIGS: Keeping you up to date with RIGS nationally and in your area.

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E D I T O R I A L

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. As we approach 2007, I feel that we have reached a significant point in RIGS history. This year we have seen an increase in the number of LGAPs being produced, either led or supported by RIGS groups and the first conference on the history of Geoconservation has been held. This must show that we have reached maturity as we have a history! The Geological Society of London will publish the proceedings in 2008. I have now given my inaugural address entitled "Why conserve rocks? Geoconservation explained" which seems also to have put Geoconservation and RIGS on the map. The term "Geodiversity underpins biodiversity", which I first coined in 2000 for a university student exam and published in Earth Heritage in 2001, seems to have become a common phrase. This is gratifying as it links the two nature conservation concepts together. Local sites and PPS9 now incorporate Geodiversity, and

understanding of the terms is spreading amongst practitioners. Indeed two professional institutes, IEEM and IEMA, have both had or requested workshops for their members. All this is to the good. As the first discussions on the need for a National GAP have taken place with a further meeting to take place in Chester on 19th March 2007 we reach the national agenda level. Sites will always need to be RIGGED but I think we have now reached a different playing field. Climate change is certainly pushing the political agenda and I think there is mileage to be made for geodiversity here. I hope you have a good break,

Cynthia.



U P C O M I N G C O N F E R E N C E S

Geodiversity, Geoconservation and GeoValue Conference

24 January 2007, 10.00am - 3.30pm, Nottingham.

At British Geological Survey, Keyworth Nottingham NG12 5GG, this free, one-day conference includes dissemination of the results of the completed ALSF/MIST/MIRO research project entitled "GeoValue: Valuing Geodiversity for the Community". The conference will be of interest to those involved in geoconservation and geological site designation, quarry company geologists, managers and planners involved in decision-making where geodiversity is an issue, quarry company personnel hosting geological visitors, owners of former quarries and other geological sites, and leaders of groups undertaking geological fieldwork in the UK. Prior registration is required.

For further information and to register, contact the co-ordinators: Peter Scott: P.W.Scott@ex.ac.uk or David Roche drgeo@ukgateway.net

Historic Scotland National Stone Conference Bridging With Stone

7th – 8th February 2007, in Glasgow.

Dinner at the Radisson SAS Hotel. Stone has always been a key component in shaping Scotland's architectural landscape. Its demand in new build construction, as well as repairs to the country's historic buildings, is a testament to its durability and beauty. However, without a commitment to training and investment this unique piece of Scotland's character could be lost and that is the key message of the Bridging with Stone conference. To find out more, email events-scotland@rics.org.

SPECIAL MENTION

First Professor of Geoconservation

Europe's first professor of Geoconservation, Professor Cynthia Burek, gave her inaugural lecture on Friday December 1st 2006 at Chester, entitled "Why conserve rocks? Geoconservation explained" (photo above). A packed lecture theatre listened to this interesting talk.





UKRIGS Education Project Update: Earth Science On-Site

John R. Reynolds & Rick Ramsdale.

Work on the Project continues, with the help of local RIGS Groups and ESTA members. The conference season in September was busy. Tedbury Camp and Vallis Vale (Somerset) materials were on display at the ESTA Conference in Bristol, with reports and an on-site fieldwork session. Barrow Hill (Dudley) was visited, and full reports given as part of the UKRIGS Conference. The Ercall KS2 materials are now on the website. We visited Meldon Aplite Quarry in early November where Kevin Page and the Devon RIGS Group introduced us to not only the geology but to the enthusiastic education staff from Dartmoor National Park. Our final field session was another visit to Rytton Pools, hosted by Martyn Bradley of the Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group. They are doing sterling work maintaining access to sands and till. On the website, the separation of the Earth Science On-Site materials from the main UKRIGS web-pages has enabled usage to be accurately logged. Five sites have received over 160 hits each since the count started in August. To provide your feedback on these web-pages, click on "Education" at: www.ukrigs.org.uk. Have close look and please email us at education@ukrigs.org.uk. Thanks to all concerned! We have spare CDs of all materials written to mid-September. These were distributed at both the ESTA and UKRIGS Conferences. They are free – please ask John at jr.reynolds@virgin.net. The UKRIGS Education Project is funded by Defra's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, administered by Natural England.

UKRIGS Handbook

Discussions have taken place as to the future of the UKRIGS Handbook. If you would like to comment on how you use or do not use the RIGS Handbook please contact either the editor, Professor Cynthia Burek at c.burek@chester.ac.uk or Dr. Tom Hose at those01@bcuc.ac.uk. Thank you.

New Displays for UKRIGS Groups

UKRIGS has a new, professionally produced display for use at events and functions. The display comprises of two pull-up roller banners, featuring the corporate UKRIGS, and RIGS more generally. Each is 800mm wide by 2m tall. They can be used separately or side by side. Together the display has already made a striking statement at the Geoparks meeting in Belfast, the Dudley Rock and Fossil Festival, the Geologists Association annual meeting in London, and the History of Geoconservation Conference in Dudley. Two sets are available for member groups to freely borrow for their local events. To borrow a set, please contact Cynthia Burek c.burek@chester.ac.uk 01244 513051 or Alan Cutler info@ukrigs.org.uk 01384 443644.

UKRIGS Group Survey

Please complete and return your RIGS group survey ASAP to Alan Cutler. Any problems email him at alan.cutler@btconnect.com.

UKRIGS Web Updates

Craig Slawson

New additions to the website since August include: the "Earth Science On-site" resource for school teachers (esos.ukrigs.org.uk), an e-mail discussion forum for member groups of UKRIGS (email me if you are a UKRIGS member and want to join in - webmaster@ukrigs.org.uk) and Google Analytics, a tool for monitoring who visits which areas of the website. Current results from Google Analytics shows that the main UKRIGS web-pages are visited by a select group, mostly from the UK (80%), the USA, Canada and Europe. The five most popular sections of Earth Science On-Site, are Park Hall Country Park in Staffs, The Ercall in Shropshire, Black Rock in Derbyshire, Tedbury Camp in Somerset, and the National Stone Centre in Derbyshire. Visitors to Earth Science On-Site are mainly based in the UK and Ireland (83%) while others come from all across North America, Canada, Australia, Europe, Africa and China!

NATIONAL NEWS

National Trust Geology Policy

The National Trust has for sometime been aware that it has not always acknowledged or promoted the significance of its geological resource or clearly set out a policy on its conservation. Therefore, two draft National Trust policies are currently being drawn up, in collaboration with UKRIGS, the GA and the Geoconservation Commission: a Geology Policy and a Collecting Policy. These formalise and bring together what has been previously discussed and produced in a number of papers and reports. One interesting question asked in the collaboration is "Should we be selling geological specimens from Trust land in Trust shops?". We await the final document with interest. To find out more or add your comments, contact Lucy Cordrey on lucy.cordrey@nationaltrust.org.uk.

Local Sites Guidance

A DEFRA led seminar called "Taking Forward the Guidance" is planned for Thursday 25 January 2007 at the Birmingham Hippodrome. UKRIGS has a full representation, together with geological and wildlife groups and planners. Natural England helped to shape the agenda and ensure that RIGS groups present and run workshops. There may still be some 'spare' places.

National GAP?

A meeting in Chester on 5th October, attended by representatives from England, N.Ireland, Scotland and Wales, explored the appropriateness of an NGAP. The initial outcome was positive, and the NGAP idea may be discussed further with groups developing LGAPs. Progress of this idea will be tracked with interest, to the next meeting in March 2007.



Geodiversity Good Practise

Hugh Pruddon

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council have produced a document which shows the way by which we can bring geodiversity onto a par with biodiversity and archaeology, in terms of the time, money and recognition given to it by local authorities. It is called "The UKRIGS Geoconservation Association: Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance for Nature Conservation-Geodiversity and Development in The United Kingdom." Go to www.ukrigs.org.uk, click on Downloads, and look under the Public Downloads section. This is quite the best geodiversity conservation statement I have ever seen and goes much further than the much-publicised PPS9. It must surely be a candidate for national adoption. It is clear, well structured and incisive. It asks for no more than is standard practice elsewhere. Why do geologists put up with second-class status?

Natural England Progress

Natural England is settling down, but has a very target led approach and geology does not feature highly in the major corporate targets. The profile of geology is currently lower than it was in English Nature. We may need to petition harder to get things done.

Soil Protection Strategy

In September, the European Commission published "The European Thematic Strategy For Soil Protection", one of seven thematic strategies presented by the European Commission. Other strategies cover waste prevention and recycling, air pollution, the marine environment, natural resources, the urban environment and pesticides. The Strategy for Soil Protection includes a draft framework directive for soil protection, and a soil strategy and monitoring framework. For more information and to download the strategy, go to ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index

LOCAL NEWS

English Stone Forum

The English Stone Forum had its first meeting on 16th November, chaired by Brian Marker. A wide range of representatives were present. This forum aims to help identify and promote England's unique stone heritage, mirroring the Scottish Stone Liaison Group. It was born out of the "England's Heritage in Stone" conference in York, in March 2005.

Regional Spatial Strategy for NE England

Hugh Barron

The profile of geodiversity is on the rise - geodiversity is extensively referenced in the June 2005 Regional Spatial Strategy for NE England (2005 - 2021): The submission draft has 21 references to geodiversity! See [www.viewnortheast.com / documents / index](http://www.viewnortheast.com/documents/index)

Scottish Geology Festival

From September 2006, the Scottish Geology Festival will be an annual, rather than biennial event. The organisers established that there is sufficient interest by enthusiasts, professionals, and various groups, societies and museums, to organise and run events to meet the public demand every year! More information at www.scottishgeology.com

UKRIGS GROUPS NEWS

Bedfordshire & Luton Geology Group

A downloadable education pack is available from the website Bedsrigs.org.uk, for Key Stage 2 classes and upwards. Topics are Bedfordshire rocks and fossils, with maps, worksheets and case studies. Well worth a visit.

Geological Society of London

There are a large number of anniversaries and celebrations at the moment, and 2007 marks 200 years of the foundation of the Geological Society of London, the world's leading geological society.

NEWRIGS

North East Wales RIGS has been awarded four grants not one as implied earlier. These are from: the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund for Wales, Clwydian Range AONB Sustainability Fund, the Countryside Council for Wales, and Tarmac. (This is an amendment to the previous announcement.)

Berkshire RIGS Group

Heather Whetter

A large number of sarsons stones have been discovered

in a farmer's field in Peasmore in Berkshire. To avoid damage to his plough, the farmer dug up the stones and piled them at the edge of his field by a public footpath. Berkshire RIGS group are involved in investigating the possibility of this being a man-made stone circle.

Black Country Geological Society

The autumn celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of Wren's Nest National Nature Reserve, were extremely enjoyable and successful. The Wren's Nest Conference in early September was a geological master class, with fourteen speakers giving short presentations on various aspects of the Wren's Nest, and emphasising the international importance of this small area of the Black Country. Then, society members helped at the family Rock and Fossil Fair, which was extensively covered in the local press, raising public awareness. The canal trip underground, celebrated not only the National Nature Reserve, but also the fame of the Wren's Nest in the Victorian scientific world. The anniversary celebrations ended with 'The History of Geoconservation conference' at Dudley Museum and Art Gallery in November. This has been a very busy year, celebrating a wonderful heritage and resource. Bill Groves.

Greater London

Vernon Marks

Major steps forward have been taken in London geoconservation! The Greater London Plan, "Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London", states that the Mayor will work with partners to ensure the protection and promotion of geodiversity, and that London boroughs should give strong protection to RIGS, and identify and protect additional sites of value at a local level. This plan emerged from a meeting about PPS9 in 2005 between the Greater London Authority and interested geodiversity parties. We are very pleased with how this work has proceeded and the positive attitude shown by the GLA to geoconservation. A continuation meeting is being held shortly to see how this work can be taken forward as a partnership.

Somerset Geology Group

Temporary geological exposures give a unique and short-lived insight into our subterranean world, and need to be taken advantage of quickly. Earlier this year, Somerset Geology Group took such an opportunity, when the National Grid laid a natural gas pipeline from Ilchester to Barrington. They logged an 8-mile stretch through an almost continuous section of clay vale type land, collected a number of ammonites and discovered some previously unrecorded faults. This adds to the group's notes made over 45 years of pipeline and road works, building up a detailed knowledge of the stratigraphy and structure of the area. BGS now has a copy of this report.

South London RIGS

Vernon Marks

A "London Geodiversity Partnership" has been set up to prepare an Audit document of geodiversity in London. It will give an overview of London's geology, with a detailed list of Geological SSSI's, RIGS and LIGS in a similar manner to the BGS Durham Geodiversity Audit, but with more detail about the individual sites. BGS will manage the project, which is a fully paid professional study with RIGS input.

South Yorkshire RIGS Group

Calling all members – past, present and future! Our last official meeting was five years ago and members have since, drifted away. The South Yorkshire region desperately needs its passionate and professional RIGS group back again. Geology and geoconservation have almost disappeared off the local authority's agenda! Help is needed for it to regain the recognition it deserves. We need an LGAP, and people to advise, and pressure the local authorities about conserving sites of interest and importance, before it is too late. Contact Scott Engering: scott@sengering.fsnet.co.uk, to be involved.

Welsh RIGS groups unite

Stewart Campbell

The Association of Welsh RIGS Groups, currently comprising NEWRIGS, Gwynedd and Môn, and Central Wales RIGS Groups, has produced a new leaflet about Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS) and RIGS groups in Wales. Although the leaflet started as a NEWRIGS project, some joined-up thinking by the groups at their regular liaison meetings resulted in the all-Wales leaflet. All three groups have received ALSF grants, administered by the Welsh Assembly Government, to establish comprehensive networks of RIGS in their areas. Funding for the design of the leaflet was kindly provided by NEWRIGS via an "Awards For All" grant.

It is always interesting and enjoyable to read about RIGS groups and their work. To share your news and events in this quarterly newsletter, please contact Prof Cynthia Burek, RIGS Newsletter Editor, c.burek@chester.ac.uk or Vic Page, Assistant RIGS Newsletter Editor, v.page@chester.ac.uk 250 words max, pictures if you can. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual authors and unless stated, do not represent the opinions of UKRIGS.

DIARY DATES

2007 – 200th Anniversary of the Geological Society of London.

2008 – 150th Anniversary of the Geologists Association (the GA).

January 24th – Geodiversity, Geoconservation and GeoValue Conference, Nottingham. Contact p.w.scott@ex.ac.uk for information.

January 25th – DEFRA Seminar "Taking Forward The Guidance"

February 7th – 8th – National Stone Conference, Glasgow. Contact events-scotland@rics.org for information.

March – National GAP Meeting

September 13th – "The ground beneath our feet: 200 years of geology in the Marches" Festival. www.shropshiregeology.org.uk/festival.

CREDITS

UKRIGS Geoconservation Association
National Stone Centre. Porter Lane,
Middleton by Wirksworth,
Derbyshire, DE4 4LS, Tel 01384-443644

info@ukrigs.org.uk
www.ukrigs.org.uk

Executive Committee

Chair: Mike Browne – Lothian & Borders
Treasurer: Alan Cutler – Black Country GS
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Chester

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