



THE OPEN UNIVERSITY GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY GOGLEDD CYMRU (NORTH WALES) BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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Branch Organisers Bit (February 2004)

This year has already started with the Branch Annual General Meeting at the beginning of February. My thanks go to everyone who attended. It was good to see so many Branch members there. The people who attended the AGM also listened to two talks given by David Maddocks the OUGS Chairman. The topics were on the Geology and Wildlife of Tanzania and Namibia. The photographs were spectacular, and the talks very entertaining. It was well worth queuing with the traffic going to the local Football match to hear David speak.

I would like to personally thank the Committee of 2003 for their efforts through the year which helped to ensure a successful year of Field Trips. In particular I would like to mention Sue Hughes and Fred Owen, both of whom have been on the Committee since the Branch started in 1998.

Sue was the Branch Treasurer until the AGM in 2003. Fred has been Branch secretary and lately the Branch Information officer. We hope to see both at future field trips.

The Committee for 2004

At the AGM I announced that Ann Bunning would also be resigning from the Committee at some point during 2004. She will be leaving the area in the next few months, and will therefore be unable to carry on as Newsletter Editor. We were therefore looking for a number of volunteers to join the committee. My thanks go to Frank Buxton and David Decker, who both offered their services for 2004. Both are current students of the OU.

E:mailed reminders of events

Frank Buxton has agreed to take on the e:mail list which reminds people of GCy events coming up, that Fred had been keeping up to date. An e:mail has gone to everyone on that list saying that if they no longer wish to be reminded of field trips a few days before the event, then they should e:mail Frank and let him know. Anyone would like to be added to the list should also let Frank Buxton know.

Field Trips and Transport

The Committee are progressing arrangements for future field trips. If you see a trip you would like to attend, but either don't want to go on your own, or have no transport available, please let me know. We may be able to arrange a lift to the field trip location or arrange to share driving with someone else from your area.

If you think you would like to go on any of the GCy Filed Trips advertised in the Newsletter, please ring/e:mail the contact or myself

before the day to indicate your interest. Sometimes events get cancelled or changed due to unforeseen circumstances. We would like to be able to contact people in those circumstances to avoid unnecessary confusion or a wasted trip.

Annual Subscription

I would like to remind everyone to fill in the Annual Subscription form in the National Newsletter if you have not already done so. If you need a copy of the form let me know and I will arrange to get one to you.

I look forward to seeing you on the first field trip.

Best Wishes Rachel

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Your new committee for 2004 is

Branch Organiser	Rachel Atherton
Treasurer	Elaine Tilson
Newsletter editor	Tony James
Webmaster	Wendy Owens
Committee Member	Frank Buxton
Committee Member	David Decker

The branch field trip programme for this year is (so far)

March 27th Wrexham Science Fair - Any help would be welcome... We have been given the theme this year of 'Fossils, etc.'. Please contact Tony James or John Wilkins of the NWGA if you require information... Interesting samples will be a much appreciated.

April 17th Nanach Quarry - contact Wendy

May 16th Conwy Mountain - Gladys Dinnacombe - Contact Ann, the expected plan is to meet at 10.00 for 10.30 Town Square Conwy by Town Hall to observe The Conwy volcanic group; Rhyolite flow banding; Conwy Grits; greywacke shales. Sturdy boots and wet weather gear are required; some areas are steep and exposed, packed lunch advisable (a really wet weather programme would look at the Castle and a Town Trail where most of the above can be seen). Estimated time of finish 3/3.30

June 19th Cadair Idris Glaciation This will be led by Prof. Mike Hambrey, more information e.g. what & where will follow.

July/Sept. Derek France. How to examine a peat core. This was planned last year but rain stopped play. Hopeful.

Sept. 26th Revision Day This is of interest to S260/S269 students Queens Park High School Chester your help will be appreciated - Sue Hughes

T.B.A. Working Day at Minera Quarry Uncovering unconformities to die for, more news will be forthcoming soon.

Regarding field trips we have been again asked to issue the advice concerning insurance on field trips - "Each person attending field trips does so on the understanding that they attend at their own risk. The OUGS has Public Liability Cover for field and indoor meetings, but Personal Accident cover and personal Liability cover remain the participants' responsibility. Members with house insurance will probably find they are covered. Members should also note that they will be required to take out appropriate travel insurance for any overseas visits: An annual travel insurance may be the best form of cover for any member who regularly attends field events." Please also remember that the cost of each trip is £1.50 for full members and £2.00 for temp/family members.



Field Trip to the Great and Little Ormes April 2003

Arriving in Llandudno I got out of the car and got back in again very quickly. The wind was blowing cold and quite strong so warmer clothes were needed. After adding extra layers, the group collected together by the Pier.

The first exposures were along the side of the road and these were inspected together with the exposure almost covered by the tide, at the bottom of the steps to the beach. In these exposures are well bedded dolomites (Llandudno Pier Dolomite) with lenses of dark grey limestone. The dolomite contained drusy cavities with large crystals of calcite and dolomite. Down by the beach, a variety of fossils could be seen in the limestones.



The Rock Caves were next and discussion of whether these were man-made or natural followed. Here above the dolomite are mudstones and limestones with a variety of fossils. The group then made their way to the Halfway Station on the Great Orme. Some walked while some drove there. Up here the wind was much stronger but the rain stayed away. After we had all gathered together again we walked to the old quarry which has a bed of sandstone in the quarry face. This is the only exposure on the Great Orme where this sandstone, the Craig Rofft Sandstone can be seen. It is brown or purplish and varies from fine to coarse grained. We then walked up the Orme to the main quarry, Bishops Quarry, where the Bishops Quarry Limestone is exposed. Here much conservation work has been done, loose faces removed and protective coverings for others. The new exposed faces enabled a better view of the limestone. Luckily the large blocks of fossils at the rear of the quarry were still there. These are most spectacular *Gigantoproductus* sp. *maximus* fossils in what could be called a death-bed assemblage. After lunch we met in the car park near the Little Orme. After a short walk we looked at the reef section of the Little Orme but this exposure seemed less clear than on previous occasions. As it faces the sea, it is badly weathered. We then looked at the main quarry face on the lower level. It was noticed that the path to the Upper Level is now in much better condition and on another visit the Upper Level will be able to be included. Time was a factor on this trip and we tried to include as much as possible. On the way off the Little Orme we inspected a huge rock which had fallen from the Upper level.



This was a breccia containing fragments of limestone, sandstone, chert, marl, mudstone and a purple siltstone. Although some of it had been removed by collectors, a huge block still remained. Unfortunately, the block of fossil coral had gone, removed by collectors I presume. A great pity as it was a superb example!

What a day it had been; buffeted by the wind on the top of the Great Orme and quite cold but at least it did not rain!

Gladys Dinnacombe

If you have any photos that you would like to include in the newsletter please e-mail them to me at anthony_james@btinternet.com.

Here are some more events for your diary from the NWGA,

March 17th at 7:30 p.m. Global Warming and Sea Level Rise: The Geological Context. A talk by Paul Markwick of Robertson Research. Paul's academic interest and commercial interest in the last 10 years makes him well placed to put these "hot topics" into perspective.

April 25th at 2p.m. Knutsford, Cheshire Fred Owen will lead his walk around the Building Stones of Knutsford. Contact: Jane Michael

April 21 Wed. NEWI Wrexham at 7.30 p.m. The Life and Work of Alfred Wegener.

A talk by Clare Dudman. The extraordinary life of the scientist who developed the revolutionary theory of continental drift, Alfred Wegener remains largely unknown: an arctic explorer and war hero he died heroically on the Greenland ice sheet aged 50. The speaker will illustrate her talk using her own and contemporary photographs collected during her research for her novel: 'WEGENER'S JIGSAW'.

And from the [1]LGS

13/14 March: Yorkshire Coast Field Weekend with Mike Romano, Martin Whyte & Joe Crossley.

16 March: Talk: Soft Bodied Sensations from the Silurian of the Welsh Borders.

20 March: W Smith Map and Rock Around Liverpool, joint field trip with N Staffs GA, leader Hilary Davies

3 April: N Wales field trip, Sylvia Gonzales and Joe Crossley

16 May: Southern Lakes field trip, Cyril Kerley and Tom Metcalfe

LGS contact Joe Crossley

Editor's Note

From this issue I have taken over the editorship of our newsletter. Never having worn editors shoes before you may find my fledgling attempts a little clumsy, please be patient. For the time being I have reverted to the old single column (easier to manipulate) style, with practice I hope, soon, to return to the more appealing, but more demanding, 2 column magazine format. Don't be afraid to send in your advice, photos or articles - it's your newsletter and any help will be more than welcome.

By strange circumstances, I've inherited an old geology book - It's dated MDCCLXXII which I think is 1772. The book is a series of letters to the Royal Society from Sir W. Hamilton. The letters are about some observations made of Vesuvius and Etna and I will try and reproduce some plates in later issues. This is a small excerpt about a Vesuvius eruption in 1764:-

"On Good Friday, the 28th of March at 7 o'clock at night, the lava began to boil over the mouth of the volcano, at first in one stream; and soon, after dividing itself into two, it took its course towards Porticini. It was preceded by a violent explosion, which caused a partial earthquake in the neighbourhood of the mountain, and a shower of red hot stones and cinders were thrown up to a considerable height.

Immediately on sight of the lava, I left Naples with a party of my countrymen, whom I found as impatient as myself to satisfy their curiosity in examining so curious an operation of nature, I passed the whole night upon the mountain; and observed that, though the red hot stones were thrown up in much greater number and to a more considerable height than before the appearance of the lava, the report was much less considerable than some days before the eruption.... The lava, after having run pure for about a hundred yards, began to collect cinders, stones &c. and a scum was formed on its surface, which in the daytime had the appearance of the river Thames, as I have seen it after a hard frost and great fall of snow, when beginning to thaw, carrying down vast masses of snow and ice."