



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



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Sept. 2004

Branch Organisers Bit (September 2004)

Welcome to the Gogledd Cymru Branch Newsletter for September 2004. Now we are in September many of you will be considering how to approach the upcoming exams in October. For the last few years GCy and NW branches have jointly organised a revision day for those of you studying S260 and S269. This year is no exception. This newsletter carries details for those who are interested. The OUGS newsletter that you will have recently received states that the Revision Day is for S260 only. This is not correct –S269 is also included. We have access to the regions OU Tutors who give their free time to tutor those who attend, including S269 tutors. We have had some very positive feedback from those who have attended in previous years, who all felt it had been worth the time and effort. There are still a few places left as I write, so if you are interested please contact Sue Hughes as soon as possible to check available places.

The OUGS newsletter is advertising the Annual General Meeting on Saturday 20th November 2004. The day of the AGM usually starts with a Branch Organisers Meeting in the morning which I attend on behalf of the branch. If there are any issues which you would like to be discussed please get in touch with me before Friday 19th November. There are field trips arranged for other members of the group. The AGM takes part of the afternoon after which there is the Geoff Brown Memorial lecture given by an eminent Geologist. This year it is 'The ups and downs of Mount Etna' by Dr John Murray. The evening involves a Dinner and Disco. This gives plenty of time to get to know other OUGS members.

Both Wendy Owens and I are going to the AGM in Telford. We will be going on Friday and returning during the day on Sunday. If you are interested in attending but would find it difficult to get there, please feel free to ring either Wendy or me (phone numbers at the end of the newsletter), as we may be able to help with transport. If you are not sure if you would enjoy it, we could tell you more about what happens to help you make up your mind.

We are in the process of trying to put together the program of events for 2005. We are open to any suggestions, either for field trips or lectures during the year. We are also open to suggestions for locations to hold lectures if they are feasible (this may depend on cost of hiring a room). We are aware that the GCy membership is widespread, and are trying to ensure that there is something for everyone.

Finally, the committee would like to thank Lyn Relph for responding to the appeal for help in the last newsletter. Lyn has volunteered to help where she can, for which we are grateful.

Good luck to all of you who are taking exams.

Best Wishes

Rachel

In the next few issues the committee members have agreed to be profiled, including a mug-shot. To start the proceedings, this issue's victim will be Rachel.



Rachel is Branch Organiser and has occupied the role for the last 2 years. Prior to that, she was the Branch Secretary for 12 months. Her interest in Geology started at School when she chose Geography as an A Level subject. Unfortunately geology was not an option, so a decision was made to study the subject later if possible.

Rachel initially qualified with a Bachelor of Education having studied Geography and Environmental Science. The intention to teach was overtaken by events and now she manages a small group of scientists undertaking safety assessments. The urge to study geology persisted and in 1994 she started the first OU course. The range of courses over the next seven years

included the main geology courses S236, S237, S330, S338, S339. Other courses included Biology Form and Function (S203), T237 and T303 (environmental engineering courses). A BSc (hons) was received in 2001.

Having spent 7 years studying it was time to turn attention to other things, including supporting the GCy OUGS branch. That was until last year when the urge returned to start studying again. This time the intention is to choose environmental and astronomy courses.

Geology for Kids (and their teacher)

A teacher's tale.

As some of you may know, I teach in a primary school, and my class consists of 7-9 year-olds. Whenever I can geology is brought into my class, we have an ever-growing collection of labelled rocks and fossils from field trips and holidays (they have even been known to dig up gardens, playing-fields and beaches bringing their trophies to me for identification.). The children are fascinated by them, not so the rest of the staff who, I suspect, secretly think I am a saddo.

Imagine my pleasure...nay, overwhelming delight, when our science subject leader gave me the options list for science activities in the Wrexham Science Fair. There, in black and white, a QUARRY TRIP. Guess which option I chose?!

The day dawned and, after explaining – several times – why they needed multiple layers of clothing, why they needed to listen very carefully (it was a working quarry after all) I went to school ready in my field-trip gear; Hi-Vis jacket; waterproofs (thankfully not needed); hard-hat with Wendy written on it (for some reason this resulted in choruses of “Bob, the Builder”), the ever-present backpack. I don't know who was more excited, them or me. At last we were on our way to Aberduna Quarry at Maeshafn near Mold.

Upon our arrival we were met by three ladies, who are the educational officers. Then children and helpers were kitted out with jackets and hard hats. As we walked to the viewing platform above the quarry the reaction by one and all was a collective “WOW!” – as the children saw the extent limestone and the size of the machinery at work. Some geology stuff – Aberduna quarries limestone from the lower end of the Loggerheads Series. Clearly visible were strata dipping at 40°-45° with S/SE strike. The massive limestone beds are interbedded and overlain by sandy beds of about ½ to 3 metres. At this point whilst keeping up a running commentary, I was bombarded by my class' questions.

Next to be visited was the educational office – a port-a-cabin – where there was an impressive display of rocks and minerals (not all from the quarry, though). After watching a video about the quarry and the uses of limestone (which the children knew – they had been well prepared!), we began the activities.

We made a cement slab – amazing how many prospective builders were in the class – each one took home a paper-weight (which has since been painted and taken home). We tested the hardness of various rocks – chalk, limestone, granite and a very crumbly shale and sandstone – by using a metal tube down that was dropped a weight attached to a rope. It took two children to hold the weight. They had to guess which rock would be strongest (i.e. suffer the least damage). Out of the granite and shale most thought the granite would be the strongest, nice to know they had been paying attention in class. One even pointed out that it would only be a fair test if the samples were the same size, nice laboratory thinking.

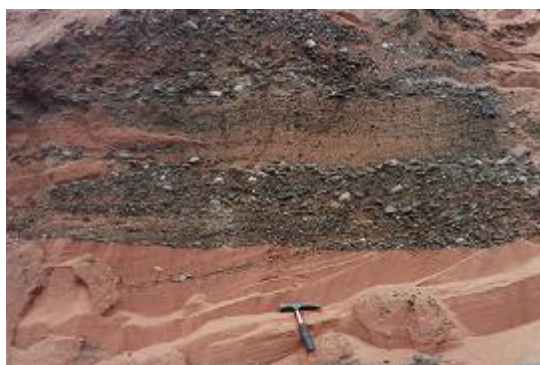
We next tried sifting the rocks into various sizes, this was enjoyed, whilst was explained what the various sizes were used for. There were three highlights to the visit, one was sitting in the large bucket of a digger (fantastic photo opportunity), the second was getting wet in the sprayers playing on the lorries (this they found out was to minimise dust in the surrounding villages) and after spraying getting weighed collectively on the weighbridge. The third was our fossil hunting! The quarry workers had brought up large hand size pieces (some a bit bigger – Tony James backpack size!) of limestone, absolutely packed with productids, corals and chrinoids.

As we came to leave and say our goodbyes, all of my class had had a great day. Their responses ranged from “10 out of 10, this is the best trip we’ve ever had, do we have to go? I don’t want to go home” – two of them burst into tears [sounds like an OUGS field trip – Ed.]! We boarded the bus with our concrete paperweights and tightly clutching our “trophy” – the fossils. “Miss” took a few extra to join the classroom collection!

We had had a wonderful day, and I like to hope that with my classroom efforts and the memories of the day, the children’s enthusiasm and fascination for geology continues to grow. Who knows what the future holds?

Wendy Owens

April 2004



layout of the beds indicates, so if you’ve got the answers (or any ideas) please e-mail them for the next issue. A lot of the quarry had become overgrown and couldn’t be seen, (We did see a fox, however, calmly trotting through our field trip).

Nannerch Quarry

The trip to Nannerch quarry was a bit of a washout I’m afraid. Not many people turned out, and it was a pretty damp and miserable day. We did see some nice gravel beds, so I have included some photos of the bedding.

We didn’t really work out what history the



Announcements

I’ve also been asked to remind everyone that the cost of field trips is £2.00. This covers expenses for the leader (travelling/photocopying etc.). Please also remember to check your insurance details for trips, the exact requirements are published in the national newsletter.

Wendy has some old course units, which she is willing to donate to anyone who might be interested. Please contact her on 01352 715531 for details.

Please note that the website address is www.OUGS.org.uk. We are also attempting to put a copy of each newsletter on the Gogledd Cymru website, any photos can then be viewed in full colour and at much better resolution.

S260 & S269
REVISION DAY
STUDY CENTRE
QUEENS PARK SCHOOL
CHESTER
SUNDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2004
NORTH WEST AND NORTH WALES TUTORS
Further details from:
Sue Hughes

Events Diary

Sept. Derek France. How to examine a peat core. This was planned last year but rain stopped play. Hopefully there are plans afoot to obtain a portable peat-corer, it should prove an interesting trip. Stay posted

Sept. 26th Revision Day This is of interest to S260/S269 students Queens Park High School Chester your help will be appreciated or if you are interested in attending contact Sue Hughes

30th October Working Day at Minera Quarry Uncovering unconformities to die for, more news will be forthcoming soon. We will need trowels, hard hat, pickaxes, stiff brushes. Meet at 10am. Details of Minera Quarry working day can be got from Wendy. Leader Cynthia Burek.

Nov. 7 Bangor. Trip round Prince Madog Research Vessel + geology in Bangor area (Joint with NWGA) Contact Rachel Atherton

20th November OUGS AGM on (see OUGS Newsletter).

Your new committee for 2004 is

Branch organiser	Rachel Atherton
Treasurer	Frank Buxton
Newsletter Editor	Tony James
Webmaster	Wendy Owens
Committee member	David Decker