

UKRIGS NEWSLETTER



Spring 2007, Vol.5, No.1

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

*P1 – Editorial, White Paper Threat, Happy Birthday GeolSoc
P2 – News from UKRIGS Exec, News from UKRIGS Groups
P3 – National News, Conference Report
P4 – Upcoming Conferences, Publications, Diary Dates*

E D I T O R I A L

Dear Colleagues,

Well Summer approaches with the promise of fieldwork. However I do feel that I must report on the very successful National GAP workshop held here in University of Chester. About 45 people turned up for a series of short talks to set the scene, followed by an afternoon of workshops. We decided not to get bogged down on boundaries and nearly came up with the main aim of the NGAP. We then discussed objectives. A small steering committee was suggested with

names, and the process looks set to move on. The day was funded by English Nature and the Centre for Science Communication in the University of Chester. There was much discussion, networking and food for thought.

Have a good summer,
Cynthia



ACTION REQUIRED

Barker White Paper Threat

RIGS are protected by policies such as PPS9. However, future RIGS may be threatened by the Planning White Paper due in 'late Spring'.

The Barker report makes recommendations to enable more economical and rapid land planning applications. If economics are considered alone, the environment will surely suffer. See www.hm-treasury.gov.uk, 'independent reviews' for more information on the Barker Review.

RIGS Groups have the opportunity to push the environment higher up the government's agenda, and bring the nascent White Paper some balance.

Three Big Threats are: 1) a pro-development planning system, 2) a review of Green Belt boundaries, and 3) abolishing a critical public consultation stage in the planning application.

Please ask your MP to pass your concerns on to the Chancellor, and Ruth Kelly and to sign the two Early Day Motions expressing concern: EDM 564 by Drew, and EDM 679 by Spelman, Write to: <your MP's name>, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA, or email your MP from www.writetothem.com

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

GeolSoc is 200 This Year

Happy 200th Birthday to the Geological Society of London; the world's oldest national scientific and professional society for Earth scientists. Expect events throughout the year and across the UK for

this bicentennial celebration. Planned events include: a Heroes Initiative – events based around geological heroes, a student essay competition, a public lecture series across the UK, and an international conference in London – Earth Science in the Service of Society. Find out more at www.geolsoc.org.uk





UKRIGS EXEC

UKRIGS Education Project Completed

The final Project Report and Evaluation for the Earth Science On-Site Education Project was completed in March 2007. The project was funded by DEFRA's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, administered by Natural England. Project Managers: John Reynolds and Alan Cutler. Education Officer: Rick Ramsdale.

Between June 2004 and March 2007 the UKRIGS ESO-S educational project succeeded in creating freely available, high quality materials illustrating the Earth science educational possibilities at twelve ex-aggregate, SSSI/RIGS locations across England. These materials are currently being viewed on the website by a growing number of interested parties. Gaps remain in the ESO-S site coverage across England, and there remains the task of monitoring and facilitating the continuing uptake and impact of the project. The report's recommendations include: continuing support for school staff directly and through the Local Authority and the Learning Outside The Classroom Network, extending the project's geographical coverage and publicity.

Please email Vic Page for your copy of the full report. v.page@chester.ac.uk

UKRIGS Handbook

Web-based RIGS Handbooks will probably be how this useful document develops. The committee are seeking funding for either a UK-wide RIGS Handbook, or separate Handbooks for each country. The current handbook chapters can be downloaded from www.ukrigs.org.uk/handbook.

Geoconservation Database

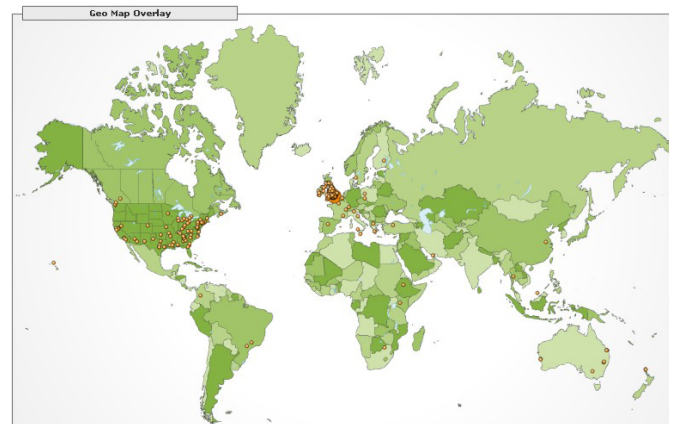
Does it work for you? The Geoconservation Database is a tool for geological site recording and RIGS assessment. It provides a common way for RIGS groups to communicate the features of their sites, and can be downloaded from the UKRIGS website. Ideally all RIGS groups will be using this soon. Please let Cynthia Burek know how useful and useable this tool is for your group so that we can improve it if necessary.

Geology Trusts to Join UKRIGS?

A meeting between UKRIGS and the Geology Trusts will consider a possible partnership of the two organisations. This would give each a much-needed, stronger national voice. Details will be discussed in Warwick on 28th March.

UKRIGS Web Updates

This map, produced by Craig Slawson, shows the location of visitors to the UKRIGS website. Most are from the UK, many are from North America, and some are from distant places such as New-Zealand, Brazil and Thailand.



UKRIGS GROUPS

Elsbeth's Books Support Students

Elsbeth Read, a former **Scottish RIGS** volunteer and Open University tutor, had amassed an interesting library of geology books and journals. David Reid, Elspeth's husband, has now donated these to the Highland Geological Society. Their new home, alongside other bequeathed and donated books, is with the Library Service. 'Rock Solid – the geology of Nuclear Waste Disposal' is a book written by Elspeth. It was published in 1990 and is marketed at £8.99. Twelve copies are available to UKRIGS readers by contacting the Chairperson, terch@terch.demon.co.uk. Proceeds go to support the Elspeth's Student Travel Fund.

Northern Rocks

From 19th May to 3rd June, the AONB partnership bring their annual festival to the North Pennines AONB: The North Pennines Festival of Geology and Landscape. Between April and October, the North Pennines AONB Partnership will also be running a series of events and activities designed to help visitors and local people discover the area's stunning landscape, hay meadows, geology, birds and archaeology. Programmes available from www.northpennines.org.uk.

Shropshire Marches Festival

Shropshire Geological Society celebrates 200 years of GeolSoc with a festival based around the famous Marches. A summer full of children's events lead up to a one-day symposium in September. www.shropshiregeology.org.uk/

Discovering Dinosaurs

Dr Dinosaur (Mike Howgate MSc) can provide Dinosaur activities, talks and field excursions for children and adults across the UK. Just right for your summer events programme or group meeting. Email: mehowgate@hotmail.com.

NATIONAL

ALSF Funding from Natural England

Deadline for applications is 9am April 16th. Natural England is pleased to announce the launch of the 2007/08 Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) £5 million pound Grant Scheme. Match-funding of between £5k and £350k will support projects that reduce the effects of aggregate extraction on local communities and the natural environment. The themes are: Landscape and Nature Conservation, Access and Informal Recreation, Communities, Education and Understanding, and Evidence gathering. Projects involving SSSIs or ponds will receive special consideration. For fuller details of the scheme, and to apply, visit www.naturalengland.org.uk/conservation/grants-funding/alsf.

NGAP Workshop, 19th March 2007

About 45 people attended the workshop, funded by Natural England and the University of Chester, to explore the feasibility and development of a National GAP. Short talks were given by key individuals: Introduction and History (Prof. Cynthia Burek), Where We Are Now (Dr. Jonathan Larwood), National GAP (Dr Jac Potter), Local GAPs (Dave Owen from the Cotswolds LGAP) and Action Planning (Elaine Tilson). Much discussion ensued and a general aim was developed. The afternoon was spent exploring the objectives needed and the mechanisms to be developed to drive this forward. It was a very productive meeting.

CONFERENCE REPORT

DEFRA Local Sites Seminar "Taking Forward the Guidance", 25/01/07, Birmingham Hippodrome.

JRR

About 100 delegates attended, taking forward 'DEFRA's Local Sites: Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management', published in 2006. Copies of the ten papers presented, are likely to be on www.defra.gov.uk

Taking Forward the Guidance will involve working in partnerships. The idea is that formal 'Local Sites Partnerships' will deal with geological and wildlife aspects of sites. RIGS Groups will be part of these Partnerships! Wildlife Trusts may also be a part.



The Presentations: Julian Claxton [DEFRA] in 'The History behind the Guidance', acknowledged the input of John Reynolds of "uck"-RIGS, which caused a few chuckles at the back. Colin Prosser [Natural England] with David Knight, exhorted the importance of the geological

background to all nature conservation in 'Setting the Context'. For the snooze session after lunch, John Reynolds [UKRIGS] entertained delegates with 'The Educational Potential of Local Sites'. This assumed that listeners had experienced school and fieldwork! He also spoke about linking conservation and fieldwork networks, as in the UKRIGS Education Project. Rachel Hackett [The Wildlife Trusts] in 'The Current Status of Local Wildlife Systems' highlighted familiar problems of finance, landowners, regional variations and group viability, problems echoed by Jonathan Larwood [Natural England] in 'Local Geological Site Conservation Review Project'.

The workshops covered much useful ground, common to both Geological and Wildlife Conservation. Site Records and Information [Nicky Court, Hants Biodiversity], Practitioner Collaboration [Jonathan Larwood, Natural England], Promoting education and community involvement [Cynthia Burek, UKRIGS], Making Systems Work [Rachel Hackett, The Wildlife Trusts].

All concerned felt that it was a worthwhile seminar, which could be reconvened at a later date to report on progress. The geologists among us felt that we had given a good account of our side of nature conservation!



UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Geodiversity in Scotland RIGS workshop 28th April 2007.

This free event at the BGS in Edinburgh is open to all Scottish practitioners in geodiversity and biodiversity. Local government departments, geological societies and other concerned parties will find it useful. It aims to help all groups improve the promotion of geodiversity and biodiversity in Scotland. Closing date for applications is 19th April. For more information and a booking form, email Stuart Fairley of Strathclyde RIGS: s.fairley@ntlworld.com or phone him at 01475520605.

PUBLICATIONS

UKRIGS

Conserving and Promoting Local Geodiversity

A leaflet aimed at everyone who wants to find out more about RIGS. This would be useful for any RIGS group to hand to their public. It answers the fundamental questions of 'What is geodiversity?', 'What are RIGS', and 'What do RIGS groups do?'.

University of Chester and partners

Geodiversity and the Cheshire Region LGAP Partnership

The second edition of this leaflet explaining geodiversity, what the CrLGAP is and its aims, and how interested parties could get involved.

Central Wales RIGS

Pebbles On The Beach

A bilingual guide to the history and formation of pebbles found on the Welsh coastline. A must-have beach companion!

Cheshire RIGS

Walking Through The Past – Macclesfield

This geological trail has a history of Macclesfield, an interesting route and excellent photos to help amateur rock hunters identify what they see. Available from the Grosvenor Museum, Chester.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust

Roche Rock & The Tresayes Trail

Enter the land of legend, exploring the granite outcrop that is Roche Rock, then move onto Tresayes Nature Reserve which includes a pegmatite quarry.

Lochaber Geopark Association

Lochaber Geotrails - Glen Nevis, and Visiting Glen Coe

Two bilingual guides to the area. Excellent photographs and diagrams to explain the influence of volcanoes and glaciers.

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.

NEXT COPY-DATE is JUNE 15th 2007.

The views expressed in this newsletter are of the individual authors and do not represent the opinions of UKRIGS.

DIARY DATES

April 16th – closing date for ALSF funding applications, p1.

April 19th – closing date for Geodiversity in Scotland Workshop. Event on April 28th p4.

April 20th – Bicentennial Event in the Midlands: Geoconservation and Geological Heritage, Dudley Museum.

April 30th – Global Warming, Should We Worry? Open forum at BCGS.

November 3rd - UKRIGS AGM

CREDITS

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