

EAST MIDLANDS GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 1989/90

The Society has enjoyed yet another successful year with a steady influx of new members both professional and amateur, the membership currently standing at 502 comprising 402 ordinary joint and student members and 100 institutions. Some members are sadly no longer with us having retired due to illness and it is with much regret that we heard recently of the death of Peter Brayne whom many of us will have known and our deepest sympathy is extended to his wife Jean and family.

The Society events during the year have covered the usual wide and interesting range of topics and upon looking through the list it seems to have been a year very much of economic and engineering geology. We have learnt of the problems of engineering in Hong Kong and of those of the Channel Tunnel nearer home and we have been instructed in not only the geology but also the archaeological history of our local gypsum mining industry and seen at close hand the steel industry in Scunthorpe, motorway construction in Oxfordshire and the building stones of Nottingham together with the limestone quarrying at the National Stone Centre. All of our meetings both in and outdoors have been very well attended reaching what may be a Society attendance record of 142 at the January meeting when we had to change lecture halls to avoid members expiring from the body heat generated in our usual meeting place!

For the A.G.M. we celebrated the culmination of our first twenty-five years with an affectionate reminiscence introduced by one of our founder members Frank Taylor, who I am delighted to say has agreed to be nominated for Council again this year, followed by an excellently put-together presentation of slides by our Treasurer, Jack Fryer, from items loaned by members for the occasion.

In April we had a most interesting talk by Russel Arthurton of the B.G.S. explaining the problems and role of the geologist in the design and construction of major engineering works in that unique part of the world, Hong Kong. Then in May for our first venture outdoors we had a fascinating visit to the old Gypsum workings in and around Tutbury combined with visits to two of the local churches to view the beautifully carved end products of those workings. The leaders were our Editor Ron Firman who knows so much about the industry and John Young of the Chellaston Local History Group who put the industry into a historical and archaeological context for us.

Into June and we had a splendid evening visit to the National Stone Centre at Wirksworth led by one of our members, Robin Jeffcoat. We were welcomed to the Centre by the Director Ian Thomas and then Robin led us on a fascinating trail through the limestone environments of the old quarries upon which the Centre is sited. We ended in the gloaming after 10.00 p.m. having been accompanied throughout the latter half of the tour by a small black cat—a lucky omen for the Society we hope!

July was a busy month starting with our one-day Symposium on the Geology of the East Midlands at the B.G.S. in Keyworth coordinated by Mark Dean one of our Council members. It was a most interesting day born out of the recent work carried out by a B.G.S. team on "The Nottingham Project"—a re-mapping and surveying of our own local region—but broadened to include recent work on a variety of geological topics in the wider context of the East Midlands. We had the benefit of several speakers from the B.G.S. and others from B.P., British Coal and Nottingham Polytechnic. We are most grateful to the B.G.S. for allowing us to use their excellent facilities for the Symposium and to all of the speakers who gave us the benefit of their investigations and expertise.

In mid-July, on what was one of the hottest evenings of a year of hot evenings, we had a leisurely and instructive stroll around Nottingham City Centre led by Neil Turner of Wollaton Hall Museum when we all looked upwards instead of down, as is the wont of geologists, and saw how much we usually missed of some of our quite beautiful city buildings and the decorative carving and beautiful stone used in their construction.

Then at the end of the month there was a week-end excursion to investigate the geology of Anglesey attended by 20 or so members, all of whom thoroughly enjoyed the trip. The leader was Dr. Tony Evans of Leicester University, an old friend of the Society.

We then allowed our members six weeks or so rest and recommenced activities in mid-September with an excursion to the South Ferriby area of North Lincolnshire and the old Scunthorpe Steelworks quarries; a day which started out in torrential rain (we only narrowly avoided losing a few members in the glutinous quicksand of

the Oxford clay in the bottom of the South Ferriby quarry) and ended in glorious warm sunshine. Those members who decided to stay in bed when they saw the early morning weather missed a super day jointly led by Alan Dawn and David Elford and even the bus driver had an excellent day, thoroughly enjoying his drive along the quarry roads which were later last year to be used as one of the stages in the R.A.C. rally.

Our last full meeting of the season was to view the Jurassic strata of Oxfordshire as seen in the exposures produced by the major new motorway roadworks for the M40. Albert Horton, our leader on the day, is part of the B.G.S. team who have been remapping the Thame sheet. Both for the mappers and for us these works are a real bonus despite their undoubted despoilation of the countryside and probably for many a lasting memory of the day will be of seeing the phalanx of huge earth moving machines cutting a swathe of new road. The power (and the noise!) was phenomenal.

To the winter programme, and only five days after our last field trip we started the indoor season with a fascinating lecture by Robin Gill of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College based on his work on the east Greenland coast with its evidence of the continental separation which occurred there during the Tertiary period. We saw multitudes of magnificent dykes and banded gabbros.

In November we held another of our successful joint meetings with the Yorkshire Geological Society on the Quaternary Geology of Northern England. The speakers had all carried out recent work within this general topic area and we were privileged to hear their latest findings in their specialised fields.

To December and we decided to enliven the dull days of winter with a visit to the South Pacific Island of Tonga with Dave Tappin of the B.G.S. Unfortunately this was not a field trip but we did follow the proceedings with our usual Christmas party. This was as ever successful and we are very grateful to all those members who so kindly helped in providing festive fayre.

We started the new year with what proved to be our best attended meeting of the session, a most interesting talk by Dr. Tony Brown of Leicester University on the Post Eruption History of Mount St. Helens concentrating on the environmental impact of the 1980 eruption with its associated devastating blast, mass movements and flooding and the response and recovery rate of the eco-systems, hydrology and geomorphology of the area.

The Society year ended with the Foundation Lecture at the beginning of February. The President had chosen the Channel Tunnel as the topic and we were most fortunate to have Dr. Lionel Lake of Mott Macdonald Geotechnical who gave us a fascinating insight into the history as well as the modern techniques of tunnelling and the geological constraints of the tunnel site on both sides of the channel. The lecture was followed by a most enjoyable buffet meal at the University Staff Club attended by some 55 members which was generally agreed to be a splendid finish to the year's proceedings.

Five Council meetings have been held during the year to discuss the Society's affairs and eight circulars have been produced to inform the members of Society events and other matters of interest.

One member of Council, Tim Charsley of the B.G.S., had unfortunately to resign from Council during the course of the year as he was posted to Jordan which is why he is being replaced after only one year on Council.

I reported last year that the Society's exhibit was being redesigned. This has now been carried out by Mick Stanley and our thanks are given to him for producing the new one which was first on display at the joint meeting with Y.G.S. in November.

I personally would like to thank Jack Fryer and Ian Sutton who have respectively been responsible for organising the programme of indoor meetings and field excursions, and also of course Judy and Philip Small who have again this year produced, with the aid of a small sub-committee, the Society circulars. All these jobs were formerly part of the secretary's task and my job would be a lot more onerous if not impossible without their help.

We are all extremely grateful to the speakers and excursion leaders who have so willingly given of their time to instruct and entertain us during the year and of course to the University for the use of the lecture hall facilities in the Geology, Geography and Biology Departments all of which we have utilised during the year.

Lastly but certainly not least, thanks to all the members of the Society who have helped in any way during the year with a particular mention to the small band who regularly help in hand delivering the circular and journal and who help check the journal prior to distribution. And to you the members for your excellent support of Society activities. Thank you.

Susan M. Miles
10th March 1990