



**SECRETARY'S REPORT
FOR 1990/91**

It is very pleasing to note that, although there is no longer unfortunately a Geology Department at the University here in Nottingham, the Society has continued to attract many new members — a total of 25 during the course of the year, and as at 31st December last the membership numbers stood at 399 ordinary, joint, student and junior members, and 101 institutions. Unfortunately during the year we received sad news of the death of two founder members — Jack Challinor, at the age of 95, who was one of our two life members, and Dick Elliott, a former President of the Society whom many of you will remember with affection. Other stalwart long-time supporters of the Society have also had to resign their membership due to ill health, and they too will be sadly missed.

We have enjoyed a very varied programme of events throughout the year, including seven indoor meetings and, in the field, a non-residential weekend in the Nottingham area, two day excursions, two evenings and one afternoon, all events being very well supported as usual. The number of indoor meetings should in fact have been eight, had the weather not intervened in the form of a heavy snowfall on 8th December, the date fixed for our Christmas party.

Following last year's A.G.M. we enjoyed a fascinating

talk from Dr. Paul Bridges on what most of us had hitherto referred to as reefs, but which we now know we should really call carbonate mudmounds, which formed in the late Paleozoic in areas such as Dovedale; the conclusion apparently being that these formations were in effect bacterial infections of the Carboniferous sea floor, a result of a change to nutrient-rich waters.

Then in early April we had a stimulating lecture by Professor Ineson of Sheffield University on some of the perceived ways in which geology and health may be linked; a somewhat different slant from our usual lectures, which provoked much discussion and questions a-plenty from the audience.

On a beautifully sunny Sunday in late April some 30 members led by Richard Ellison of the B.G.S. journeyed to the Castleford area where we spent the morning looking at mining activities in the sandstones of the Upper Coal Measures and the collapse features associated therewith. In the afternoon we moved up-sequence and visited two superb quarries looking at various features in the Permian and the overlying drift deposits. The area has recently been re-surveyed by the B.G.S. and we were very fortunate to have the benefit of this up-to-date work.

In early May we had a mid-week afternoon visit to Stoke Hall Quarry at Grindleford, a working stone quarry in the Millstone Grit. Some 20 members (the maximum allowed by the Quarry) attended and we were looked after extremely well, being permitted not only to clamber over the quarry face, where we saw some

superb sedimentary structures, but also to watch a blast and then to visit the stone cutting room where the various processes were explained with great patience by the quarry workers.

There were two evening excursions into Derbyshire in June, the first led by our President-elect Neil Aitkenhead of B.G.S. to the Upper Dove Valley between Hartington and Pilsbury. We found so much of interest along that beautiful valley that it was full moonlight by the time we returned to Hartington. The second, led by Ian Sutton, was to Monsal Dale and specifically to view the magnificent Hobs House Coral Band. The early part of the walk was accompanied by a torrential thunderstorm, but fortunately the weather had improved by the time the Coral Band was reached. Both excursions were, as ever, extremely popular.

The field weekend for this year was a departure from the usual format in that it comprised a full two-day programme of field visits in mid-July to various Permo-Triassic locations in the Nottingham area. The weekend's programme was excellently co-ordinated by Mark Dean; his fellow leaders for the various excursions being Dick Crofts, Andy Howard and Dave Lowe, all from B.G.S. Familiarity with the excellent sections we have in and around Nottingham tends perhaps to breed contempt of them and it was salutary to have their merits so ably explained to us by members of the B.G.S. Nottingham Project Team.

Although we had another field meeting to come in late October, this was preceded by two indoor lectures. In late September we were treated to an exposition by Professor Bill Sarjeant, a founder member of the Society who is now at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, entitled "Footprints before the Flood", an occasionally light-hearted review of the important research he has carried out on the value of vertebrate footprints in palaeontology.

We were then extremely fortunate in early October to have Dr. Peter Cook, the recently appointed Director of the B.G.S., give us an excellent and most instructive talk on the significance of phosphorites in the geological record, a subject in which he has particularly specialised.

The last field trip of the year had been specifically fixed for late Autumn as it was to the Lower Liassic of the Grantham/Newark area, and the entire day was spent traversing bare arable fields. We learnt to appreciate the slightest change of slope as evidence for change from one bed to another, and many of us were astonished by the wealth of fossil material which was found. Again, the B.G.S. provided our excellent excursion leaders, Allan Brandon, Mike Sumbler and Hugh Ivimey-Cook.

In November Dr. Peter Regan from Derby took us, in the comfort of the lecture theatre, on our first truly foreign excursion of the year with an insight into the composition of the immense batholith underlying the Peruvian Andes. Then, our appetites having been whetted for foreign shores, the inclement British weather deprived us of our eagerly anticipated visit to the Loire Valley for what should have been our Christmas party meeting. Thankfully, we were able to re-arrange this for the 1991 A.G.M.

Into 1991, and Dr. Bill Read formerly of B.G.S. gave us a most instructive talk on the Scottish Namurian sequence compared with the Pennine Millstone Grit, an area in which he has done so much valuable research.

The Society's year concluded with the Foundation Lecture presented by Professor Tony Hallam of Birmingham University on that ever-popular topic "The Mass Extinction Controversy" in which old theories were reviewed and new evidence most interestingly explained, although the word "controversy" appears to be still most apt with the various, all seemingly cogent, theories which are still vying for precedence. The lecture was followed by an excellent buffet meal at the University's Florence Nightingale Hall, which was greatly enjoyed by the 48 members who attended, together with the speaker and his wife.

I have not yet mentioned Derby Environmental Week which took place in May 1990 and in which again the Society was involved, thanks almost entirely to the sterling efforts of our Council member, John Bush. We again organised a visit to the Stone Centre during the course of the week, and provided a speaker from the Society, Dr. Peter Jones of Derby, for the Wednesday evening lecture. Both events were very well supported and at these and the opening event at Kedleston Hall, much interest in the Society was engendered and several new members obtained.

Six Council meetings have been held during the year to discuss Society matters, and a major topic for discussion throughout the year has been the lack of a new Editor to replace Dr. Ron Firman who resigned at last year's A.G.M. Hopefully the situation has now been resolved by the setting up of an Editorial Board of professional and lay members co-ordinated by Dr. Richard Aldridge.

Six circulars have been produced during the year and we have again been indebted to Judy and Philip Small for their production. Judy has in fact now resigned this onerous task and John Bush is to take over the job for the coming year. I would like to thank Judy and Philip for all their hard work on the circular and also, of course, to thank Jack Fryer and Ian Sutton who have respectively again been responsible for the organisation of the Indoor and Field programmes. Without their invaluable assistance my job as Secretary would be very much more time consuming.

We are all extremely grateful also to the speakers and excursion leaders who have so ably instructed and entertained us over the last year and who have so willingly given of their limited free time. I feel I should particularly mention in this regard the very substantial contribution which the B.G.S. have made to the year's proceedings. We are indeed lucky to have them situated so close to Nottingham and that they show so keen an interest in the Society.

Finally, thanks also to those unsung members of the Society who regularly help in hand-distributing copies of the circular, and in checking and then again distributing copies of the Journal, and to all members who have helped the Society in any way during the course of another successful year.

Susan Miles