THE RECORD

Our membership now stands at 275 (and 31 institutional members), and we welcome new members who have joined the Society during the year until March 2012.

Indoor Meetings

In March the Annual General Meeting was followed by Barry Azzopardi talking about his work at Nottingham University on multiphase flow, with a laboratory-scale 'volcano' constructed to record infrasound and analyze the passage of gases through viscous liquids.

Also in March a joint meeting was held with the Yorkshire Geological Society at BGS Keyworth on the theme of 'Carbon Capture and Storage'.

This year's Members' Evening took place in April. Ian Thomas described how he had used his Churchill Fellowship in Scandinavia in 2009, exploring traditional building craft skills and materials, in the context of modern limitations. Richard Hamblin shared his experience of being caught up in the Christchurch earthquake in February. Being near the epicenter when it struck, he showed pictures of the effects of liquefaction and the damage to buildings and infrastructure. Katy Gosling reported on her undergraduate survey of the ostracod fauna of Groby Pool, Leicestershire, prompted by interest in living ostracods by Quaternary geologists. A scanning electron microscope aided identification and study of their anatomical features.

The new winter lectures opened in October with Prof. David Large of Nottingham University talking about how time might be measured in terms of coal deposits, and exploring the influence of massive volcanism.

In November, Colin Bagshaw gave an account of his visit to the Galapagos Islands. He demonstrated the impact of plate tectonics on their development and how the differences in the fauna of different islands had influenced Darwin's ideas concerning evolution.

Great stratigraphical myths were dispelled by Bill Bailey in December when he suggested that consideration of the gaps in the record led to understanding of some of its features and anomalies. This was followed by the Society's Annual Cheese and Wine social event.

The Devensian glaciation of the Vale of York was the subject of a lecture by Tony Cooper of BGS in January. He demonstrated how digital map data, digital terrain models, field mapping and borehole data enabled time slices to be constructed for the Vale's glaciation.

Tim Colman's final Foundation Lecture as President in February described Australia's mineral wealth and its mining history from exploration boom through to the present operations to secure iron ore, copper, uranium and gold in Western and Southern Australia. This was followed by the Society's Annual Dinner.

Field Meetings

May saw a day-visit to the Oxford area, led by Paul Sargent of the Oxford Geology Group. After a visit to Kirtlington Quarry with its Jurassic limestones and clays famous for mammal fossils, the afternoon was spent on a building stones walk around the Oxford colleges.

In June, Keith Ambrose took us to the Millstone Grit in Derbyshire to examine outcrops of the Ashover Grit and Rough Rock. Comparisons were made between the structure and lithology of each sandstone.

In July, an evening walk led by Tim Colman studied hydrothermal mineral deposits and mine workings in the Ashover area on a traverse across the anticline. Ashover had been an important site for mining lead and then fluorite.

A day excursion to Robin Hood's Stride in August was led by Gerry Shaw, relating the lithology of the Carboniferous rocks to landforms. Building stones and mining remnants were visited along the way.

The Upper Dove Valley was the focus of a visit led by Neil Aitkenhead in September. This examined the apron reef landforms of Parkhouse and Chrome Hills at the western margin of the Derbyshire Platform.

Also in September, a weekend excursion visited Shropshire. The Ironbridge Gorge Landslip Geotrail was walked on Saturday, followed by a visit, led by Andrew Jenkinson, to the fossiliferous Silurian Wenlock Limestone of Wenlock Edge. Devonian and Carboniferous sedimentary rocks and igneous intrusions of the Brown Clee area were visited on the Sunday.

Council

Our thanks go to the many members who are involved in the planning and leading of the field trips, without whom this important and enjoyable part of the Society's activities could not take place. We thank Sue Miles for editing the circular, Ian Sutton for the organizing the Field Excursions, and Richard Hamblin for managing the Lecture Programme.

The Society's website has been enhanced with an archive of back issues of Mercian Geologist, some from the earliest days of the Society and some more recent editions. Eventually all the back editions more than two years old will be available with free access, and preparation of the digital files continues. David Bate and the Editor are thanked for their work in making this possible, as is Rob Townsend for continuing to manage the website.

Council met formally on six occasions to discuss matters concerned with developing the Society for the benefit of its members and where possible to contribute to wider geological issues.

The Society's rock boxes for schools continue to be distributed. The contents of these are made up of rock, fossil and mineral specimens donated by individuals, organizations and institutions reducing their holdings. This year we are particularly grateful to the widow of the late John Aram, from whom we have received a large consignment of suitable specimens collected by John throughout his career. With his long association with geology in education we are sure he would be pleased to know that his specimens were being recycled in such a way.