THE RECORD

The 2015-16 winter programme had 7 indoor meetings.

Ekbal Hussain spoke of the challenges created by the North Anatolian Fault, which extends for 1300 km across the length of northern Turkey as a right lateral strike-slip fault. Being one of the most active strike slip faults in the world, it has a long history of earthquakes.

Lively stories were told by modern-day flint knapper and archaeologist, Phil Harding, who demonstrated that evidence from the excavation of short-term knapping sites increases knowledge of stone working in the past.

David Harper talked about the new and often bizarre body structures of the Cambrian Explosion and the Great Ordovician Biodiversification Event, leading to increased numbers of families, genera and species. With modern marine ecosystems in place by the end of the Ordovician, abundant and diverse metazoans were set to dominate the next 450 million years with increasingly complex and diverse community structure.

Engineering and environmental geology in Cyprus was reported by Paul Nathanail. Its sheeted dykes and pillow lavas present challenges to road builders, and soils can be sources of potential harmful elements. The Troodos hydrogeology defines where and how deep groundwater wells can be to provide secure water supplies. Over-abstraction of groundwater causes ground instability in areas underlain by soluble gypsum.

Richard Hawkes described the preparation of geological specimens by removing the rock matrix to reveal the natural beauty of fossils and minerals. He brought with him many fine examples of ammonites, dinosaur bones, fossil wood, crinoids, trilobites and echinoids.

The lava fields of the Inner Hebrides were shown to be more than just monotonous piles of basalt by Ian Williamson's lecture. Case studies from Skye, Mull and Canna have increased the understanding of the physical volcanology, its stratigraphy, facies architecture and secondary mineralisation, and the sedimentary environments associated with the volcanism.

In her first Presidential Address to the Society, Vanessa Banks explained the processes behind the increased numbers of slope failures, landslides, and sinkholes induced by the unusually high rainfalls in the winter of 2013/14. Infrastructure was affected across the country and prompted high levels of enquiries at BGS, from the public and from the media, concerning sinkholes.

The 2015 summer programme had 6 field excursions.

The use of stone in buildings and the suitability or otherwise of the local bedrock was the focus of a walk in Nottingham led by Steve Parry and Graham Lott.

The Marlstone Rock Formation with its ironstone workings at Holwell were visited with Keith Ambrose. This had been the last operating quarry in the area, closing in 1962, and was the only one with underground mining of the ore.

A combined excursion with the North Staffs GA group was led by Colin Bagshaw to investigate the Carboniferous limestone and igneous rocks of Masson Hill and the remnants of the local lead mining industry.

A visit to the Brassington area in Derbyshire with Jim Ridings enabled study of the Miocene sediments expose in the Bees Nest and Kenslow Top pits. The Brassington Formation is the best example of sediments in karstic fills that survived Late Neogene and Quaternary erosion.

Allan Straw and Peter Worsley led an excursion to consider evidence of glacial events between the Anglian and Devensian in Fenland and the Wolds. This produced some lively debate amongst the participants. A stratigraphically important site at Welton-le-Wold, near Louth, contains tills, artefacts and a mammalian fauna; this has enabled reconstruction of environmental change during several glacial and interglacial cycles, and has given rise to alternative interpretations.

The geology of both coastal and inland sites was seen during a weekend field excursion to Yorkshire, led by Ian Sutton. Visits were made to the Cretaceous Chalk of Flamborough, the Lower Jurassic at Staithes, the Upper Jurassic oolites of the Forge Valley and inland on the North York Moors to localities in the Tertiary Cleveland Dyke.The impact of Pleistocene glaciation on both areas was also observed.

On behalf of the Society, Albert Benghiat has been conducting a feasibility study for creating a geopark in the Peak District. This idea has attracted support from potential partners such as Peak District National Park Authority and many local organizations. The next step is to establish funding options and identify an organization interested in taking the project forward. This is too large a project for EMGS to take the lead role, but it is hoped that the Society will play its full part in helping with specific tasks within the wider project.

Janet Slatter

EDITORIAL

With so much material relating to geologically youthful events, it had been suggested that this year's *Mercian Geologist* should be labelled as a Special Issue, or even renamed Mercian Quaternary Geologist. But we have been very boring and done neither. However we have welcomed two papers that provide somewhat conflicting views within their very different styles. Allan Straw's overview of Quaternary Lake Humber is based on many years of study and observations over a wide area, whereas Robert Friend and friends describe detailed research on one small part of the same area. Geological science progresses only when fed by both detailed evidence and provocative overview. *Mercian Geologist* has therefore been happy to accept both these papers, in the hope that they might contribute to discussion and debate that can resolve controversy within our geological understanding.