THE RECORD

The Society has continued to offer its programmes of indoor lectures and field excursions, and membership numbers have ended the year as they began.

The Society's new edition of Trevor Ford's classic book on Derbyshire Blue John, edited by Tony Waltham and Noel Worley is now published. It fulfils a promise made to Trevor before he died (it is reviewed on page 299).

The Society took part in the Trevor Ford tribute weekend in June at the Dome in Buxton. This reflected his wide ranging interests with lectures and field trips presented and directed by family, friends and colleagues.

Sadly we have lost two past Presidents recently; Madge Wright (who was also a long-serving Secratary) died in December, and John Travis at the end of February.

Indoor Meetings in 2017-2018

Following the AGM in March 2017, Haydon Bailey spoke on the subject of 'The Real Value of Microfossils'. Used as tools in hydrocarbon exploration for over 140 years, microfossils have taken on an increasingly important role over the last 20 years. The advent of horizontal drilling techniques has increased demands on the micropalaeontologist in the optimum exploitation of oil reservoirs.

The April speaker was unable to attend, so Ian Sutton presented his story of the Cascades volcanoes.

In October Dr Michael Simms presented 'The Search for a Giant Meteorite Impact in Scotland'. Beginning with his observations of the impact deposit and study of gravity anomalies centred on Lairg his talk describe the chance series of events that led to the discovery, and some of the ongoing work that has considerable implications for understanding the geology of Scotland and the nature of giant meteorite impacts.

Fluvial sandstones of the 1.2-billion-year-old Stoer Group, in the far northwest of Scotland, enclose the Stac Fada Member (less than 10m thick) that contains green-grey shards of once-molten rock. Previously interpreted as a volcanic mudflow, shocked quartz grains and geochemical anomalies are evidence of formation by the impact of a giant meteorite. Field data indicates that the impact deposit had come from the east, where any crater of this age will now be concealed by rocks above the Moine Thrust. A gravity anomaly 40 km across is centred on the town of Lairg, more than 50 km east of the Stac Fada outcrop, and this could be generated by the source crater.

The November speaker was delayed by travel, so Vanessa Banks described recent work on unstable ground over gypsum in Ripon, Yorkshire.

Professor Alex Maltman gave the December lecture on 'Wine, Whisky and Beer: the role of Geology'. He presented his thoughts on the supposed links between vineyard geology and wine flavour, on the influence of water sources on the taste of whisky, and on the rarely mentioned influence of geology on beer.

In January 2019 Jim Rose made his case for a mega-tsunami in the Mediterranean about 80ka ago. At many sites around the Mediterranean coast, a repetitive succession has a conspicuous boulder-bed sandwiched between deposits of the Last Interglacial and sediments from the time of the Last Glaciation or Holocene. These boulders are interpreted as the products of a mega-tsunami. In beach-rock below the boulder-bed, conspicuous polygons have a typical diameter of 1.2m and a typical depth of 1.5m; they are infilled with a sandy diamict and calcrete. The origin of the polygons is unclear, but desiccation or shock-induced packing are considered to be possible explanations.

For his first Presidential address in February, Mike Allen presented 'The Long and Moving Story of The Great Glen Fault' (see page 224).

Field Excursions in 2018

The field season began in May to the Irchester Country Park opened in 1971 in the abandoned Wembley iron ore opencast site. Here exposures of the Mid-Jurassic Northampton Sand ironstone were viewed following an informative ironstone heritage trail. This was followed by a visit to Twywell Hills and Dales to see examples of the 'hill and dale' method of ironstone working and exposures of the boxstone structures preserved there (see page 181).

In June, the visit to Holmebank Chert Mine was led by Paul Chandler with an underground walk through the extensive upper workings, the lower ones now being flooded (see page 224).

A weekend trip to the Malvern and Abberley Hills Geopark took place in July. A number of sites were visited, led by John Payne, Moira Jenkins and Richard Edwards on the theme of the Precambrian inlier, the Late Precambrian to Permian sediments and its intrusions (see page 266).

The last field trip of 2018 was in September to the Churnet Valley in Staffordshire led by Ian Stimpson. This walk over a variety of Carboniferous Gritstones and Coal Measures rocks in this scenic post-industrial valley also took in the remains of coal and ironstone mining, copper smelting and lime burning. The geomorphology of the region was discussed with particular reference to both the underlying geology and events at the end of the Pleistocene.

Janet Slatter