

Conserving Warwickshire's Geological Heritage



WGCG

Hidden wonders
in the landscape
of Warwickshire

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South Wales field trip

Kenilworth Cutting

WGCG Rock collection

The Rob Holloway Award

Reaching Out

Dinosaurs Uncovered



*Queens Diamond Jubilee Festival
Rugby*

Newsletter

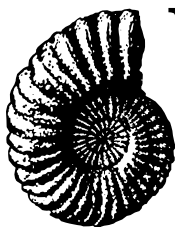
Autumn 2012 Issue Number 24

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Front cover

*At the Queens Diamond Jubilee Festival held in Caldecott Park in Rugby.
We see Tyrannosaurus rex joined by the Mayor of Rugby
- Councillor Kathryn Lawrence and Ian Fenwick in front of the WGCG stand.*



WGCG

Hidden wonders
in the landscape
of Warwickshire

WGCG

c/o Warwickshire Museum

Market Place

Warwick

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On the web: <http://www.wgcg.co.uk>



On facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/WarwickshireGeologicalConservationGroup>



On twitter:

https://twitter.com/#!/wgcg_uk

From the Chair

Summer 2012 has been a busy season for the Group with a more than full programme of field meetings, coupled with some pretty demanding outreach activities.

In the past, we have played with the idea of offering alternatives to the by-now traditional Wednesday evening trips. This summer we have tried Saturdays and Sundays and there does seem to be a real demand for some trips to be run at weekends. Re-visiting old haunts is something we also need to consider. Our May field weekend in the Vale of Glamorgan was rated very highly by all that attended (see Nick Humphris' article on p.6) – excellent leader, unique accommodation and first-rate food.

In amongst all this field activity, our Outreach Working Group has organised a WGCG stand at Rugby, Stratford and Coombe Abbey (see p.8). All of these events were made possible with the help of a massive number of volunteers – especially that at Coombe where we needed serious numbers of helpers to cope with youngsters casting fossils in plaster of Paris!!!! This Working Group needs bolstering with one or two additional members so, if you would be interested in assisting, please give me a call (01926-512531 or swift@ianfenwick.f2s.com).

Finally, as they say, this will be my last note 'From the Chair' as I am standing down after October's AGM. The past three years have been demanding in that we have had to pilot our application for charity status through to a successful conclusion, handle the Holloway bequest with care and sensitivity, expand the scope of our lectures and field trips programme and venture into the untried waters of outreach work. A measure of the Group's success has been the surge in membership from 69 a year ago to 91 today. I have been very privileged to lead a group where so many members, and especially the Trustees, always seem to be willing to step forward and assist.

Ian Fenwick

The Rob Holloway Award

Brian Ellis

The Management Committee has been considering how best to use the generous bequest that Rob left us, particularly taking into account his wish that we should look for ways of encouraging and supporting young geologists. We have now set up one scheme in conjunction with the geologists in the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences at Birmingham University. After discussions with the relevant staff in the department we decided that it would meet Rob's wishes if we offered an award to geology students following the four year MSci course. There is a research element to the course in the final year and there is an expectation that as part of the student's professional and career development they will attend an academic conference and gain experience in presenting their results. It is this element of the course which we will support by offering a small number of discretionary awards, to be called the Rob Holloway Award, to contribute towards the cost of attending and contributing to a conference.

To apply for an award students will need to provide:

- i) cover letter supporting their application including a summary of the MSci project
- ii) conference abstract (probably an outline of a poster presentation)
- iii) estimated budget for attending the conference.

A group of three WGCG members will select the successful candidates late in October. An important consideration in the selection of successful candidates is evidence of consideration of how the outcomes of the project might be explained to WGCG members who are in the main an audience of interested amateurs and a commitment to make some form of presentation to members of WGCG at the April 2013 meeting and to write a short report for the WGCG Newsletter.

We have only entered into an agreement for the academic year 2012-13 but if the award scheme is successful we would hope to continue it in future years. We are also aware that this is only one way of meeting Rob's wishes. We would welcome not only ideas of other ways WGCG might support young (potential) geologists but also offers from members to work up and administer any such schemes.

WGCG COLLECTION GETS A THUMBS UP - & NEEDS A BIT OF WORK!

Ian Fenwick

Over the past year, the Group has acquired a considerable range of hand specimens of rocks, fossils and minerals. Most of these are from the Midland counties but several are from further afield. In many ways, this collection has come about through misfortune! In the first place, the Group inherited Rob Holloway's extensive collection of rocks and some fossils from which a selection of the better items was made. Then, with the cessation of Martyn Bradley's geology courses in Lifelong Learning, which many will remember

with affection, the collection at Westwood needed a home. These valuable resources have been complemented by a beautiful collection of minerals assembled by Colin Frodsham.

A chance encounter followed between Colin and Holly Sievwright. Holly is nearing the end of a contract with the West Midlands museum services to identify, assess the condition and offer support for geological collections in the region. Apparently, these range from huge reference collections of national importance, such as the Lapworth Museum collection at Birmingham University, through to small collections of just a few items. So, in late July Holly came to look at the new Group collection. Well, WGCG's falls somewhere in between!

..... **BUT NEEDS SOME VOLUNTEER HELP!**

Holly found the collection of interest and was keen to see that it be better classified, boxed and stored. Basically, this is not a very technical task but would be very worth while if the specimens are to be of use for displays, talks and activities.

If we could raise some volunteer help, the task could be completed fairly easily. Holly has offered to come over and lead a small 'workshop' on how to tackle the labelling and re-boxing etc. She can also provide some materials. In the first instance, the job would probably have to be done in the Kenilworth office.

If you might be interested in helping to push this little project forward, perhaps you could get in touch with Ian (telephone: **01926-512531** or email: **swift@ianfenwick.fzs.com**). N.B. this does not involve a spade, hard hat or wellies!

The Great Atherstone Landscape Exhibition

Jim Passmore

This exhibition, held at White Hart House in Atherstone from April 21st - April 29th, was a celebration of North Warwickshire's amazing 600 million years of geological history that has created spectacular landscapes and provided raw materials to fuel the area's industries over many centuries.



The exhibition was prepared by Colin Frodsham and Mike Clarke with some help with the artwork from Jim Passmore. Mike was on hand at the exhibition for much of the time to answer questions posed by visitors.

In the photo we see Mike Clarke (left) with Steve Adnett, a local historian and former miner, who has compiled a history of Warwickshire Collieries.

Field Trip to South Wales 18th to 20th May 2012

Nick Humphris



Plas Llanmihangel hotel

The first thing to say is that the trip was interesting, informative, enjoyable and expertly led by Tom Sharpe from the National Museum of Wales. Our accommodation at Plas Llanmihangel was as interesting as it was excellent. It is an ancient manor house on many floors with many staircases where none of the rooms were en-suite; there was a long dining table where we all ate and the food was great.

Tom is an excellent communicator able to make novices like me understand while not talking down to the real geologists amongst us. He also had patience when, inevitably, some members of the group went off in their own directions. What he had to say was always well worth listening to.

After meeting for lunch on the Friday we met Tom in the afternoon high up on the Blorenge. We were overlooking Abergavenny on the north-eastern margin of the South Wales coalfield. Here the weather was the worst of the whole trip, we had our heads in the clouds, visibility was poor and it rained. From the summit we should have had panoramic views all round from the Black Mountains and across the Severn Estuary to the Mendips, but no. Having said that, it was well worth going up there as we could study to the south-west the 18th and 19th century industrial landscapes of the coalfields, now designated a World Heritage site, contrasted with the rural landscapes of Monmouthshire to the east.



Tom demonstrates the succession at Trwyn y Witch, Dunraven

On Saturday the weather was fine for us in the Vale of Glamorgan and its coastal flats at Ogmores-by-Sea. The rocks exposed in this section of the coast are Carboniferous, Triassic and early Jurassic – the former slowly deposited on a warm shallow sea bed and rich in fossils, the Triassic being the debris from flash floods filling gullies in an undulating desert. The Jurassic rocks were formed as these landscapes were submerged by rising sea levels. In all, we managed to visit ten of the intended locations; it was a very packed and interesting programme.

Sunday was a full day too in fine warm sunshine starting at the Bendricks just east of Barry where we were able to see many reptile trackways from the Triassic period to be seen. We then moved on to Penarth and walked south along the coast where we could see the Carboniferous Limestone islands of Steep Holm and Flat Holm. Then south to Ranny Point and further on to Lavernock Point where gently folded and colourful late Triassic/early Jurassic mudstones rise and fall from the beach level. Particularly striking were the ripple marks, formed by wave action, visible on a number of fallen blocks on the beach. We also saw a rich diversity of fossils in the Jurassic rocks. One of the warmest and sunniest days of the year had been packed with geological joys.



The Glamorgan Jurassic Coast from Dunraven Park

Tom had arranged a fascinating visit to his home stamping ground. The trip had been well organised and with plenty of wine to be had during dinner in the stunning ambience of Llanmihangel.

A Ramblers' Guide to Building Stones in Warwickshire

Jim Passmore

You may have seen already a review of Hugh Jones' **Ramblers' Guide** in the June 2012 **Down to Earth** or in our Spring newsletter. Even if you have, it is worth reprinting extracts from the review in **Down to Earth**. It is an excellent review and the book is given a five star rating.

Chris Darmon writes:

"I'm always pleased to receive a book from a small publisher and even more so when it's a group of volunteers operating in a local area. Hugh Jones has written a very accessible book that will not frighten the non-geologist, but at the same time can be read and used by those who are 'in the know'."

He then summarises the structure and contents of the book and finishes:

"As always with a book such as this, enthusiasm and pride comes across on every page. As for the quality and design, it's the equal of any professional publisher around."

Reaching Out

Ian Fenwick



The WGCG display at the Coombe Abbey Funday

The locations were deliberately chosen to provide exposure for the Group in parts of the County not visited in 2011 and also to provide a chance to make direct contact with children, mainly of Primary School age.



Children visiting the WGCG stand at the Queens Rugby Diamond Jubilee Festival in Caldecott Park



Dipping for fossils at the Queens Diamond Jubilee Festival at Caldecott Park, Rugby

Rugby, held on the Jubilee Saturday, started off very damp but eventually the sun, and the crowds, came out. The big draw was our new friend, Rex, the Tyrannosaurus – even the Mayor found him irresistible (see front cover!). But we also found that ‘dipping’ for fossils was also a great attraction. Unfortunately, our stock of fossils was rapidly depleted!

Our experience at Rugby informed what we put on at Stratford.



Rex, the Tyrannosaurus, being restrained from attacking visitors and volunteers at the Stratford River Festival

Several people asked to be kept in touch with WGCG activities and, indeed, some of them turned up at the Kenilworth Cutting field trip in July.

But, the most novel event from our point of view was the 'Rock and Fossil Funday' - the idea of Ben Steer. By now it was clear that dipping for fossils did not have a long-term future so we decided that we must cast them in Plaster of Paris.



Children at work on fossil casting



Children scrabbling for fossils, Coombe Abbey Funday

With the help of moulds provided by our friends at Hereford & Worcs. Earth Heritage Trust, we were able to make use of the activity area at Coombe Abbey. There, several stalwart volunteers oversaw the production by 5 to 12 year olds of a range of 'fossils' from crinoids to echinoids and ammonites. They also headed for a range of other activities, including making puppets of pre-historic animals and colouring.

All in all, the day was a roaring success and the staff at Coombe Abbey are keen to see it repeated next year. None of this would have been possible without the more than 30 volunteers who turned out to put the name and activities of WGCG in the public eye. To them, and especially to Brenda Watts, Pat Joyce and Ben Steer, who did much of the planning, a huge 'THANK YOU'!

Out and About on our Local Sites

No. 6: KENILWORTH CUTTING (LGS 97)

Ian Fenwick



Grid Ref: SP 2985 7326, 200m SE of the footbridge over the Coventry Road

One of the more recent Local Sites to be designated, Kenilworth Cutting, is unusual in that it provides a very extensive and accessible exposure in the Permian Kenilworth Sandstone Formation. We have two other sites in this Formation – Kenilworth Castle Quarry which is difficult to access, and Kings Hill Nurseries which is limited in size and in the amount

of sandstone exposed. However, the Cutting exposure is some 30m long and potentially 4m high. What is more, it is on the new Sustrans footpath and cycle route from Kenilworth to Warwick University. Indeed, it was the preparatory clearance of the dense growth in this area for the cycle route which first suggested that there could be a useful exposure.

The section shows mainly quite massive units of red quartzitic sandstone interbedded with thinner, laminated units of red mudstone. Some of the sandstone units display fairly weak cross-bedding. So, two inferences can be drawn immediately – (i) the sediments were deposited in a fluvial regime (the grains are of medium sand and are sub-angular, not spherical as they would be in a dune deposit) (ii) there were quite dramatic changes in environmental conditions to allow clays to be deposited at one time and sands at others. Indeed, the clays could suggest deposition in a totally stagnant cut-off or flood plain slough.

The structures are of interest, but puzzling! The bedding planes dip in a variety of directions but, in the centre of the section, there appears to be a sandstone unit, which slopes away to left and right, with channel features to either side. This could represent a cross-section across a 'sand bar', within the broader channel. We are probably looking at the cross-section of an old stream bed where the river would have been flowing either towards or away from us. On either side it has been eroded by a migrating stream or simply by more energetic flows within the main stream. It is in one of these channel forms that the mudstones are at their thickest. However, the bed tapers away to nothing on top of the 'bar', clearly suggesting deposition in a shelving depression. But these are only ideas to wet your appetite – have a look for yourself. I would be very interested in any ideas you might have!

Winter Programme 2012/2013

Wednesday 19th September

- Dr Frank Wells 'Rocks under the microscope - A Beginners' Guide'

Wednesday 17th October

- AGM & Jim Passmore on 'Historical Figures in early Geology'

Wednesday 21st November

- Dr Geoff Warrington (ex-British Geol. Survey)
'Mineralisation at Alderley Edge, Cheshire'

Wednesday 19th December

- Christmas Social and members' presentations:
Brian Ellis - 'Tenerife Volcanoes'
- Poster display on 'Outreach 2012'

Wednesday 16th January

- Alan Clewlow (Volcanic Experiences Tours)
'Volcanoes around the world'

Wednesday 20th February

- Dr Jon Radley (Keeper of Natural Sciences, Warwickshire Museum)
'Iguanodon country and the Geological Conservation Review:
safeguarding an ancient world'

Wednesday 20th March

- Speaker t.b.c.

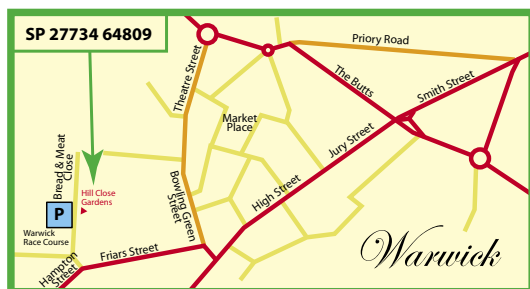
Wednesday 17th April

- Birmingham MSci student presentations and buffet

New venue

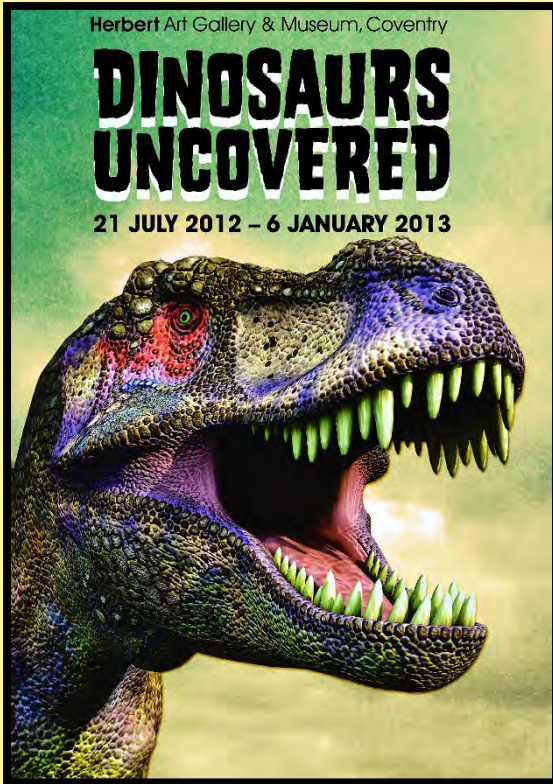
Starting in September we have a new venue for our evening talks.

- Meet at 7.00pm for tea or coffee for a 7.30pm start



The Lammas Room
Hill Close Gardens
Bread and Meat Close
Warwick CV34 6HF

Free parking is available in the Bread and Meat Close car park, accessed from Friars Street (or Hampton Street), which runs past the racecourse stand.



**The Herbert Art
Gallery & Museum,
Coventry**

**Dinosaurs Uncovered
Exhibition**

From 21st July 2012
- until 6th January 2013

Travel back 250 million years, and discover some of the most iconic and awe inspiring creatures to walk the Earth.

Come face to face with the skull of the ferocious Tyrannosaurus Rex, witness the strength of the Stegosaurus' armour plating and be astonished by the Triceratops' three horned might.

For more information about the exhibition visit:

<http://www.theherbert.org/index.php/home/whats-on/dinosaurs-uncovered>

Herbert Illuminations

- Warwickshire's Jurassic Past

As part of the event Dr Jon Radley, Curator of Natural Sciences for Warwickshire Museum Service, will describe Warwickshire's seascapes and marine wildlife, roughly 200 - 170 million years ago.

Discover how Warwickshire consisted of shallow muddy seas teeming with sometimes weird and wonderful extinct creatures, and subtropical shorelines patrolled by dinosaurs.

***This free talk will be held at the museum on
18th September from 12.30pm - 1.30pm***