

# **Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group**

## **Trustees Annual Report for the year ended 31 August 2016**

**Full name** Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group

**Principal address**

c/o Warwickshire Museum, Market Place, Warwick CV34 4SA

**Committee members**

Barry Dale

Brian Ellis (Chair)

Nigel Harris

Christine Hodgson

John Hiatt

Roy Johnston (Secretary)

Frances Morley

Roger Pinkney

Jim Watts (Treasurer)

Co-opted (non-Trustee) Paul Stevenson

**Observers**

Dr Jon Radley – Curator of Natural Sciences, Warwickshire Museum

Anton Irving – Natural England

**Bankers**

HSBC, 46 The Square, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 1EA

**Independent examiner**

Nigel Grounds, Mercia Community Accounting, Lorton, Tamworth, Staffordshire

**Governance and management**

The organisation is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011. A number of Trustees were elected or re-elected at the AGM 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015. All new Trustees undertake an Induction programme soon after their election.

The governing body of the WGCG is the Management Committee which comprises 9 Trustees and 2 observers. The Trustees co-opted an additional member with specific geological expertise. There are 3 sub-committees – Education, Conservation and an Outreach Group, which is largely responsible for organising outside events. Decisions of these sub-committees are subject to approval by the Management Committee.

The charity has a series of documents outlining policies and procedures relating to financial management, reserves, management of risk, safety, volunteers and conflict of interest. These are subject to periodic review by the Management Committee. The most recent versions are contained within the 2016 Trustees Folder.

An unexpected organisational change and expense this year has been the need to move, at short notice, the location of the WGCG office due to the redevelopment of the building which contained our existing office. The change was made in April within

Kenilworth. The movement of the specimen collection, maps, records and outreach materials and their reorganisation involved a lot of time and effort detracting from more geological activities.

### **Aims and objectives**

a) To advance the education of the public in the significance of geology for the understanding and aesthetic appreciation of landscapes, for human settlements and economic activity, for recreation and leisure and for ecology.

b) To conserve the geological heritage of Warwickshire through identification and active conservation of geological sites and through fostering an interest in and knowledge of the geology and landscapes of Warwickshire.

When planning our activities the Trustees take note of the Commission's guidance on public benefit. To meet these Objects and provide 'public benefit' the Trustees have promoted a concerted programme of Education, Outreach, Conservation and Publications. It remains the Group's policy to focus on the links between these activities.

None of our work would be possible without the willing cooperation of a large number of volunteers. They are involved directly in practical activities including supporting outreach events, designating, recording and monitoring Local Geological Sites (LGS) and maintaining the database, curating the Group's collection, supporting the lecture and field programme, contributing to and producing the bi-annual Newsletter and other publications, dealing with local enquiries, talking to community groups and not least attending a variety of meetings. This is in addition to the large number of people who are involved in running what is an increasingly complex organisation.

### **The Holloway Bequest**

As previously reported the Group has received a bequest from a former member, Robert Holloway, which was invested in February 2012 so as to secure an annual income big enough to support the increased range of education, conservation, outreach and publications activities now being undertaken and to secure the long term future of the Group. The performance of the investment portfolio is monitored by a group of three Holding Trustees and is reported to the Management Committee at its bi-monthly meetings and to the membership at the AGM. Our financial adviser attends a meeting of the Management Committee once a year on the anniversary of the initial investment.

The Holloway Award, according to the wishes of the benefactor, aims amongst other things, to encourage an interest in geology in children and to support young geologists early in their career. This year has seen the successful expansion of the scope of these awards. Specifically support has been given to the following activities:

- Two primary schools have each had a day's geological fieldwork,
- Secondary schools have been on visits to the demonstration mine run by the Camborne School of Mines,
- A group led by a post-graduate student has run a project titled 'What was on the menu 100 million years ago' promoting public engagement with work by the University of Leicester's Palaeobiology Research Group. This culminated in

participation at Yorkshire Fossil Festival held at the Scarborough Rotunda Museum on September 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.

- Six Birmingham University geology undergraduates and five from Camborne School of Mines (Exeter University) have been supported financially to complete their field mapping projects;
- Two MSc students from Camborne School of Mines have had periods of research experience with British Geological Survey
- A grant of £5200 was made to the Warwickshire Museum to support its redevelopment by financing two pieces of artwork associated with the presentation of displays on two contrasting geological environments in Warwickshire and
- For the first time in 2016 the Bequest has funded two places for practicing teachers at a Summer School at Keele University which is designed to enhance the teaching of geology in secondary school. The Summer School is organized in conjunction with the Earth Science Education Forum (ESEF)

## **Education Programme**

A core of the Group's activities is the monthly winter series of lectures (September to April). It continues to attract good audiences (average 60 per meeting) and covers a wide range of geological topics.

The programme of summer field excursions included Wednesday evening visits led by members and two whole-day visits. The day visits involved (i) a study of the geology along the Severn Valley Railway and (ii) the study of the geology of the Burton Dassett Hills Country Park and Cross Hands quarry. The latter was a joint excursion with the Black Country Geological Society hosted and led by WGCG.

There were two residential trips – (i) A study of part of the Jurassic Coast based at Portland and (ii) a study of the geology of Anglesey. Both were led by an expert on the areas and each was greatly enjoyed by the 20+ members participating.

An important part of our educational programme is the work undertaken with primary school children. There were the two field visits this year referred to above as part of the use of the Holloway Bequest. These are led by one of the WGCG members who is an experienced school teacher. As a result of contacts made with one of the schools taking part in the visits in 2015 one WGCG member spent two afternoons in school leading a practical geology workshop with year 3 and 4 pupils.

A major educational initiative in 2016 has been the redesign on the Group's website. This has improved the accessibility of the site and is allowing the introduction of more well illustrated content as well as bringing the Group's activities to a wider public. The latter aim is also being achieved by a presence on Facebook and Twitter.

## **Education via Public Events (Outreach)**

Activities have included mounting exhibitions and displays. To provide public educational benefit about the geology of the County and to publicise the Group's activities, displays were presented at Nelson's Wharf on the Grand Union Canal near Stockton. This wharf was associated with the limestone quarrying industry and is being

renovated by a private company in conjunction with wildlife conservation by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. It is policy to try to use different locations each year so as to contact as many people as possible. As well as photographic and specimen displays the Outreach Group has continued to develop an increasing variety of “fun” (and learning) activities for children and adults. The Group is also undertaking work to make its specimen displays more interactive and/or self-explanatory.

Based on our experience gained in the above activities the main educational event this year was a one-day public exhibition based on the geology of Warwickshire using the Group’s specimen collection. It combined the presentation of some basic ideas in geological science with illustrations of the range of geology which the public can see in Warwickshire and the Midlands area. It was designed and executed by members of the Group. Approximately 300 people attended and we received a large and very positive feedback on the event, as well as gaining some new members.

### **Publications**

A leaflet on the geology and buildings of ‘Old’ Kenilworth was published in February. The group continues to produce a newsletter twice a year in Spring and Autumn. Work has been completed on the design of an interpretation panel for one of our Local Geological Sites on the well-used Sustrans Trail in Kenilworth and also on interpretation materials for a wall illustrating the geology of Warwickshire built in conjunction with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust at their Brandon Marsh Reserve. In addition to articles previously published about the geology wall an account related to public interpretation of the wall was published in the geology conservation magazine ‘Earth Heritage’.

### **Conservation Programme**

WGCG now has designated over 90 Local Geological Sites (LGS) in the County. The need to discover and designate further sites is now a lower priority and so none have been designated this year. However, the rotational monitoring of the condition of our Local Sites has continued in the current year with each site being visited at least every five years. 2016 saw the start of the second cycle of monitoring all sites. This activity also forms one of the components of the Group’s mentoring policy with members receiving supervision and instruction in the application of the agreed criteria. The information is also fed into Warwickshire County Council’s Single Data List and is also provided to Natural England in support of their construction of a national database of geologically designated sites.

In light of the Group’s policy of concentrating physical clearance work and interpretation on those sites with high visitor levels to maximise the value of the effort, valuable joint work with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) has continued on the development and interpretation of one of their existing reserves in an abandoned limestone quarry. Even more significant this year has been the purchase by the WWT of an old sand and gravel quarry site which includes one of WGCG’s LGS (Wood Farm). The quarry had now been backfilled and landscaped. It has become Bubbenhall Meadow, completing a conservation cycle and ensuring the sites future. WGCG is actively involved in the development plans for the Meadow which is important as a representative location for the Ice Age geology of Warwickshire.

The Conservation Sub-Committee continues to monitor new planning applications through the monthly Warwickshire County Council Bulletin and through being consulted on the Local Development Plans.

The Group has become aware during this year of increasing difficulties in accessing both working and especially closed stone quarries as a result of the concerns of owners about safety issues as a consequence of recent accidents and fatalities.

### **External Relations**

In the course of the year members of the Group have assisted other local organisations with their public education programmes by giving talks or leading field excursions.

A Local Nature Partnership for Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull has been established in partnership with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT), amongst other organizations. Progress of LNPs is slow due to funding problems but the cooperation has led to a closer working relationship with WWT.

As a member of the Geology Trusts the Group has cooperated on conservation matters with other county geology groups in the West Midlands and further afield. Through this organisation it contributes to national environmental policy development. It is gratifying that the Group is being increasingly seen as a source of geological and geoconservation expertise.

### **The Organisation's Policy on Reserves**

In the charity's Reserves Policy, the purpose of the reserve is:

- to ensure continuity of services and benefits to members during lean times
- to contain shortfalls in current income to meet overhead costs and unforeseen setbacks
- to prepare funding bids for new projects
- to set aside a separate reserve of 'unrestricted' funds to finance grant-aided projects where expense claims are reimbursed in arrears by funding agencies
- to aid strategic planning to sustain and develop future activities
- to fund initiatives and to take advantage of new opportunities
- develop and maintain Holloway Bursaries to young and early career geologists in line with our benefactor's wishes

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Signed

(Chair) Date: