



Newsletter Issue 1: May 1997

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Background

The Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites programme was set up by English Nature and organised on a county basis with individual groups arranging their own structure.

An award from English Nature in 1996 enabled the Group to appoint a part-time Data Manager and purchase and install specialist software specifically designed for geological conservation.

A grant of £123,000 has been awarded to the Group by The Heritage Lottery Fund to cover a 4/5 year project for recording some 3000 sites in the County and for the identification of those that are regionally important.

Partnership funding will be provided in the form of voluntary assessment of sites by professional Earth Scientists and facilities supplied by Worcester College.

Project Details

A Group has been set up serving the County of Hereford and Worcester with the express purpose of recording and identifying Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites. The Project consists of the following elements to be carried out over a 4/5 year period;

- To identify and survey geological and geomorphological sites in the County and to promote the establishment and protection of Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites,
- To create, maintain and enhance a data base to include a RIGS List and to select sites for RIGS listing based on criteria such as the use of sites for educational fieldwork, scientific study, historical value, aesthetic value and similar aspects,
- To promote the protection and use of RIGS by close liaison with the planning authorities, schools and colleges, industry and those interested in earth science.

Site Information Suppliers

Individuals who have supplied site information on GLR forms are as follows:

- Helen Stace, Conservation Officer for Herefordshire at English Nature.

- Nick Dean, Principal Planner, Hereford and Worcester County Council.
- Alan Cutler, Chairman, Black Country Geological Society.
- Margaret Rowlands, Independent Geologist.
- Rollo Gillespie, Geology Student

Organisations that have supplied site information:

- The Environment Agency.
- Bromsgrove District Council.
- English Nature.
- Worcestershire Nature Conservation Trust.

Literature searches in progress:

- Droitwich, Abberley and Kidderminster Memoir.
- Dudley and Bridgnorth Memoir.
- Minerals Local Plan Consultation Draft 1990.

Data on GLR forms:

It is anticipated that desktop studies by Earth Scientists and literature searches will result in the completion of some 700 Geology Locality Record Forms over the next few months. The data on these forms will then be loaded onto GD2.

Site Distribution Maps:

A trial run using a two coloured dot system (yellow for Herefordshire and red for Worcestershire) with a unique reference on each dot and plotted on 1:50,000 encapsulated maps has been carried out. Because of crowding in certain parts of the County the map scale will be changed to 1:25,000.

Objectives of the Group

The Group has a conservation policy which is also stated in the Constitution as follows;

- To identify and survey geological and geomorphological sites in the County,
- To promote the establishment and protection of Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites,
- To create, maintain and enhance a database to include a RIGS List,
- To select sites for RIGS listing based on criteria such as the use of sites for educational fieldwork, scientific study, historical value, aesthetic value and similar aspects,
- To promote the protection of RIGS by close liaison with the planning authorities,
- To inform educational establishments of the work of the Group,
- To make data available to any interested body.
- To promote an interest in geological conservation amongst the general public,
- To maintain an active policy with regard to the long term monitoring and management of RIGS.

The short-term benefit of the project will be the identification of a large number of geological and geomorphological sites within the County and such information will be available to any interested party. In the medium-term regionally important sites (RIGS) will be designated and they will consequently play their part in County planning processes, education and research. In the long-term a greater awareness of geological conservation will be the benefit together with the potential for H&W RIGS Group to manage sites, co-ordinate conservation and decide relevant policies.

The Group will ensure wide-scale availability of the information by undertaking regular publicity programmes, by inviting institutions and organisations to supply representatives as members of the

Group and by maintaining frequent and regular contact with schools, colleges, universities, museums, local authorities, wildlife trusts and natural history societies. At present an exhaustive database of geological and geomorphological information relating to sites in the County does not exist; this project thus provides a major advance.

Those to benefit from the project will include schoolchildren undertaking earth science fieldwork as part of the National Curriculum, students studying for higher level qualifications and carrying out research, the planning authorities as they make decisions regarding developments, amateur individuals and groups with an interest in earth science, and landowners, quarry and landfill operators all of whom will be made aware of the significance of sites on their land.

Call for Site Data:

The Group is very keen to receive details concerning any sites within the County whether of a geological or geomorphological interest. Please phone Pauline Couper for blank GLR forms or alternatively send details such as name of site, grid reference, brief description of site and as much technical information as possible.

Membership

Membership is open to anyone interested in furthering the aims of the Group. There will not be a membership fee. It is anticipated that the first AGM of the Group will be held in the near future. All those currently on the mailing list will be invited. Anyone wishing to be added to the list or wishing to become a member should write to the Recording Centre.