



## **Newsletter Issue 6: March 1999**

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### **AGM - Director's Report**

The second AGM was held on 2nd February 1999 and the following Director's Report was given.

The highlight of the year was our successful hosting of the first UK RIGS Conference. Over 100 delegates attended during the 3 days and papers, field trips and workshops were given. Subsequent positive comment came from Earth Heritage and Mineral Planner journals as well as BBC local radio. A major decision of the conference was to set up a Steering Group to look into the creation of a properly funded national body which could actively support local RIGS groups. The proceedings of the conference have also been published by the Group and so far 60 copies have been sold. We are currently organising the second national RIGS Conference for 2nd - 4th September 1999 again at University College Worcester.

The success of the conference was in no small way due to the hard work of Pauline Couper, Les Morris, Cheryl Jones and Rollo Gillespie with excellent help from the support units of the College.

We have been able to make significant impact on the national scene as a result of the conference and publication of the proceedings. We are hosting the UK RIGS Conference page on our web site with information being updated on a regular basis. At present it contains a summary of the '98 conference and early information about the '99 conference.

A very interesting development is our project to produce 14 trails and guides, 7 for each of the counties. We have been encouraged by the promise of financial help from Herefordshire. It is likely that funds will be available to pay for a project assistant on a 12 month contract. Information for inclusion in the guides has been promised by various geologists and will be supplied free of charge. Herefordshire Council will print and market the guides. I believe it would be very useful to test some of the trails before going to print and therefore I am keen to hear from anyone wishing to be a 'trail tester'.

The second project that the Group has given a lot of thought to is that of a type collection of specimens and 'landscapes' to be housed in a museum here at the University. The collection would represent the geological periods, rocks, minerals and fossils of the two counties and also have

illustrations of the main landscapes. The Worcestershire Archaeology Service and the Geomorphology staff here have expressed an interest in being involved in this museum and so if it comes to fruition it may be quite a significant facility. I envisage its use by schoolchildren as part of their national curriculum studies, by students at the University and by the general public. We are investigating the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme as a means of funding this and we will keep members informed of progress via the newsletter. Anyone interested in acting as assistants to our curators Rosemary Roden and Les Morris, would be most welcome.

The Group is actively involved in the National Biodiversity Network development in that I sit on the Advisory Group of the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre and Peter Thomson on the Biodiversity Forum for Herefordshire. We are mainly concerned with ensuring that geoconservation issues are recognised and that our geological site records are incorporated into other natural science recording centres in a sensible and efficient way.

To further the involvement of members in the progress and development of the Group I think there is scope to create working groups looking at the issues of education, promotion and site maintenance. The latter could mean closer links with English Nature and assistance with the management of SSSIs as well as RIGS; promotion could be developed around design and production of mobile display panels and education is about building up contacts with schools, providing information as part of national curriculum work and promoting safe sites with easy access.

The major work of the Group, site recording, continues to progress and although we have not yet designated any sites as regionally important, we do have a provisional list. The Panel of Assessors meets for the first time this month to agree criteria and procedures for designating sites and will subsequently visit proposed RIGS. Hopefully the Group should have some 40 sites designated as RIGS by the end of the year.

It is clearly important that planning authorities and countryside services are aware of our work and the need to conserve sites of importance. I have already written to all County and District Planning Officers urging them to make reference to RIGS in Structure and Local Plans. Some have done this and others are considering doing so. It is just as important that we keep quarrying and landfill companies and landowners informed about our activities and we will be looking at the best way to do this during the year. Information supplied to us by individuals on GLR forms has dried up over recent months. I think this may be due to the fact that the obvious sites have been recorded. However, I would encourage all those interested in Earth Science to continue to supply site details to the Group. To help promote our work we now have a dedicated noticeboard in the School of Environmental Science and Land Management.

Finally I would bring to your attention the web site that I have spent much time developing this last year, with major help from Lance Woodman in the IT department at the College. It contains information about the work of the Group, volunteer recording, computer records, fossil collecting, geological successions in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, a geological map of the region and links to other internet sites of geological and geomorphological interest as well as details of the UK RIGS Conferences.

## **Second UK RIGS Conference**

*Recording and Protecting Landscapes.*

*The New RIGS Structure.*

Subject to sponsorship the Conference will take place at University College Worcester from 2nd to 4th September 1999. The programme will consist of sessions dealing with the report and

recommendations of the Steering Group, the recording and protection of landscapes, workshops on field recording and safety, web site design, GD3, Rockwatch, publicity and education. Field trips will form a major part of the conference. Information about the Conference can be found on our web site or alternatively put your name and address on the mailing list by phoning the GRC.

### **Periodicals, newsletters and maps**

The following are available in the University Library:

- Geoscientist
- Geology Today
- Journal of The Geological Society
- Earth Heritage

The following are available in the Geological Records Centre:

- RIGS Briefing
- Avon RIGS newsletter
- Black Country Geological Society newsletter
- Gloucestershire RIGS newsletter
- BTCV newsletter
- Down to Earth
- British Geological Survey catalogues
- 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 O.S. sheets for the two Counties
- BGS geological maps and Memoirs for the area.

### **"Trail Testers"**

A lot of interest has been shown in helping to create the trails and guides that are proposed. A meeting will be arranged in the near future to discuss the best way of assessing the provisional routes and sites. All those who have expressed an interest in helping will be sent further information. The project is: The Production and Printing of Countryside and Town Trails and Guides Illustrating the Geology and Landscape of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

### **1998 Conference Proceedings**

The Proceedings have been published and copies are available from the Geological Records Centre at a cost of £7.50 plus £2.00 postage and packing. To order please make your cheque payable to UK RIGS Conference.