



Newsletter Issue 7: July 1999

In This Issue:

- **Rare temporary exposures in the Lias of Worcestershire**
- **The 2nd UK RIGS Conference**
- **Periodicals**

Rare Temporary exposures in the Lias of Worcestershire

Robert Raine writes

Neigh Hill in Himbleton, near Droitwich, has yielded sites in the clay over the past few years, most of which quickly become overgrown. The main site is a ditch 120 metres long which runs the height of the hill, exposing a bed by bed section. Much of it is now overgrown and is in the process of being cleared. Since it was dug, extensive collections have been made covering a diverse fauna. The site is within the Lias Group, Blue Lias Formation, Salford Shale Member, Alsatites liasicus Zone, Waehneroceras portlocki Subzone. The Alsatites liassicus Zone is proved by the presence of abundant Cardinia (nearly 500 in total), Psilophyllites hagenowi and Waehneroceras spp.

Few sites exist in this area due to a lack of regular beds of good quality building stone or good quality clay. There are also few boreholes, and due to this the fauna of the Salford Shale was not fully known.

The lithography consists of buff-grey/olive shales, clays, shelly clays, mudstones and iron concretions. There are several thin, impersistent rock beds, which are shell detrital deposits and very fossiliferous.

Fossils are not pyritised and are well-preserved. Most of the 30 species are bivalves such as Cardinia ovalis, Plagiostoma giganteum, Liostrea irregularis and Modiolus hillanus. Gastropods are abundant in some beds, and ammonites, worm tubes, nautiloids and crinoid stems also occur. Corals have been found in one bed.

Once cleared, the site should last for another ten years. The best time to visit is after floods and heavy rains, around Easter time.

The Second UK RIGS Conference, to be held at University College Worcester, 2nd-4th September 1999.

We are once again organising the national conference, details of which have already been sent out (see the web page for details). Delegates at the conference will hear the recommendations of the Steering Group which looked into the formation of an association of UK RIGS Groups. This and the first AGM of the Association provide a major landmark in the evolution of the RIGS movement.

The main theme of the conference is 'Recording and Protecting Landscapes'; an essential assessment of the geomorphological side of RIGS. The 'Best Practice' theme covers many of the issues of concern and importance to RIGS Groups, and should provide important guidance.

Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) are being recorded and assessed by county and regional groups around the United Kingdom. The groups and other interested organisations and individuals come together each year to discuss progress and hear of research and developments in the conservation of geological and landscape features. This conference is the forum for what is rapidly becoming a very strong and active movement and the national leader in local and community geoconservation.

The groups are run largely by professional volunteers with administrative support from the Royal Society for Nature Conservation. One of the main aims of the groups is to involve the public, schools and colleges in the recording and understanding of the rocks, minerals, fossils and landscapes around them.

The conference has been made possible by support from organisations such as English Nature, The Royal Society for Nature Conservation, Scottish Natural Heritage, The Countryside Council for Wales, The Geologists' Association, The Environment Agency, Gloucestershire RIGS Group, Gloucestershire Environmental Trust, Geoconservation Commission of the Geological Society and British Geomorphological Research Group. On the first of the 3 days delegates will be given information relating to "Best Practice" with matters covered such as the collecting and conservation of Specimens (Dr Peter Crowther of Ulster Museum) and recording techniques (Dr David Schofield of the British Geological Survey). The programme will also bring everyone up to date with a lecture about the Internet and home based web sites (Lance Woodman of University College Worcester). During day 2 deliberations will be on the recording and protection of landscapes, especially such features as river channels and coastlines which are constantly being changed by processes of erosion and deposition (Professor Janet Hooke of Portsmouth University). In a similar way the threat posed to limestone scenery in the upland parts of Britain will be discussed (Dr Cynthia Burek of the Welsh RIGS Groups).

Both the first and second days have a major exhibition where regional and county groups and other organisations will illustrate their latest work and approaches to conservation. There is also a field trip to Bredon Hill in Worcestershire (Les Morris of Herefordshire and Worcestershire RIGS Group) where delegates will see some of the best examples in the United Kingdom of landslips and mudslides, still active today as a result of the geology of the site and its evolution since the ice age. Another interesting practical session will be a tour of the geology of the buildings of Worcester City Centre (Dr Eric Robinson, University College London).

The final day of the Conference will cover examples of how high quality documentation and publications can be produced by voluntary groups (Gordon Smithies of West Yorkshire RIGS Group) and how popular educational geological trails can be developed for the public to enjoy (Mark Campbell of Gloucestershire RIGS Group).

The progress of the RIGS movement over the last 12 months will be related to the conference over the 3 days with reports from Michael Singh of the Royal Society for Nature Conservation, Dr Peter Crowther from Northern Ireland, Tony Rogers of the Countryside Council for Wales and Dr Katherine Leys of Scottish Natural Heritage.

The "Proceedings" of the Conference will be published in December and this publication will contain 25-30 papers of the lectures and from the exhibition.

Your support at the conference as RIGS delegates would be most welcome.

Periodicals

In the last issue some of the publications available at University College Worcester were listed. Completing the list, the following are held in the library:

- Earth Surface Processes and Landforms
- Environment Action
- Environmental Geology
- European Journal of Soil Science
- Hydrological Processes
- Géotechnique
- Journal of Environmental Management
- Journal of Glaciology
- Journal of Hydrology
- Journal of Meteorology
- Journal of Quaternary Science
- Nature
- Permafrost and Periglacial Processes
- Progress in Physical Geography
- Quarterly Journal of Engineering
- Geology
- Regulated Rivers
- Zeitschrift für Geomorphologie

Back issues of other publications are also available.