Secretary's Report for 1974-75

1974 was a tranquil year for the Society. Thirteen meetings were planned, and duly took place in the absence of such problems as had characterised recent winter sessions. There was some anxiety early in the year during the petrol shortage, and for a while it seemed that an alternative excursion programme must be arranged in case coaches became unprocurable. When the time came, however, petrol was plentiful although, regrettably, more costly.

The thirteen Society meetings comprised an Annual General Meeting together with a Collectors' Meeting, five field excursions, five lectures, a geological film show and an Annual Dinner.

At the opening of the Annual General Meeting in March, 68 Members were present. After the presentation of annual reports by the Officers of the Society, it was proposed that the same Officers should be re-elected to serve in 1974. Four new Members of Council were elected to take the place of retiring Members.

The meeting approved Council's proposal that Dr. D. Parkinson, who had contributed so much to the understanding of the geology of the Midland region, and who had published so many papers in the Society's Journal, should be elected an Honorary Member of the Society.

Long before the meeting opened, members had been present to arrange their displays and exhibits, and at the close of the A. G. M. the Collectors' Meeting continued with great enthusiasm.

A list of exhibits follows:

1. A. E. G. Allsop	a. Minerals from Elba. b. Metamorphic rocks from Norway.
2. F. J. Beasley	a. Mineralised Triassic rocks from Staffordshire. b. Problematicum.
3. M. Boneham	Permo-Trias or Pleistocene?
4. B. & J. Cantrill	a. Arran collection. b. Problematica.
5. C. Champion	Productacea collection.
6. J. L. Fox	Corals, trilobites, and agates from the Trent Gravels, Colwick, Nottingham.
7. H. G. Fryer	Slides showing frost structures exposed by drainage operations in the Vale of Belvoir.
8. R. C. Gratton	Ammonites from the Lias and the Inferior Oolite.
9. P. M. Hanford	a. Ichthyosaurus skeleton from Whitby. b. Ammonites from Whitby.
10. D. Hanford	Agates from the Scarborough area.
11. A. Houldsworth & F. M. Taylor	Lower Magnesian Limestone from Yorkshire & Nottinghamshire.
12. D. Kelsey	The geology of the Lizard, Cornwall.
13. D. Lewis	Mineral specimens and gemstones.
14. J. C. Macdonald	Problematica.
15. D. M. Morrow	Some hand-coloured Geological Survey maps.
16. E. Ramsell	a. Soapstone dish from Kenya. b. Botryoidal chalcedony from Eastbourne. c. Marcasite from the Lincolnshire Wolds.

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17.	R.W. Morrell	Fossil collection.
18.	P. Spencer & R.W. Morrell	a. Fossils and minerals from Shropshire, Kent and Sussex. b. Collection of handbooks old and new of geological interest.
19.	G. Robson	Minerals, fossils and an unknown.
20.	The Editor	Complete Mercian Geologist volumes.
21.	J.H. Sykes	Geological quiz.

Mr. J.H. Sykes was again in business during the meeting, and his specimen stall was besieged by an army of eager customers. On this occasion his profit was such that he was able to donate £31 to the Society's Trust Fund. Mr. Sykes has arranged three Rock Sales to date, and his total donation to the Trust Fund now amounts to £71.90. The Society deeply appreciates this substantial contribution to its funds.

The last indoor meeting of the season was held in April when Mr. T. Brabben spoke about the Geology and Water Resources of Lincolnshire. We have lately become very much more aware of the problems encountered by the Hydrologist and Mr. Brabben's lecture added considerably to our understanding.

The excursion season opened in May with a splendid excursion to the Mendip and Quantock Hills, led by Dr. P.J. Hill of Derby College of Technology, and centred in Weston-super-Mare. The Nottingham minibus again made its appearance in the capable hands of Mr. H.G. Fryer, to whom we have so many times been indebted for transport. The excursion had many moments of delight, the incredible abundance of malachite and azurite in the first quarry which introduced a note of richness at the start, the sunny beach at St. Audrie's Bay, the Rock of Ages, so appropriate on Sunday morning, and the Vallis Vale unconformity late in the day, where a patient queue waited to kneel in turn and bow down to peer perilously over the edge of the face to see the worm burrows. Interest was indeed very keen, as this was new ground to most of the party.

On a glorious day in June, Dr. A. Ludford of Luton College of Technology led an excursion to the Weaver Hills, an area in which he had carried out intensive research, and in which he could convey an appreciative party to disused and forgotten quarries through overgrown and hidden paths, lovely with blossom and birdsong. Against this rare background, it was a pleasure as well as a privilege to have Dr. Ludford's expert commentary.

In July a visit was made to the Ancaster and Leadenham area, under the leadership of Mr. A.M. Honeyman of Nottingham University. Before reaching the stone quarries in the Lincolnshire Limestone, the party were pleased to have the opportunity of paying a last visit to two ironstone quarries, shortly due for infilling. After a rewarding day in the Ancaster quarries, the excursion ended at Leadenham, high on Lincoln Cliff.

A spectacular excursion took place in September in the Earl Sterndale area. In general, the Society is blessed by good weather, but on this occasion, Dr. N. Aitkenhead of the Institute of Geological Sciences opened the excursion by offering the party the choice of a drenching as they searched for limestone fossils in the open, or a drenching as they examined the shales in a stream bed amongst trees. Morale was excellent, however, and was duly rewarded when the rain ceased and the wind blew members dry as they climbed Chrome Hill.

The October excursion, the last of the season, was led by Mr. D.N. Robinson, Tutor-Organiser for South Lindsey, Nottingham University Department of Adult Education. The subject this time was the Pleistocene deposits of Lincolnshire, but members are hardly prepared for the wealth of the first quarry in Tattershall, which had so much to offer that it seemed that the party would never be assembled again. The afternoon was spent at the coast - always a joy to a native of the Midlands - examining a drowned forest and searching the shingle for erratics.

The first indoor meeting of the season was held in November when Dr. W.A. Cummins of Nottingham University described to a large audience his researches into the source of rocks of Neolithic stone axes. The lecture was illustrated by excellent slides, and also by a varied collection of stone axes which were eagerly examined at the close of the lecture.

In December, three lecturers from Derby College of Technology, all members of the Society, gave accounts of recent research which they had carried out. Dr. P.G. Baker described studies he had made of very small brachiopods, and the technology which he had used to determine their composition and functions. Dr. J.D. Weaver spoke of investigations he had made in Derbyshire and in South Wales of joint patterns in rock formations, and related mineralisation. Mr. P.F. Jones gave an account of Pleistocene deposits which had been exposed during industrial excavations in South Derbyshire, and deduced the probable origin of such deposits. It was a very interesting evening, and many of the audience were keen to discuss items with the speakers.

The January meeting was, as customarily, held in Matlock jointly with the Matlock Field Club. Mr. L.M. Willies of Chesterfield College of Technology, and a member of both Societies, described to a crowded room the history of lead mining in Derbyshire.

Also in January a geological film show was arranged in Nottingham, which was attended by a very large audience. The main film was "Carbonate Sedimentation off the Florida Keys" presented by Dr. J.A.D. Dickson, and this was sandwiched between two exhilerating volcanoes provided by Dr. T.D. Ford, "Birth of a Volcano", featuring Surtsey, and "Eruption on Hawaii". This lively programme was very much enjoyed.

In February, the President gave his second Presidential Address entitled "Sedimentary Studies in the Peak District". His subject concerned the erosion of a small clough in the Derwent Reservoir catchment area and the subsequent deposition at the mouth of the reservoir, and his lecture was illustrated by very beautiful slides of North Derbyshire.

The Annual Dinner was the last meeting of the year. It was held on this occasion in the Wheatsheaf Inn, Burton Joyce, and if the large number of members who were present were a little short of elbow room, there was a very agreeable atmosphere of intimacy and bonhommerie.

The Society is very grateful to all those who made such stimulating meetings possible: to Mr. T. Brabben, Dr. W.A. Cummins, Dr. P.G. Baker, Dr. J.D. Weaver, Mr. P.F. Jones, Mr. L.M. Willies and to Mr. H.R. Potter, our President for their admirable lectures, to Dr. J.A.D. Dickson and Dr. T.D. Ford for providing such absorbing films, and to Dr. P.J. Hill, Dr.A. Ludford, Mr. A.M. Honeyman, Dr. N. Aitkenhead and Mr. D.N. Robinson for their excellent and enjoyable excursions.

Eleven circulars were sent our during the year, and though postage costs rose ruinously, Council felt that this monthly contact with Members should continue. The service rendered by members who deliver circulars by hand is invaluable in keeping down costs and we are very grateful to those concerned.

Membership has continued to be satisfactory, and indeed has increased since the last Annual General Meeting. The present state of membership is as follows:

Ordinary	Joint	Institutional	Junior	Honorary	Total
247	112	117	29	2	507

Although Vol. 5 no.1 of the 'Mercian Geologist' was published early in the year, and prospects looked bright for the next issue, 1974 was not a propitious year for the Editor. After diligent work, Vol. 5, No. 2 was ready for publication in October, as had been planned, and it was cruelly disappointing that it should be delayed by the printers until the following February. It was however, by heroic efforts on the part of the collating team, ready for distribution at the A.G.M. in March. Work had continued during the delay, and the subsequent issue was well on the way to production.

Finally, the Society must again gratefully acknowledged the debt which is owed to Professor Lord Energlyn for his continued patronage, and to the University of Nottingham for the privilege accorded to us of using its premises for our meetings.

In conclusion, I must give my thanks to Society Members who at all times give their full co-operation and make the task of Secretary such a pleasant occupation.

BOOK REVIEW

BATES, D.E.B., and KIRKALDY, J.F.

Field Geology in Colour. Blandford Colour Series, Blandford Press Ltd. 1976. 215 pp., 56 Figs. 156 Plates. Price £2.75.

Readers who are familiar with, and who have used the earlier geological books of the Blandford Colour Series (*Minerals and Rocks in Colour* and *Fossils in Colour*, both by Professor J.F. Kirkaldy), will welcome this worthy companion volume.

It is described as a guide for those lacking in experience in geological field work, and is so explicitly written that it can be readily used by those with only limited geological knowledge.

The first section is concerned with localities suitable for field work, areas with natural exposures in coastal or mountainous regions or streambeds, and areas where rocks are exposed only in man-made excavations, quarries, road-cuttings or trenches. There follows a description of the requisite equipment and the techniques of collecting and labelling samples. Valuable advice is given on the proper examination of exposures, the recording of observations, the use of field sketches and the identification of rock, mineral and fossil specimens. A detailed description is given of geological mapping techniques, with an index of mapping symbols and full explanation of their significance.

The second section deals with rocks and structures to be observed in the field, and is illustrated by line diagrams and an impressive series of colour photographs, fully explained - and in many cases supplemented by line drawings - in the text.

The book ends with a section devoted to information on practical matters. The reader is directed to sources of geological information, museums, maps and publications of the Institute of Geological Sciences, the Geologists' Association, East Midlands Geological Society and those of other geological societies and bodies. A list is provided of suppliers of field equipment, some sound advice is given about photography in the field, and at the last there is an index.

The subject matter is arranged logically, and the contents list enables easy reference. The print is clear, and its arrangement in double columns makes for a compact presentation of each item.

In all, it is an extremely useful field text book for the active geologist, and an excellent introduction to field mapping for the university student.

The main charm of the book, however, lies in its superb colour photographs, and for the geologist of the armchair it will prove an abiding delight.

D.M. Morrow.