

Secretary's Report for 1977

This will be my last annual report to the Society, and it is with great pleasure and satisfaction that I can say that 1977 has been a year of vigorous activity and enthusiastic support. There have been fifteen meetings, nine indoors and six in the field, all well attended and enjoyed. The lecturers whom we have invited to speak to us have all mentioned with appreciation the interest shown by our members, and the leaders of our excursions have expressed their pleasure in leading such keenly interested parties.

The indoor meetings comprised an Annual General Meeting and Collectors' Meeting, a Presidential Address, a joint meeting with the Matlock Field Club, an Annual Dinner, four lectures from visiting speakers and an evening devoted to demonstration of laboratory techniques. There were four day field meetings, a weekend field meeting, and for the second time, a meeting which lasted a week.

At the Annual General Meeting in March, the serving officers were elected to hold office for a further year and four Ordinary Members of Council retired, to be replaced by four newly elected members.

A vote of thanks was proposed to the retiring members, Mr. R.C. Gratton, Mr. N. Green, Mr. D.N. Robinson and Mr. M. Stanley, each of whom had rendered particularly valuable service during his term on Council.

When the business was concluded, a Collectors' Meeting followed. Exhibits had been arranged earlier in the evening, and in the happy, relaxed atmosphere, characteristic of this meeting, members enjoyed a tour of the wide variety of geological items. A list of exhibits follows:

1. A.E.G. Allsop "Let's go to the Isle of Skye again."
2. M. Beaumont Collection of geological books.
3. P. Binks Rocks and minerals mainly from the Peak District.
4. M. Boneham "What can it be?" Geological quiz.
5. D.S. Buist Columnar sandstone from Kilchallan Bay.
6. J. Cantrill Crystals great and small.
7. W.A. Cummins (a) Working model of tectonic plates of the East Pacific.
(b) Collection of metamorphic rocks.
8. J. Hayes Photographic slides of the Edinburgh field excursion.
9. R.J. Hawkins (a) Collection of geological instruments.
(b) Collection of "The British Geologist".
10. Cahit Helvaci Borate minerals from Turkey.
11. N. Leiter Collection of old geological books.
12. D.M. Morrow Some British granites.
13. S. Penn Photographic slides of fossils.
14. G.S. Robson Random gleanings.
15. J.W. Smith (a) Geological map of Mount Vesuvius with lava and ash samples and thin sections.
(b) Photographic slides of the Edinburgh field excursion.
16. H. Sykes & M. Williams Collection of Pleistocene mammal bones.

17. F.M. Taylor (a) Mineralised Carboniferous Limestone with malachite, azurite and baryte from Cannington Park, Somerset.
(b) An algal limestone with corals, Treak Cliff, Derbyshire.
18. The Editor Complete series of "The Mercian Geologist".
19. Dept. of Geology Examples of fossil preservation.

At the meeting, Mr. J.H. Sykes again offered for sale a stallful of delectable specimens, fossil and mineral, and his business premises were as popular as ever. His total profit amounted to £18.30 and this sum he later donated to the Society's Trust Fund, bringing his total contribution to the fine sum of £143.40. Mr. Sykes thanks members for their generous donation of specimens and their unfailing support of his sale. The Society in turn is very grateful to Mr. Sykes, who gives a great deal of his time to the receiving, storing, mounting and presenting of his wares, thus making considerable contribution to our funds.

In April, Mr. J.B. Delaire came to speak on the subject of ichthyosaur remains. He conveyed to his audience his own keen interest in these ancient creatures, and, indeed surprised his hearers with the wealth of fascinating information which he possessed. His lecture was copiously illustrated by photographic slides and a fine collection of fossil bones.

The weekend field meeting in May was centred in South Wales, the first time the Society has ventured into this beautiful part of Britain. We were fortunate to have for leader Dr. J.D. Weaver of Derby College of Technology, whose knowledge of his home ground was extensive and detailed, and who gave the party a thorough introduction to the most interesting geology and lovely scenery of the North Crop of the South Wales Coalfield.

Also during May a meeting was arranged for the Association of Teachers of Geology, to which members of the Society were cordially invited. The meeting was held in Derby College of Technology and was practical in nature, with the object of demonstrating basic laboratory techniques. This is the first occasion such a meeting has been held and it was a most successful experiment. We are grateful to the staff and technicians who gave their time.

The June meeting was in the hands of Dr. N. Aitkenhead and Mr. I. Chisholm, both of the Institute of Geological Sciences, who led a large party to the Lathkill Dale and Pilsbury area. It is always a privilege to have demonstrated the latest investigations and conclusions by the survey officers who have worked in the area.

An unusual and interesting day was spent in July visiting the Quaternary terrace sediments of the Trent Basin around Derby and Nottingham. There were three leaders on this occasion, Mr. P.F. Jones of Derby College of Technology, who showed and described the various terraces of the River Derwent; Dr. W.A. Cummins of Nottingham University, who demonstrated river habits and sedimentation; and Mr. J.L. Fox, who led the party to Colwick, Nottingham, for a wide succession of items of geological and archaeological interest. We had with us also Dr. C. Salisbury, who described his work in dendrochronology, in connection with fossilised tree trunks at Colwick.

Late in July, the week excursion took place, this time centred in Ayrshire. The party was accommodated in the Craigie College of Education, Ayr, among delectable surroundings, and we were deeply grateful to Dr. E.N.K. Clarkson of Edinburgh University who kindly arranged the week's activities. Not only this, Dr. Clarkson stayed with the party, led the first three excursions, to the beautiful areas southwest of Girvan, to the Craighead limestone inlier, to the incredible graptolite-rich valley near Moffat, known as Dobb's Linn, and in the evenings presented a lecture to describe and discuss the geology of the day. Following this, Dr. W.D.I. Rolfe of the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow led a marathon excursion to study the Silurian beds of the Hagshaw Hills; Mr. S.K. Munro of the Institute of Geological Sciences, Edinburgh, showed the Scottish Carboniferous of the Ardrossan area; and finally Dr. B. J. Bluck of the Department of Geology, University of

Glasgow crowned the week with a splendid day among the beautiful rocks of the Ballantrae volcanic complex. We acknowledge our gratitude to all our leaders for this fine week's excursion to such a fascinating corner of Scotland.

The Society does not meet during August, but in September Professor J.E. Prentice of King's College, University of London met a very large party in the Manifold Valley to examine limestones of varying facies at Ecton Hill and in Narrowdale. Professor Prentice pointed out the characteristics and relationships of bedded and reef limestones, and showed how an environment could be inferred by studying bedding types and conditions of fossil deposition.

A visit had been planned in October to visit certain exposures on the new motorway which was under construction near Chesterfield. At the last moment, however, this had to be cancelled, and Dr. F.M. Taylor of Nottingham University stepped gallantly into the breach with a substitute excursion to the Cromford and Wirksworth area. This proved a most enjoyable day, which the party spent in a secluded world, surrounded by fog, but if the views were restricted, the geology was excellent.

The indoor meetings of the winter season began in November with a lecture on the metamorphic rocks of southern Norway. The speaker was Dr. D. Field of the Department of Geology, Nottingham University, who had himself carried out research in this area. In his interesting address, he discussed regional variations in the degrees of metamorphism and related dehydration of rocks to a deep-seated position in the earth's crust.

In December, Dr. B.J. Bluck, who had, during the summer excursion, introduced the Ayrshire party to the rocks of the Ballantrae volcanic complex, came down from Glasgow University to describe them to the Society, and to link them to the theory of plate tectonics. This latter has always been a favourite subject with the Society, and members entirely filled the large lecture theatre to hear Dr. Bluck speak of the unique sediments of southern Ayrshire, and give his interpretation of them.

The Society met twice in January, first when Dr. P.H. Bridges of Derby College of Technology gave a lucid account of the evolution of the Welsh basin. This lecture was doubly appreciated in its corollary to Dr. Bluck's exposition at the last meeting.

A week later, a meeting was held jointly in Matlock with the Matlock Field Club, when three geological films were shown. Two were issued by the National Coal Board, the first gave an interesting report of the new coalfields at Selby and Belvoir, and the second a reassuring account of the reclamation of old coal tips, "eyesores to assets". Less comforting was the third, a BP film entitled "Energy in Perspective", which presented a sobering picture of the lavish wastage of natural fuels during the present century. An official from the N.C.B. was present to lead a discussion.

The Annual Dinner was held in February in the Staff Club of the University of Nottingham. Dr. Taylor again kindly made all the arrangements. This meeting held all its usual warmth and good companionship, and after dinner the party adjourned to a private room for further refreshment.

The Presidential Address next evening had for its subject economic geology in neolithic Britain. The Society was aware already of Dr. Cummins' researches concerning the source rocks of neolithic stone axes, and it was of enormous interest to hear him link the factory sites with the areas in which the axes are found, and suggest probable trade routes between the two.

We are very grateful, not only to our President, but to all our speakers for such a fine series of lectures.

Our excursion leaders, too, merit our most grateful thanks. We cannot be unaware of the busman's holiday our leaders take when, after lecturing or surveying all week, they give the whole of one of their free days to share with us their expert knowledge and experience.

In connection with excursions, one point has been particularly stressed this year, the use of safety helmets when visiting quarries. Since the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act, quarry owners and managers have been responsible for the safety of visitors to their premises. Naturally, as a result of this, certain restrictions have been imposed, one of them being the wearing of safety helmets. Indeed, some quarry owners refuse admission unless helmets are worn. The Society has, consequently, acquired a stock of these which may be bought by members at any meeting.

The Society continues in its policy of conservation of geological sites, and is vigilant in ensuring that all new members are provided with a copy of its Countryside Code. Certain of our members have offered their services in patrolling the Wilcockson Geological Nature Reserve at Duckmanton, and the Society has donated £20 to help in the production of a booklet to describe its geological features.

Eleven monthly circulars were sent out during the year, a necessary and valuable means of communication with members and, indeed amongst members. Increasingly members have used the circular to obtain information or assistance, and the Secretary may be contacted at any time. It is, however, an appallingly expensive item, costing almost £18 every month in postage. And this cost would be considerably greater if it were not for the help given by individual members who receive several circulars and most kindly deliver nearby ones by hand. This service is enormously appreciated and further volunteers would be welcomed.

It was understandable that after doubling our annual subscription we should lose some members. A small number of institutions left us with some regret and some of our Juniors did not renew their membership, but the great bulk of our members accepted the increase as unavoidable, and we were delighted to welcome many new members. It is with sadness that we recall the death of two of our most longstanding members, Mr. R. Wilmot and Mr. Edmund Taylor, the Society's first Treasurer and a well known figure at all our gatherings.

The state of membership at the end of the year was as follows:

<u>Honorary</u>	<u>Ordinary</u>	<u>Joint</u>	<u>Junior</u>	<u>Institutional</u>	<u>Total</u>
2	276	118	19	112	527

Council met on six occasions during the year to arrange programmes, discuss policy and deal with any business. Although there is a gradual change in the composition of Council over the years, it maintains a wonderfully helpful character and spirit of co-operation. As secretary for eight years, I have had tremendous help and support.

After experiencing such an auspicious year as 1976, the unhappy Editor could only expect vicissitudes to follow, and after publishing Volume 6, No.2, early in the year, he met with delays and disappointments on every hand. In spite of all endeavour, he did not succeed in producing Volume 6, No. 3, until the close of 1977.

The travelling Society exhibit has been much in evidence during the year. Upon completing its tour of museums and libraries in Lincolnshire, it embarked on a tour of those of Leicestershire. It was shown at the conference of United Kingdom Geological Societies in Swansea, and we were gratified to receive an invitation from the Assistant County Librarian to place it on show in the Nottinghamshire County Library in Angel Row. We give our thanks to Mr. M. Stanley who has kindly taken on responsibility for its travels and its maintenance.

Perhaps the most unexpected occurrence of 1977 was the bequest of £1,000 to the Society from the will of Mr. A.E. Frost, unknown to the Society, but described by his solicitors as interested throughout his life in science. The Society was most grateful at this time of desperate inflation to accept this handsome bequest.

In conclusion, I offer the Society's warm thanks to Professor Lord Energlyn and to the University of Nottingham for the free use of their fine premises for our activities, and for my own part, my sincere gratitude to the Society and to Council for a most happy and rewarding term of office.

My best wishes to Mrs. Wright, my successor.

D.M. Morrow