

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 1993/1994

The Society has again had a most wonderful year with 19 new members and one new institution having joined. Membership now stands at 392 individual members plus 81 institutions. It is my sad duty to record the deaths of four of our members, Mr. Ian Gott, Mr. R. Bean, Dr. Roger Gunn and Dr. Neville Green, the last two having been founder members of the Society. Our sympathy and condolences are extended to all their families.

Our programme of events has included nine indoor meetings, three full-day field meetings, two evening excursions and a residential weekend in the Forest of Dean.

Last year's Annual General Meeting was enlivened by a thoroughly entertaining talk from John Martin of Leicester Museum on the "Art" of Palaeontological Reconstruction. He showed how the artistic depiction of a dinosaur by a particular scientist, such as Richard Owen, could influence public and scientific interpretation of the beast in question for a considerable period of years.

Later in March Dr. Robin Wingfield of B.G.S. lectured to us on the topic of Sea Level Changes since the last glaciation with particular reference to the raised beaches around the Celtic and Irish seas.

The first two field meetings of the year were evening excursions, the first being to the British Gypsum Quarry at Cropwell Bishop. It was a perfect May evening with 56 members in attendance, and our leader for the visit was Ted Moczarski, a geologist with B.G.S. Once he had overcome his amazement at the number of participants, Ted gave us a most educational guided tour of the huge new working of the Cropwell Bishop pit.

The second evening event, in mid-June, again took place on a superb evening. It was an idyllic geological walk from Hartington through Biggin, Wolfscote and Beresford Dales led by our President Neil Aitkenhead and our Field Secretary Ian Sutton, and was thoroughly appreciated by the 32 members who were there. This time we got back to the cars before the moon came up!

The Forest of Dean was the venue for our annual residential weekend field course, the party being based at an excellent hotel near Ross-on-Wye. The participants very much appreciated the most able leadership of the course by Dr. Paul Coones of Oxford University, who knew the area intimately having lived there for many years and having studied its geology in some considerable detail.

On Sunday, 18th July, David Thompson of Keele University led a well attended excursion to the Clive and Grinshill areas of Shropshire to examine the Permian-Triassic of the South Cheshire Basin and to view the famous Murchison's Dykes. David's fund of historical as well as geological knowledge enhanced a most enjoyable day.

After our Summer break, we recommenced activities with a day excursion to the Coventry area led by John

Rees and David Bridge of B.G.S. Attendance for the trip was disappointing because of a delay in publicity that resulted from permission being denied for the party to enter one of the main quarries. This was a great shame because those of us who did attend enjoyed an extremely well led trip proving that despite their name, the so-called "Barren Measures" of the Warwickshire Coal Field were far from lacking in interest.

The Autumn lecture programme commenced in October with a talk in inimitable style by Tony Waltham of Nottingham Trent University on the Caves of Xingwen in China. He described the ongoing environmental conflict between local mining activities and conservation of the spectacular karst scenery of the area.

On a clear but biting cold day in late October, we had our last field excursion of the year with Eric Robinson of the G.A. taking us on one of his famous London walks, in the area south of the Thames between Tower Bridge and London Bridge. His wealth of knowledge about the building stones and the industrial and architectural history of the area was greatly appreciated by the large number of members on the trip. It was an excellent day.

We were pleased to be able to hold our November meeting in Derby by courtesy of the University, where Dr. Stan Salmon of the Geology Department gave a most interesting lecture on the varied plutonic igneous activity exhibited in the rocks of the Channel Islands and the closely associated areas of South Normandy and Brittany.

The pre-Christmas meeting in December was, as ever, extremely well supported and we were rewarded with a fascinating insight into the number and variety of projects which have been undertaken by the British Geological Survey over the years and the way in which the funding for these projects has had to change. The speaker was Dr. Rob Evans of the Survey, and I am delighted to say that both he and his wife have since become members of the Society. The lecture was followed by the usual Christmas buffet which was much enjoyed by all, the food and wine both disappearing very rapidly.

To the new year, when Dr. Susan Rigby of Leicester University came to talk to us about graptolites. She presented new evidence showing such similarities between the graptolites and present day pterobranchs that it can now quite viably be argued that graptolites are still alive and well and with us today. It was an excellent lecture which was most professionally presented.

And so to the last meeting of the year, Neil Aitkenhead's third Presidential Address for which he chose as his topic, the Birth, Life and Death of the Derbyshire Carbonate Platform. The topic and the speaker were clearly popular as there were so many members in attendance (102) that we had to repair at the last minute to a larger lecture hall in order to accommodate everyone. It was a most coherent and educational account of an area well known and loved by many, detailing the evolution of the platform from early Courcayan times through to its demise with the

development of black shales (the Longstone Mudstones). These were deposited during a sudden rise in sea level which made life no longer viable for the calcareous fauna upon which carbonate production is dependent. The evening and the Society's year were most appropriately concluded with a superb buffet meal at Nightingale Hall, Nottingham University, attended by some 60 members.

Seven Council meetings have been held during the year and six Circulars published, and once again we are indebted to Mrs. Joan Bush for all the hard work she puts into production of the Circular.

One initiative launched by the Council this year is the inauguration of an Annual Study Travel Award for a student of pre-undergraduate level living in the East Midlands Area and studying geology or an associated Earth Science subject. The award will be worth £250 to the winner, together with one year's free membership of E.M.G.S. £50 will be given to the student's School or College to be spent on furthering the study of geology. This award will be funded from Trust Fund money, the objectives being the encouragement of geological studies and publicity for East Midlands Geological Society.

Only one issue of the Journal has been published — number 13(2) in July, but 13(3) is anticipated very shortly. Sales of the off-print of The Sandstone Caves article written by Tony Waltham for volume 13(1) have been excellent, and I feel that all those involved in promoting and distributing the booklets for sale should be sincerely thanked for all their hard work.

The Society has recently invested in a new (and much more easily carried and erected) display stand, which is available to be used at appropriate events. One future event I would like to bring to members' early attention is the British Association Meeting which is to take place at Loughborough University in early September 1994, with Society involvement.

Our Treasurer, Jack Fryer, has again been responsible for organising our programme of indoor meetings. This year our thanks to him for all his unstinting efforts over many years on the Society's behalf should be particularly recorded, as Jack is retiring from both posts on Council at this Annual General Meeting.

Ian Sutton has continued to organise our programme of field meetings and the standard and diversity of our excursions continues to be excellent. He is to be thanked for his sterling efforts.

We continue to be indebted to the many ordinary Society members who regularly help with the refreshments at our indoor meetings or deliver the Circular and Journal. Their assistance is greatly valued and appreciated as has been the help of my own Secretary, Celia Morris, over the six years I have enjoyed being your Secretary.

The Society continues to appeal to a wide audience of professional and amateur geologists and to a wide age range. Long may it continue to thrive.

Susan M. Miles