

REPORT

Derbyshire Archaeology Day

This is now an annual event organised by heritage teams from the Peak District National Park Authority, Derbyshire County Council and Chesterfield Borough Council. Held in January, it comprises a full day's programme of talks on recent archaeological activities in the county. Since 2003, the Archaeology Day has coincided with the publication of an annual magazine entitled *Archaeology and Conservation in Derbyshire*. The 13 issues to date contain nearly 100 articles that are relevant to geology, geomorphology or geoconservation.

The Chesterfield venue for the Archaeology Day is particularly fitting. The Stephenson Memorial Hall commemorates Chesterfield's link with George Stephenson (1781 – 1848), the celebrated engineer and railway pioneer who left a significant legacy of industrial archaeology. Although not a geologist, Stephenson clearly recognised the value of local rock and mineral resources and exploited these to make a significant contribution to the region's industrial development. He used the expanding rail links to transport large quantities of raw materials, particularly coal, for which there was increasing demand. Good quality coal seams together with Coal

Upper Palaeolithic cave art and new excavations at Creswell Crags: implications for the late Magdalenian settlement of Britain. Paul Pettit (University of Sheffield) 2008.

Bronze Age metalwork from the River Trent: a south Derbyshire perspective. Richard Davis (University of Nottingham) 2009.

Old King Coal: Derbyshire's archaeological heritage of coal mining. John Humble (English Heritage) 2010.

Archaeological excavations on Ecton Hill 2008-09: new evidence for prehistoric copper mining. Simon Timberlake (Cambridge Archaeological Unit) 2011.

Derbyshire fluorspar: end of an era? Paul Deakin 2012.

Predicting the past: the Derbyshire and Peak District Archaeology and Aggregates Project. Jim Brightman (Archaeological Research Services Ltd) 2012.

Heritage at risk – an overview of the past 15 years in Derbyshire and the Peak District. Ken Smith (Peak District National Park Authority) 2013.

Digging coal to make lime: 300 years of coal mining above Buxton. John Barnatt (Peak District National Park Authority) 2014.

Lea Wood, Derwent Valley: its archaeology and links with lead smelters. Robin Holgate (Archaeological Research Services) & James Hawksley (Dethick & Holloway Historical Society) 2015.

Examples of geological talks from Derbyshire Archaeology Days, all of which were published in the annual magazine "Archaeology and Conservation in Derbyshire".



Chesterfield: the infamous crooked spire on the parish church, with its timber frame twisted by 45° since construction in the 1300s; and the bronze statue of George Stephenson, holding a replica of his "Locomotion", in front of the railway station.

Measure ironstone encountered at Clay Cross during the construction of a tunnel for the North Midland line led to the formation of George Stephenson and Company, a commercial enterprise that Stephenson established with his son Robert Stephenson (1803 – 1859) and others. The Company opened a colliery at Clay Cross and built coke ovens, blast furnaces and an iron foundry. It also quarried limestone at Crich Cliff and transported this to their large lime works at Ambergate by means of a novel self-acting mineral railway designed by Stephenson.

Overall, Derbyshire Archaeology Day is an informative and successful event that is held in a well-chosen venue. In conjunction with the associated magazine, the event does much to enhance public awareness of the results of archaeological research projects in Derbyshire and Peak District National Park. However, from a geosciences perspective, the same area is characterised by a diverse range of geological and geomorphological features many of which have historical significance. Such geodiversity also needs to be conserved for future scientific, educational and recreational use.

*Peter Jones
p.f.jones@derby.ac.uk*