



Circular 417
January 2016
Registered Charity No: 503617

President: Vanessa Banks

www.emgs.org.uk

WINTER 2016 **LECTURE PROGRAMME**

Saturday, 16th January 2016 – 6.00 pm

Ian Williamson, BGS retired – Early Palaeogene Lava Fields of the Inner Hebrides – are they just monotonous piles of Basalt?

Saturday, 13th February 2016 – 6.00 pm

Vanessa Banks, BGS – Sinkholes and the media

Followed by the Annual Dinner – booking form enclosed

Saturday, 19th March 2016 – 6.00 pm

Rory Mortimore, Professor at Brighton University – Chalk of the Paris to London fast railway route

Saturday 9th April 2016 – Members Evening -speakers and titles to be confirmed in next Circular.

CHANGE OF LECTURE VENUE

PLEASE NOTE Indoor meetings will, from this October, be held in the School of Geography on the Nottingham University Campus which is in the Sir Clive Granger Building. Enter the University by the North Entrance, off the A52, and follow signs to the main Visitor Car Park. As you enter the car park, the Sir Clive Granger building is on your left and can be entered from the car park. **There are no parking charges for this car park at the weekend.** Lectures are held in Room A48

The Society is indebted to the School of Geography at the University, who are hosting our lectures, for the use of these facilities.

Saturday, 16th January 2016 – 6.00 pm

Early Palaeogene Lava Fields of the Inner Hebrides – are they just monotonous piles of basalt ?

It's all too easy to see the Palaeocene Lava Fields of NW Scotland as bleak, featureless landscapes, endless tracts of grassland and blanket-peat bogs, beset by rain, mist, ticks and midges. The rocks too are often considered unexciting, dull monotonous piles of old, cold and boring basalt, intractable and unworthy of detailed field-based research. Nothing could be farther

from the truth of course, and this talk aims, hopefully, to convince you to consider them in a very different, fascinating and certainly more dynamic light. Taking specific case studies from my research on Skye, Mull and Canna, the lecture aims firstly to summarise our current knowledge and then to detail how recent field-based research has significantly increased our understanding of the physical volcanology, stratigraphy and facies architecture of these rocks.

The talk will also cover field-based and isotopic age relationships, elements of geochemistry and secondary mineralisation, and the sedimentary environments and processes associated with the volcanism. Do you know, for example, how the classical columnar jointing of the world famous Fingal's Cave formed, and that the volcanism that produced it was intimately associated with sedimentation in a developing graben populated by thriving ecosystems, or that the Talisker area on Skye was once the site of what is known as 'intracanyon' volcanism'? In lighter 'non-scientific' vein, the final part of the talk will consider the legacy of this volcanism in determining present-day Landscape Character, and how perceptions of these "lava field landscapes", including the iconic features of Fingal's Cave on Staffa and the Old Man of Storr on Skye, have inspired myths and legends and played influential roles in both art & cultural circles whilst becoming increasingly important to the (Geo)tourism industry.

Saturday, 13th February 2016 – 6.00 pm

Sinkholes and the media

The winter period from December 2013 to January 2014 was characterised by exceptional periods of winter rainfall in England and Wales. Extensive flooding and increased numbers of slope failures, landslides, and sinkholes, affected infrastructure across the country, thereby generating considerable media attention. In addition to government and stakeholder requirements, the BGS experienced an unusually high level of enquiries from the public and the media pertaining to "sinkholes". This talk will describe the wave of incidents, the data that is held by the BGS and the processes associated with their formation.

Saturday, 19th March 2016

'Chalk of the Paris to London fast railway route'

Collapse of part of the railway track along the TGV-Nord (Paris-Lille) in 1994 while a high speed train was running, causing the train to leave the track, led SNCF (French Railways), to commission ANTEA (Consultancy arm of BRGM, the French Geological Survey) to investigate the scale and extent of the problem. The initial results suggested that an undetected, unfilled cavity remaining from the First World War frontline was the cause of the collapse. However, following exceptionally heavy and intense rainfall in 2000 and 2001 'swarms' of ground collapse features were reported close to the railway line in regions north and south of the Somme valley where the Chalk was the main bedrock. The problem was bigger and more widespread than initially expected.

SNCF-ANTEA instigated an investigation that involved a complete re-assessment and remapping of the geology, the Great War battlefronts, climate data, records from farmers and the mayors of the local communities over a 150km long, 5km wide zone adjacent to the railway line between the valley of the Oise and Lille. Rory was appointed International Reviewer for the work and joined the SNCF/ANTEA team on field investigations.

In 2006 ground subsidence in and around the Canadian National Monument at Vimy Ridge, near Arras led to further investigations of the geology of the First World War battle fronts by a Canadian University team from Queens University, Ontario. Rory took the Canadian team into the field to train them on the Chalk before undertaking the work.

During the 1990s ground investigations for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL/HS1) from Folkestone to London were undertaken by Union Railways Limited. These investigations provided the first opportunity to trial the CIRIA methods for classifying the engineering characteristics of the Chalk. The investigations provided the most comprehensive details of Chalk geology through the North Downs, under the Thames and into central London, a database subsequently used on all the major tunnels in London for Crossrail and the Thames Water tunnels. Rory was appointed consultant geologist to Union Railways for the Chalk part of the route.

Each of these construction projects has provided invaluable information on the geohazards related to chalk country that can now be applied to future projects such as HS2.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A reminder that these will be due on 1st February

Subscription rates remain unchanged and are as follows:

Ordinary members - £18.00

Joint members - £22.00

Please send your subscriptions to the Treasurer as soon as possible and if you pay by standing order please ensure this is for the correct amount.

We are also trying to ensure that as many of our subscriptions as possible are gift aided. This costs you absolutely nothing but means that the Society will receive much needed extra funds by way of tax rebates, so if you haven't already completed a Gift Aid declaration, please contact the Treasurer and request one.

Society Publications

- (1) **East Midlands Field Guide;**
- (2) **Sandstone Caves of Nottingham** (3rd edition)
- (3) **Leicester Building Stones Guide**

Copies available by contacting the Secretary or at Indoor Meetings.

Mercian Geologist – Back numbers

Do you need any back numbers of the Mercian to fill a gap in your collection?

The scanning of every single issue of the Mercian Geologist that the Society has published is now complete. As soon as they are all accessible through the Society's website the stocks of back numbers that the Secretary currently holds will be disposed of although a complete set of hard copies will of course be kept for archive purposes. So please contact the Secretary Janet Slatter at secretary@emgs.org.uk or on 01509 843297 if you have any gaps that you want to fill

Information for Other Societies

We hold information of lectures and field meetings for other local societies such as the NSSGA, Black Country Geological Society and Leicester Lit & Phil Society. If you would like details of any of these, please contact the Secretary.

EMGS Website

The publications page on the Society website (www.emgs.org.uk) has been tidied up and updated. It now includes links to two archives:

One is the archive of the early Mercian Geologists where the huge task of diligently scanning and preparing copies of all the back issues has now been completed thanks to the hard work of David Bate. These will soon, if they are not already, all be accessible through the Society's website.

The other is the archive of papers and reports in the more recent issues. These will go onto the webpage two years after they appear in the paper issues of the Mercian. Files will be extracted and posted, working backwards as far as 1992, and this all takes time. Files for 2010 onwards are already prepared and will go online on their second birthday.

Costs of the Circular

To minimise postal costs and photocopying charges which amount to approximately £4.00 each year for every member who still receives their Circular by post, we would very much like to send you your Circular by e-mail. If you have not already done so, please send your e-mail address to the Circular Editor, sue.miles@freeths.co.uk

Please can you also confirm your name and address when sending your e-mail so we can correlate these details with our membership listing.

The next Circular will be published in early February 2016

The next Council Meeting will be held on 16th March 2016

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EAST MIDLANDS GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

52nd Anniversary Dinner **13th February 2016 at 7.45 pm**

The 52nd Anniversary Dinner will be held this year at a new venue on the University campus, the award winning De Vere Orchard Hotel, which is situated close to the west entrance adjacent to the East Midlands Conference Centre. There is ample car parking at the hotel with easy level access. The hotel is easy to find but directions will be given on the night to those that need them.

The cost is **£25.00** per person, including tea and coffee.

If anyone has any special dietary requirements please let us know, and an alternative dessert may be available.

Starter

Coronation Chicken, lettuce, mango and almond;
Vegetable Soup (V)

Main Course

Seafood Pie, seasonal salad;
Butter Chicken Curry, basmati rice, popadums;
Tomato Tart with black olives, capers, basil and marscapone (V)

Dessert

Marmalade Bread and Butter Pudding, spiced custard.

Tea and Coffee.

Please indicate your choice of starter, main course and dessert below as soon as possible.

Booking form for 52nd Anniversary Dinner

Please reserve places

My/our chose of three courses are as follows:

Starter(s):

Main Course(s):

Dessert(s):

Name(s) & Tel. Nos:

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Cheque made payable to EMGS enclosed for £

Please send to: Ian Sutton at 30 Alford Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 6GJ
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