

Over 300 people enjoyed tours

The British Geological Survey at Keyworth ran free guided tours for the public on Saturday 29th November 2008. This was the 5th year of this highly successful event which is organised in support of the national Archive Awareness Campaign 2008. The theme of the event changes each year with this one entitled. "Communities Industry and Earth History – How the past influences our environment". (www.archiveawareness.com).



These tours were a unique opportunity for the public to get behind the scenes at the Survey and see displays and demonstrations which used parts of the vast collections of millions of records, specimens, archives and the state of the art computing technology available. The displays showed how specific geological conditions lead to major industries in the Midlands and illustrated their significant influence on the development of these areas, their communities and the environment.

The event was fully booked weeks in advance and we now have a waiting list for next year's event. Over 300 people joined the tours, which had something for everyone. For 90 minutes they followed a geological timeline through the Library, the Fossil Museum, the National Geological Records Centre, the vast Material Collections storage hall before ending at the 3D suite and a demonstration of the Dando drilling rig.

The timeline covered the geology of the East Midlands and started over 4,000 million years ago in the Precambrian, with the formation of the Earth, through to the Ice Ages of the Quaternary only 11,000 years ago. The exhibits and talks highlighted the conditions on Earth at the time and how climate change and the formation of the rocks created the materials exploited by industry today. The industries covered in detail were road stone and aggregates, coal, limestone, gypsum, iron and steel, and sand and gravel. At the end of the tour they visited the 3-D Visualisation Suite and saw the state-of-the-art virtual technology used by geologists to view sub-surface geology and outside saw how the drilling team obtains the new information needed to update our databases and models.



Apart from raising awareness of our work and showing its direct relevance to researchers and the public these events have had the additional beneficial effect of producing integrated teamwork across different disciplines and areas of work. They have also led to the creation of new publications and related output which can stand on its own or be re-used in other areas or events. It also challenges us to think in different ways about the information we hold and the way it can be used.

Rod Bowie 2009