

ESEF Cymru

Launch by First Minister, Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM

“Climate – past, present and future”

By Professor Paul Pearson, University of Cardiff

4.30pm – 7.00pm, 24 January 2006

National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

Minutes of the first meeting - launch

1. Present:

Officers: Professor Allan Rogers (Chairman), Professor Mike Bassett, Professor Chris King, David Bailey, Cally Oldershaw. See list of attendees (www.esef.org.uk).

2. Chairman’s introduction:

Allan Rogers welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the rationale behind the Forum, explaining its aims and objectives.

3. Presentations:

Professor Mike Bassett gave a presentation about what the National Museum of Wales has done in education and talked about the general situation in Wales.

Professor Chris King (Vice Chair, ESEF and Director of the Earth Science Education Unit (ESEU) gave a presentation outlining Earth science education in the UK. He included school science examinations, science teaching and teacher in-service training (INSET) and continued professional development (CPD) and mentioned a number of initiatives such as the Science Learning Centres and curriculum developments.

4. Stakeholders’ discussion:

The Chairman invited stakeholders to raise concerns, provide suggestions and initiate discussion on key issues. A number of issues were raised including the following:

- Peter Hollamby, Royal Society of Chemistry – raised the issue of teacher training and the curriculum e.g. at Bangor and Cardiff universities. There was potential to improve the secondary-tertiary interface. An ‘All Wales’ conference was planned for June. The General Teaching Council for Wales (GTC) will be piloting cluster meetings e.g. in Science departments within schools where they would ‘buy in’ experts to help with the staff training. This may be something that ESEU and others could provide.
- Alison Dacey, Head Teacher, Pontygwaith Primary School – noted that the curriculum is over-loaded, with 12 curriculum areas. Generally, a cluster approach is used and regular monthly meetings could be used as a means to raise awareness of the Forum and also to help teachers with Earth science education. There may be

as many as 130 teachers in a room at a cluster meeting. GTC could be a possible funding source.

- Martyn Bradley, The Geology Trusts – mentioned the work of the Trusts
- Liv Carroll, Capita Symonds – highlighted the importance of reaching all relevant groups and crossing the interface between schools and industry.
- Simon Howell, Neath and Port Talbot CBC – noted that the All Wales Science Advisory Group meet once a term. Courses would need to fit the funding criteria.
- ? – noted that the National Botanic Gardens in Wales – was originally a quarry and that quarries can be used as a teaching resource by children of all ages. Biodiversity is within the curriculum. The Environment Agency and the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund may be suitable funding sources.
- Peter Chapman, Foster Yeoman – suggested that teachers should be encouraged to visit a quarry and see its potential. Foster Yeoman would be happy to invite attendees to visit one of their quarries.
- Tony Ramsey, Fforest Fawr Geopark – mentioned that Fforest Fawr is the only Geopark in Wales and highlighted the importance of Geotourism in Wales. He suggested that it would be a good topic for a BGS publication.
- David Bailey, British Geological Survey – explained the position re: BGS publications and noted that they have to pay for themselves via sales.

5. Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 2 May 2006, National Museum of Wales

Lecture:

Following the meeting, stakeholders were invited to the public lecture “Climate change – past, present and future” by Professor Paul Pearson in the Reardon Lecture Theatre.

Professor Paul Pearson

Paul is a Professor in the School of Earth, Ocean and Planetary Sciences at the University of Cardiff. He joined the School in January 2003. He is interested in extracting climatic information from deep sea cores and sediments, specialising in evolutionary and geochemical studies of planktonic foraminifera, and what they tell us about the long history of climate change. He helped develop new proxies for determining past seawater pH and atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, and hence the history of the greenhouse effect. Studies range from the Cretaceous period to Recent.

Prof Pearson has sailed on several occasions with the Ocean Drilling Program. Over the last few years, he has been co-ordinating a geological exploration and drilling programme in coastal Tanzania where excellently preserved samples have been obtained, providing new insights into the history of tropical climate. (see <http://www.earth.cf.ac.uk/people/default.asp?id=172> for further info)

Launch:

This presentation was followed by the formal launch of ESEF Cymru by the First Minister, the Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM. A transcript of the speech is available (see www.esef.org.uk).

Cally Oldershaw
25 January 2006