



Earth Science Education Forum (England and Wales) Minutes of the forty-second meeting

Held in the British Geological Survey meeting room, Natural History Museum, Exhibition Road, London. 1.30pm, 6 December 2011

Present: Chris King, Chairman (Earth Science Education Unit)
David Bailey (British Geological Survey)
Steve Brace (RGS with IBG)
David Brook (London Geodiversity Partnership)
Susan Brown (Geologists' Association and Rockwatch)
Nikki Edwards (OCR)
Tom Hose (GeoConservationUK)
Michael Howgate (Workers' Educational Association)
Isabel Markham (University of the Third Age)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Martyn Bradley (Geology Trusts), Grace Kimble (NHM), Jacqui Malpas (Clwydian Range AONB), Joanna Mears (Geological Society of London), Cally Oldershaw, Paul Smith (CHUGD Committee of Heads of University Geoscience Departments), Ian Thomas (National Stone Centre), Peter Warren, Niki Whitburn (Geographical Association), Martin Whiteley, Maggie Williams (Earth Science Teachers' Association).

2 Minutes of the 41st meeting, 18 October 2011

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting after minor amendments. A copy will be placed on the ESEF website.

Action: David Bailey

3 Matters arising

- 3.1 *[Agenda item 3.1] Geology teacher training:* C King reported that the Earth Science Education Unit was seeking funding to allow it to continue. Funding for training specialist geology teachers was also being sought and it was hoped this training would be accredited. S Brace advised that recruitment of participants to similar summer schools run by the RGS worked best as two weekend courses instead of a single week-long course.
- 3.2 *[Agenda item 3.3] Natural England Corporate Plan:* T Hose reported that a bid to DEFRA/Natural England by GeoConservationUK to assess SSSIs had failed.
- 3.3 *[Agenda item 4.1] National Geology Database:* C King reminded members that the costs for setting up the database had been estimated by Chris Darmon as ca £5k. CK had contacted CD to let him know that the Forum supported the initiative in principle but wished to establish a Steering Group to advise on content and were also unclear about the ongoing maintenance costs. CD agreed with the proposal for a Steering Group and confirmed that maintenance had been costed at £5k pa. After some discussion, members agreed that, while they were happy to support the Steering Group, in the current economic climate it was unlikely that the project would attract sponsorship at the level of £5k pa and that these costs seemed high. C King said he would report these views to CD. He would also advise that an application for the start-up costs could be made to the Curry Fund though there was likely to be a lot of competition for funds. T Hose said that he would also raise the matter at the forthcoming GeoConservationUK meeting. **Action: C King**

3.4 [Agenda item 9.1] *Code of conduct for rock coring*: S Brown tabled copies of the completed code and noted that a PDF version was available for download from the Geologists' Association website. C King said he would propose to CHUGD that S Brown attend their next meeting to promote the code to heads of university geoscience departments. C King asked whether there was a case for a GA leaflet on the use of geological hammers and S Brown suggested this could be incorporated in the GA guide to fieldwork. **Action: C King**

3.5 [Agenda item 9.2] *International Conference on Geotourism*: T Hose reported that a number of papers had already been offered and the conference had been endorsed by the Geological Society of London and the History of Geology Group. The conference was timely because of international debate about the status of geotourism, its relation to geography versus earth sciences and its recognition as a vehicle for geological conservation. C King asked S Brace to raise the issues with colleagues at the RGS and asked TH to forward a copy of his new definition of geotourism to D Bailey for circulation. **Action: S Brace, T Hose**

3.6 [Agenda item 9.3] *Earth science in the National Curriculum*: S Brace reported on a meeting hosted by the Royal Society. The National Curriculum was being reviewed and the science, geography and earth science communities had focused on how geology should be taught — which elements should be taught to particular age groups and within which statutory subjects (science or geography). The meeting resulted in very positive discussion and developments. In particular:

- A conceptual framework had been drawn up for Key Stages 1 to 4.
- The elements best taught as part of the Geography curriculum and those best taught within Science had been identified.
- Fieldwork was included as an important aspect for all age groups.

ESTA, the Geological Society, RGS and the Geographical Association had all signed up to the outline plan and a number of the professional science bodies had also broadly agreed, though some details were still under discussion, and the Royal Society were content to represent the proposal to government. C King agreed to circulate the final document widely as soon as it was ready. **Action: C King**

One positive outcome was the level of co-operation between the different organisations involved and the broad agreement on a well-considered outcome. It was to be hoped that the Secretary of State for Education would accept the recommendations.

T Hose proposed a vote of thanks from the Forum to Nic Bilham, of the Geological Society, and S Brace for their hard work on this matter.

An announcement on the Science curriculum was expected in January; an announcement on other parts of the National Curriculum, including Geography, was expected later in the year. It was known that the Government had received an unusually large response to the first phase of consultation.

3.7 [Agenda item 9.5] *World Skills Environmental Science Competition*: D Bailey reported that the Steering Group for the competition had begun planning for an environmental science competition at the UK Skills event in 2012 and hoped to recruit more schools and colleges to take part. He would circulate information about the 2011 competition to members.

Action: D Bailey

4 Finance report

Nothing to report.

5 ESEF website (www.esef.org.uk)

There had been no additions to the content apart from the minutes of recent meetings. D Bailey summarised visitor statistics which continued at a stable level.

6 All-Party Parliamentary Group for Earth and Environmental Sciences update

Nothing to report.

7 Potential collaborative projects

T Hose reported on a proposal to 'join up' existing and new resources and sites in the Bristol and Somerset coalfield. It was hoped that Sustrans would be involved to provide a link between geology and cycling. S Brown suggested that TH should contact Simon Carpenter. D Brook suggested linking with geodiversity groups.

8 National Geology Database

Discussed under Agenda Item 3.3 above.

9 AOB

C King said that the Select Committee on Science and Technology had said that the government's response to their report 'Practical experiments in school science lessons and science field trips' was 'hugely disappointing'. Most of the report's recommendations had not been adopted. (NB the report, the response from government and Ofqual, and the Committee's reaction are all available online at www.parliament.uk).

10 Date of forthcoming meeting

It was agreed that the dates of the next two meetings would be:

Tuesday 24 January. The subject for discussion would be the review of the National Curriculum for science (announcement by Secretary of State expected in January). It was hoped the venue would be the Geological Society (S Brown to liaise with Geological Society).

Action: S Brown

Tuesday 1 May. Chris King agreed to make a presentation about the Earth Learning Idea website.

Chris King thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 3.30 p.m.

Agreed actions:

Agenda Item	Subject	Owner	Due date
40/3.2	D Bailey to invite David Lambert to future meetings to represent Geographical Association	D Bailey	ASAP
42/2	Minutes of 41st meeting to be uploaded	D Bailey	ASAP
42/3.3	C King to relay comments on National Geology Database to C Darmon	C King	Next meeting
42/3.4	C King to propose Code of Conduct for Rock Coring should be on agenda of next CHUGD meeting	C King	Next meeting
42/3.5	Geotourism as a vehicle for geological conservation. S Brace to raise at RGS, T Hose to circulate new definition of geotourism	S Brace, T Hose	Next meeting

42/3.6	C King to circulate proposal for teaching geology within the National Curriculum	C King	Next meeting
42/3.7	D Bailey to circulate information about World Skills Environmental Science competition.	D Bailey	Next meeting
42/10	S Brown to liaise with Geological Society re venue for next ESEF meeting	S Brown	ASAP

Presentations on Geology in Adult Education

U3A and Geology, Isabel Markham

Each U3A group is autonomous, with 826 affiliated to the Third Age Trust, a charity, although it is not obligatory to affiliate. It has grown to 273 000 members in 25 years. The 'Founding fathers' are Peter Laslett and Eric Midwinter. Started in France. Academic standards high.

Local authority classes involve paperwork and fees: U3A is cheap!

Some groups are just a coffee morning and gossip shop, but are not turned away.

The Esme Fairburn Trust and other Education charities support U3A clubs and the resource centre e.g. with insurance cover, practical advice, First Aid check.

If a group is too big to meet in houses, hall hire will be paid. Can get help to access sites.

Similar membership to WEA, but U3A cheaper, although probably not such a high standard.

U3A doesn't provide tutors, who must be found within the group. Tutors are not paid. The basic principle is to be self-supporting, but it is possible to club together to pay a 'one-off' speaker.

Isabel started a geology group 22 years ago in S. London and subsequently joined the U3A main committee. For an Annual Conference she prepared a start-up leaflet on geology and charged 10p for the leaflet.

15 yrs ago, conference in Swansea had a geological day of interest added to the programme.

Isabel does not send out a newsletter – but encourages groups to contact each other.

Down To Earth – standard is ideal for U3A. Some members have been on Chris Darmon's trips.

2-3 groups a month contact Isabel about starting up a group. Isabel sends information to help the start-up tailored to the area and the age and ability of members.

U3A likes field trips! – tries to arrange to be hosted by the local group. Jersey, Malta, IOW, Auckland. (V academic)

Not certain how many groups – if happy with their geology, don't need to let her know – particularly in Wales!!

Tutors for U3A summer school – building stones

Will advertise the ESEF geol web site via U3A Sources.

WEA and Geology, Mike Howgate

WEA 1903 Albert Mansbridge, Oxbridge academics, outreach course for the working classes, mostly white collar S London.

Part of the Co-op movement, Anglican clergy, evangelising the East End.

1907 Govt funding, in part to prevent more left-leaning groups taking over.

Democratic, branches autonomous, selection panels, no examinations.

60s and 70s: many groups arose from WEA classes e.g. Harrow and Hillingdon Geology, Cuffley Industrial Archaeology Mostly orientated towards the social sciences, art.

Earth Sci patchy in WEA – local personalities often e.g. Arthur Raistrick, geol classes for farmers in Yorkshire Dales.

Up to about 10 years ago classes delivered by partner organisations such as a university extramural dept e.g. Birkbeck to Surrey and Southend with the administration undertaken by WEA.

Late 90's Birkbeck exams, prescriptive as to what was wanted.

Now generally 20 week courses.

WEA £120 for 40 weeks

Cf. Local Councils £300

WEA groups don't feed in to 'general' programmes, there are some union links, not political. Late 60's, early 70's how to be a shop steward, H&S, i.e. some govt work. Neil Kinnock a WEA organiser.

In London Mike was subject officer for science with 12 geo classes at one time. 2hrs per week for 20 weeks.

Tutors selected on a regional basis not a network

Judy Skipper, Chingford, Chris Duffin, S London, Di Clements, Southgate.

Post-grad students sometimes used – with some needing reminding of their audiences! WEA monitors tutors, insurance covered. Tutors are paid.

Local societies: geology astronomy, big burst late 60,s of local geology societies.

Local requests often related to science in the news.

Need to know where your customers are: adverts in libraries- but fewer customers, internet – niche market.

Geol down from 10 courses to 4, but once get an audience for geology, they stay with you!

120 000 WEA students now. 2/3 gov 1/3 student

General programme, trades unions, TUC funded gov-directed work.

Minimum no 12 students, age 16 onwards.

Promoting geol courses on WEA web site.

ESEF Geol website to contact WEA national office for list of regions and then contact them.

Notes by Nikki Edwards