



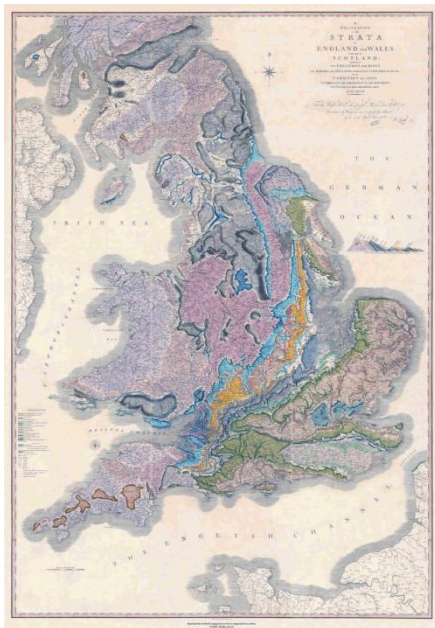
## PRESS RELEASE

9<sup>th</sup> December 2009

### **BGS Christmas Lecture 2009: William Smith, the first modern geologist**

**How did the son of a blacksmith produce the world's first geological map? The 2009 BGS Christmas Lecture will tell the story of this 19<sup>th</sup> century pioneering geologist at the headquarters of the modern-day British Geological Survey – with mince pies too!**

The British Geological Survey (BGS) will be hosting its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Christmas Public Lecture on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December at its headquarters in Keyworth, Nottingham. The lecture will tell the story of William Smith, the 'father of geology' and will be given by Professor Hugh Torrens from Keele University.



William Smith's 1815 geology map

This Christmas all lovers of history and science are warmly invited to a special lecture at the BGS. The lecture, **William Smith (1769–1839) and the new art of mineral surveying**, will tell the intriguing story of William Smith, a canal surveyor turned geologist. Despite humble origins and a life fraught with difficulty, Smith pioneered the new 'art' of mineral surveying, making extraordinary advances in geology; a science that in the 21st century continues to underpin our nation's development and wealth. He produced the world's first modern geology map in 1815. This lecture is hosted jointly by the East Midlands Regional Group of the Geological Society and the BGS.

The lecture will be presented by leading expert, Emeritus Professor Hugh Torrens. A recent winner of the Geological Society of America Award for History of Geology, he has written more than 200 books and papers on the subject and has spent much of his career researching the lives and work of the unsung heroes of geology, including William Smith, Mary Anning, Daniel Jones and John Farey.

The BGS has recently honoured Smith's extraordinary achievements by naming a state-of-the-art, eco-friendly office building after him. The William Smith Building at the BGS headquarters in Keyworth, Nottingham is the largest wooden-framed open-plan office in the UK and was opened in 2009.

The event is free to attend and booking is not required. Seasonal refreshments will be available from 6pm and the lecture will start at 6.30pm. The BGS's Geology Shop will be open beforehand offering unique Christmas gifts.



**British  
Geological Survey**  
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

Applied geoscience for our  
changing Earth

For further details about this event or to learn more about Geological Society events in the East Midlands Region, please contact the Chair, Dr Vanessa Banks by email: [vbanks@bgs.ac.uk](mailto:vbanks@bgs.ac.uk) or by telephone: 0115 936 3531.

Directions to the BGS can be found on our website:  
[www.bgs.ac.uk/contacts/sites/keyworth/kwhome.html](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/contacts/sites/keyworth/kwhome.html)

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**For further details or to arrange media interviews please contact:**

Clive Mitchell

BGS Press Office, Keyworth, Nottingham

email: [cjmi@bgs.ac.uk](mailto:cjmi@bgs.ac.uk) Tel. + 44 (0)115 936 3257

**Notes for Editors**

For additional information go to: [www.bgs.ac.uk/](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/)

**The Geological Society**

For information on the East Midlands branch of the Geological Society:

<http://www.geolsoc.org.uk/gsl/groups/regional/emrg>

**The British Geological Survey**

The British Geological Survey (BGS), a component body of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), is the nation's principal supplier of objective, impartial and up-to-date geological expertise and information for decision making for governmental, commercial and individual users. The BGS maintains and develops the nation's understanding of its geology to improve policy making, enhance national wealth and reduce risk. It also collaborates with the national and international scientific community in carrying out research in strategic areas, including energy and natural resources, our vulnerability to environmental change and hazards, and our general knowledge of the Earth system. More about the BGS can be found at [www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk).