



Tiptoe through time during National Science and Engineering Week

Did you know that tens of thousands of years ago Nottinghamshire was a frozen tundra at the edge of the northern ice cap? That 240 million years before that it baked in hot deserts? Or that 310 million years ago, thick deposits of plant material from lush tropical swamps were buried and eventually became the coal that powered the Industrial Revolution?

The British Geological Survey (BGS) encourages interest in the Earth's resources and history with a programme of events for the public, schools and teachers alike. The events are aimed to encourage everyone to take an active interest in science, technology and geology in particular, helping to inspire a future generation of local scientists.

To mark National Science & Engineering Week, the BGS ran a 'Fossil & Rock Show' at its headquarters in Keyworth, Nottinghamshire. Nearly a thousand children and their teachers from primary schools in the East Midlands learned to pan for gold, recorded their own earthquake, 'tiptoed through time' with spectacular fossils from the BGS's internationally renowned collections and enjoyed other hands-on activities and demonstrations.

Family groups joined the 'Fossil Fun' event when BGS opened its doors on Saturday 17 March. Rockwatch, the club for young geologists, was also on hand to help bring the past to life with their own brand of dinosaur-based fun.

Dr David Bailey from the BGS explained: *"The BGS works to bring earth science alive for people of all ages. We are very excited to open our doors during National Science Week and hope everyone who visits will be encouraged to learn more about geology and science in general. Perhaps some of the young people taking part will be inspired to become the geologists of the future."*

"Geology is central to our lives; it affects the water we drink, the dwellings we live in, the fuel that drives our vehicles and even the jewellery we wear around our necks. Our Science Week activities are a fun way of generating understanding of our natural resources among schools and the general public. It is particularly important for young people to understand that the way in which we manage our environment and exploit our resources will have consequences for generations to come."

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Notes to Editors:

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.