

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS AT THE AGM 2003

David Workman

It is very pleasing to record that 2002 was another good year for the Society. We had a full and well-attended Programme of lectures and field trips, with a wide range of subjects and destinations. Lecture topics ranged from volcanoes to the origin of whales and from feathered dinosaurs to geology and Hollywood! Speakers and leaders came from the Universities of Bristol, Kingston, Keele, London, Southampton and Swansea, as well as the British Antarctic Survey and the Geological Society of London. For our Jubilee lecture, held in the Assembly Rooms in June, a large audience welcomed Professor Jan Fairchild, from Keele, who gave an excellent talk on Late Precambrian glaciation. Another highlight was Professor Steve Sparks' account of his team's research on the current eruptions on the Caribbean island of Montserrat. Of the field trips I was able to attend I remember with particular pleasure the informative visits to the Vale of Wardour in Wiltshire, with Isobel Geddes, and Beer in Devon, with Charles Hiscock, also the splendid weekend in the Black Mountains and the Gower with Dr Geraint Owen from Swansea. Old friends of the Society like Nick Chidlaw and Hugh Prudden also led excellent field trips, as did several of our own members. Destinations included the North Somerset Coalfield, Somerset Levels, Forest of Dean and Severn Estuary. As always we are grateful to all those who gave so freely of their time and expertise for our benefit.

We also did our annual clearing days at the Brown's Folly Nature Reserve and the Bristol and Bath Railway Path, the latter led from the front as usual by Simon Carpenter. At Browns Folly work by the owners, the Avon Wildlife Trust, is now going forward to improve access and information on the nature trail, including the points of geological interest along it. We have given advice on this. Also on the conservation side of things, we continue to be represented on the Avon RIGS committee by John Parkins, our past Chairman, who has now taken on the role of the Society's Conservation Liaison Officer, including dealings with the local council on relevant matters.

The last few years have seen a very healthy level of membership and activity. I, for one, have gained a great deal from being a member these past five years and have had many memorable experiences. The Society enjoyed a great four years under John's committed and enthusiastic Chairmanship. He and our Secretary Elizabeth Devon made a formidable team. Now both have stood down at the end of their terms of office. Elizabeth served the Society with exemplary calm and efficiency for the maximum term Permitted by our Constitution, seven years. I know that for her it was a labour of love, for she is devoted to the Society. We all owe her a tremendous debt. Her place has been taken by Vicki Griffiths, who has already shown herself to be a most able successor. We also have a new Editor for the Journal, Angharad Hills taking on the task of producing the 2002 issue and doing such an excellent job, and then agreeing to edit this 2003 volume as well.

In this final Chairman's Review, last year, John emphasized the importance to any society of the active

involvement of its members. It bears repeating that we the membership need to keep contributing and there are various ways of doing this. Certainly, active participation is essential, and there is no problem there. But please keep thinking about what else you could offer - talks (long or short), journal articles (ditto), field excursions, exhibits ideas for speakers and topics . . . - and who you would like to see involved. In running the Society in future. Time flies. We are already planning the Programme for 2004. By the time you read this we will be approaching the run-up to the next Annual General Meeting. As this, my first review appears I am halfway through my term as Chairman!