

Chairman's Report for the Annual General Meeting 2011

Lastly, this is your Society so please feel free to give us your suggestions and thoughts.

*Elizabeth Devon
Chairman 2011*

You will be pleased to hear that the Society continues to flourish. Thanks to an appealing programme of events and to the efforts of our Membership Secretary, membership at the end of December 2010 was 98; this is a record number for the Society. At the end of December 2007, membership was 40 - it has been increasing steadily each year.

Our programme for 2010 was very successful with some extremely interesting talks and field trips. We celebrated 40 years of the Society in September with a very enjoyable evening of members' talks and birthday cake. You will see from the current programme that we have abandoned our January lecture as it often occurs too close to New Year. We shall have a lecture in the place of the Club Evening in September to make up for its loss.

Once again, we produced a very professional and interesting Journal - many thanks to the hours of effort and dedication from our Journal Editor.

Plans for the future? We are now working with WEGA and Bristol NATs in sharing field trips and, hopefully, Oxford Geology Group and South Wales GA may join the group too. The West Country Geology blog has helped to bring members of the various local groups together.

I should like to thank all the committee members for their hard work throughout the year and a special thank you to our refreshments lady, who regularly provides our tea and coffee and, of course, a special thank

Note from the New Chairman

It seems like a good opportunity to introduce myself. I graduated in 1970 with a BSc. in Geology from the Chelsea College of Science and Technology, London University and put off working for a while and went up the road into Kensington to Imperial College with the serious intent of getting a PhD. I spent a wonderful three years researching the 'type' Maastrichtian of South Limburg, which forms that part of Holland which actually is above sea level. The Maastrichtian sequence here is quite unlike our late Cretaceous chalks as it was deposited in a very shallow sea encroaching on the Brabant Massif.

I was fortunate to grow up in the 'Oil Business' as my father worked for Shell and my formative years were spent in Venezuela, Nigeria and Brunei. It wasn't long before I had landed a good position with an American oil company and I started my petroleum career in the North Sea oil and gas fields. Unfortunately, the research for my PhD floundered and I never defended my research. I spent the next 30, and most enjoyable years, with Marathon Oil Company as an active explorationist in many areas of the world; 20 of those years were outside of the UK, living in Indonesia, Texas, Colorado and Gabon. In the late nineties, after a number of years as International Exploration Manager for the Marathon in Houston, Texas I moved into

'general management' and became the country manager of Marathon's operations in Gabon and Holland. Since retiring from Marathon I have held non-executive directorships of a couple of 'start-up' exploration companies. My wife and I moved down to the Westbury area in early 2006 and are still wondering why we hadn't moved a lot earlier!

Well that is enough about me; the Society's Membership continues to improve, standing at present at 87. The lecture programme is as robust and varied as usual and as always, well attended. Six field meetings have been held so far this year, Brown's Folly, Combe Down, Saltford, Symond's Yat, Bradford on Avon and at Wick Quarry with the next field meeting near Warminster on Saturday, 29th October.

On the 9th September I attended and represented the society at the Geologist's Association meeting on 'Geoconservation for Science and Society' in Worcester.

If you have any suggestions for the Society, please do let me know. Should you have any ideas for field trips for next year please let us know. We try to keep the website, www.bathgeolsoc.org.uk, up to date - tell us if it is not. Other local geological happenings can be found at - <http://geologywestcountry.blogspot.com>

May I also take this opportunity to thank Elizabeth Devon, on behalf of you all, for her stalwart achievements as Chair in guiding and leading the society over the past years and more recently in opening her garden to the members for our 'Open Day' on the 25th June. I only hope I can do half as well.

Richard Pollock
July 2011

ANOMALOCARIDID FOSSIL

Jane Browning

The fearsome anomalocaridid, a giant prawn, unlike modern prawns, used its razor-sharp teeth as nippers to crack shellfish. They were believed to be the largest animals of the Cambrian period between 500 m to 540 mya. A fossil measuring 1m (3ft) was unearthed in Morocco earlier this year, making the creature 30cm (1ft) larger than previously thought. This is probably because they developed for a longer period of time; dating suggests it was around for 30 million years longer than had been realised.

The iconic anomalocaridids had large limbs resembling shrimp tails and a big mouth on the undersurface of the head. They also had large eyes and a ring of sharp teeth that could close in like nippers to crack shellfish.

The find also reveals a series of blade-like filaments in each segment across the anomalocaridid's back, which could have functioned as gills.

Anomalocaridids would have inhabited a muddy sea floor in quite deep water and were trapped in sediment clouds that buried them and preserved their soft bodies.

After death anomalocaridids and similar creatures tended to disintegrate and fall apart into separate chunks, and completely intact fossil remains are very rare.



A re-creation of an anomalocaridid, CREDIT: Esben Horn

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