

Reminiscences – Bath Geological Society

by Elizabeth Devon

I remember very clearly the first lecture I attended at the Bath Geological Society. It was a talk by Gilbert Green and, although I can't recall the exact title, it was about the varying rocks at Weston super Mare and was very good indeed. It was then that I knew I needed the society's help. I had recently been asked to set up an A level Geology group at the school where I was teaching. I had not taught A-level Geology before and, in fact had been out of teaching for a number of years when my children were small. I was not very familiar with the local rocks or the local sites.

That all changed as I started to attend the lectures and field trips regularly. All the members were helpful and friendly but I owe particular debts of gratitude to Charles Hiscock and Ron Smith who helped me enormously and gradually, my local knowledge expanded.

For many years my geological year was punctuated by the annual clear-up at Brown's Folly Nature Reserve, the summer Rock It! event on the Bristol to Bath railway path with the Bristol NATS and the annual Geologists' Reunion (now the Festival of Geology) which always used to be at University College, London. I have fond



Fig. 1: Rock it' at Saltford, Charles Hiscock, 25.08.2003



Fig. 2: Bath Geological Society at the GA Reunion, Charles Hiscock, 08.11.1997

memories of all of these but especially of Jan with her Gryphaea 'families' at Rock It! Ask her about them.

The lectures: there have been so many - - - but I shall never forget our Millennium lecture in the Assembly Rooms in Bath with Prof. Simon Conway-Morris. The big hall was full and it was an excellent, memorable event.

Field trips: far too many to mention but our regular field weekends to Hallsannery Field Centre will always stay in my memory. We always had wonderful long days in the field with Chris Cornford and then returned to the Centre for a wonderful dinner. I wonder if Charles' favourite armchair is still in the sitting room?



Fig. 3: Hallsannery weekend, Charles Hiscock, 07.06.1997

Our millennium field excursion was organised by Pat Bennett and involved a fabulous trip to the Greek islands. We studied everything from the major eruption about 3,500 years ago on Santorini, which destroyed the Minoan civilisation in the area, to the marble workings on Naxos, marble mines on Paros to the rich mineral deposits of Milos. It wasn't all spectacular geology - - there was a lot of sight-seeing and enjoyment of Greek food mixed in too.

In May 2007 we visited the Spanish Pyrenees, a field trip organised by Roger and Joy Lawley. We were based at Torla at the western end of the stunningly beautiful Ordesa National Park. The geological highlights of the week were seeing the deposits of not one, but two megaturbidites. They represented mega major catastrophic events; very exciting.



Fig. 4: Glastonbury Tor with H. Prudden, Charles Hiscock, 22.05.2004

Of course there were many, many local day field trips, far too numerous to mention. Geologists who formed a close association with the Society include: Geraint Owen from Swansea who led us to all the notable geological sites in south Wales, Hugh Prudden who took us to all in Somerset and Isobel Geddes who took us to all in Wiltshire.



Fig. 5: The Gower with Geraint Owen, Linda Drummond-Harris



Fig. 6: The Gower with Geraint Owen, Charles Hiscock, 29.09.2002

Mell asked me to write about things that came to mind when remembering the Society. I've mentioned quite a few already but also to be included: writing our 'Bath in Stone' book for Thematic Trails, Writhlington Batch open days, 'Geology on a Bicycle' on the Bristol to Bath Railway path with Simon Carpenter, ECOS Stones with Eric Robinson, Ploughman's Suppers and Garden Parties at our house and lots more Does anyone else remember the Bath GS T-shirts and the badges? What about the quiz night in 2004 with the Ammonites, Brachiopods, Graptolites and Trilobites? Sadly, I can't remember which team won. I could go on . . and on . . and on . .



Fig. 7: South east Wiltshire with Isobel Geddes, Charles Hiscock, 24.04.2004

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