

Newsletter Summer 2007

Dear Partners and Members

It is with considerable regret that I have to report the fatal accident of Cai who helped with our Young Geologists' Club. He was always cheerful and worked hard with the young children. He was a great help to us and we will miss him very much. Cai had been very excited about his trip, riding his motorbike with his father, in North and South America and the accident took place on his first day out on his new bike. We offer our sincere sympathy to his family and friends.

Since our last newsletter, we have been working hard at the Prichard Jones Institute (PJI), where we are now well and truly established. Our workroom walls are now covered in displays and Carolyn Davies (our Office Manager) is now very much at home in the office. We will soon be losing our little storeroom because the PJI is having a lot of renovation work done, starting next month. There will be a new roof, windows and disabled access as the first stage of the work to be completed early next year. I am very happy for the storeroom to be given away as it is to be the site of a lift up to our floor! We will be given more storage space in the former caretaker's flat adjacent to our workroom. The present billiard room will be converted to a Conference room seating 200 people, during the second phase of renovation.

At the end of April I finished my three-year contract with the Welsh Assembly Government to survey Anglesey and Gwynedd for geological sites. The sites were put into various categories to distinguish those which were important for research, education or for use by the general public. We are still in the process of contacting owners of land where there is one of these sites. The Geopark will use those sites, where the owners are happy, for some form of development (e.g. a trail, education package, information board or information sheet etc.). Many of these occur along the coast, in the A.O.N.B. or near the Coastal Path and we will be working with these organisations to produce the geological trails, education packs or sheets. Our part-time warden, Sue Brooks, will be working with me to contact owners regarding the important geology on their land in the coming months and to discuss their views regarding any possible development. We do not do any site development/publicity work if the owner does not want it.

Since April, Stewart Campbell and I have been writing the application for membership to the European Geoparks Network. If we are successful we will also be given UNESCO Global Geopark status in the following year. This is now in the hands of the evaluation committee – not without great trauma. The application should have been in by the end of June. It was duly sent off by International Data post at huge cost, as it was a bulky parcel, and was guaranteed to be delivered within 2 days to the south of France. I kept getting e-mails saying it had not arrived. After 10 days, we contacted the Post Office and they eventually traced it to Deeside, then Coventry. After the complaint, it arrived in France! We will be refunded our postage fee of £93. We had a great deal of help from the County Council with this application and it was professionally designed and printed. We are indebted to Medrwn Môn and the A.O.N.B Sustainable Fund for financing the design and printing of our application.

For the past two weeks we have had a really lovely lad, Siôn Roberts, working with us on work experience. He worked tirelessly and completed all tasks set before him. He is now in Cambridge doing a physics week taster course, before he returns to his 6th form for his final year. Siôn wants to be an astrophysicist and with his current attitude and aptitude I am sure he will be very successful. After all the problems that you hear about the younger generation, it restores one's confidence in the youth of today when you meet such great lads as Cai and Siôn, Both are a great credit to their families and sons to be proud of.

Six of the Geopark Partners will be travelling to Ullapool in the far north of Scotland for the Annual Geopark Conference in September where we hope to hear the results of our application. If and when we are successful we will be holding a big celebration in Anglesey.

Other progress in the Geopark has been our education programme. Cathie Brooks (WJEC) and Alwyn Roberts (Careers Wales) have completed a research study for CCW and RIGS/Geopark. It set out to discover what schools and the National Curriculum need regarding geological sites. This survey has led to some teacher training of Primary school teachers in Anglesey. So far I have been in 3 schools and shown the teachers what use they can make of their local area geology. This has been well received and further visits will take place on demand. The WJEC chief examiner for 'A-level' geology, Pete Loader, has produced a pilot study pack for KS3 & 4 and A-level, using Traeth Bychan. We will be doing further packs for other Anglesey sites. Karen Lawson of Chester University is in the final stages of writing packs for KS1 and 2 using Benllech. Soon she will start working on the Wylfa area and South Stack. We are very grateful for Pete, Karen and Kate (Riddington) who runs the Young Geologists' Club for travelling from the Chester and Manchester areas to help us with our work.

Regarding our interpretation/publication programme, there is good progress. John Conway, who ran two of the geowalks in Geopark week, is now creating two trail leaflets on South Stack and Breakwater Park. Jack Treagus is producing a major book on field sites in Anglesey and Rob Crossley has almost finished his Igneous Anglesey booklet. Currently, I am looking for funding to produce these works. All should be completed this financial year.

The main Geopark activity since I started working full time for the Geopark has been to organise the very successful Geopark Week, which took place at the end of May – beginning of June. We held 8 highly successful geo-walks in Anglesey and some of our partners led excursions ranging from South Stack, Breakwater Park, Rhosneigr, Llanddwyn, Newborough Forest, Parys Mountain, Red Wharf Bay and Lligwy. We held two children's events, fossil making at the PJI and a trip to Stone Science Museum in Talwrn accompanied by a gold panning event and "name that rock" where children brought in their specimens from home to be identified. Kyffin Williams, our former patron, was organising an art exhibition and competition for us but with his sad death, the local Art Group "Oriol Rhosyr" kindly took over and produced a fantastic exhibition. William Selwyn kindly judged the competition and chose one of the local group, Kath Evans, as the main winner. We are very grateful to all who helped.

We have now commissioned car/window stickers featuring our logo and these are available free to all our partners and members. One is included in this letter, which will be sent in the post, to accommodate them rather than sending this letter by e-mail in this instance. Further stickers can be obtained for your use to display in the premises of local businesses. The stickers, which are of the peelable variety, will not be glued to anything but can be removed easily. They are also on sale in the Geopark centre at 50p each. We also have metallic discs for use on way markers for our trails.

I will keep you up to date with any news as and when it occurs and I hope that now we are well established, we will be able to hold more relevant meetings and institute some valuable and interesting programmes. Now that I am working full time for the Geopark, I will endeavour to send out a newsletter quarterly.

Best wishes to everyone and I hope you all have a restful and happy summer break.

Margaret