



AUTUMN AND CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER, DECEMBER 2008

Dear Partners, Members and Friends of GeoMôn,

We would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and, dare I say it, a prosperous New Year.

We are now in the process of moving some of our belongings back into the Prichard Jones Institute in Newborough. (However, if you need to make contact please use my private details at the bottom of this letter until further notice). The refurbishment is relatively complete, though there are a few things still to be done, including putting light bulbs and lampshades in our rooms. So far we have only one bulb in the Kyffin Room and 5 still to be fitted. However the rooms in the building look very good with no damp walls, as was the case before, and most rooms are carpeted. The building has been restored to its original glory and even has a small lift to the first floor. We have retained our small office, (which also houses the CT system), and our main workshop, the Kyffin Room. Unfortunately, the lift has been sited where our storeroom existed, so we do have some problem with storage. I expect we will have completed the sorting out of our rooms by New Year when we plan to start using them for our day to day business. However, we still have a considerable amount of unpacking and sorting to do before we can achieve a pleasant working environment. While we have been “out of house and home” so to speak, we have had to be innovative with our activities and apart from working from home we were fortunate to be able to use a large room in the IoACC Planning Department until last April. The Young Geology Club benefited in that they were able to hold many of their meetings in the field (Benllech, Llanddwyn etc) although on one occasion we used the beach car park at Benllech for our meeting. You may have noticed that around the island we have been flying the GeoMôn flags. They are currently at Benllech Beach, Beaumaris Pier and on the harbour wall at Cemaes Bay.

One of the conditions listed by the European Geopark Network (EGN) for membership was that we were either to become a company or a Charitable Trust. We have looked into this, and with the help of members of IoACC and Wales Co-op (an Assembly organization) we are now a Company Limited by Guarantee with the option to become a Charitable Trust at a later date. We are very grateful for the help given by both organisations to achieve this status. We were also advised to visit at least 2 foreign geoparks to see how they are run. Before attending the annual conference in Osnabrück we travelled south in Germany and visited the Odenwald Geopark and the Messel Pit, then toured round the Vulcaneifel Geopark near Mainz. Both were most interesting and we learned a lot. Early last month on the 3rd November we went over to Northern Ireland for the day and followed a hectic schedule. We caught the 02:30 boat to Dublin then drove to Fermanagh to visit Marble Arch Caves. The facilities were amazing and around 50 people work there with 8 of them in permanent positions. The trip round the caves, part of it in a boat, is combined with a forest and field walk. The visitor centre and offices are beautifully fitted out with lecture room, museum, sales area and restaurant, as well as storage areas and workrooms. They are all built to a very high standard and with good signage around the venue and brown signs on the country lanes. It is something to be aspired to, though it has taken 25 years and a huge European Grant to get to this prestigious state. Fermanagh County Council also runs it. We were told it was, in the first instance, run from a tin hut! We then went on to visit Patrick McKeever, Vice President of the EGN, in the British Geological Survey Offices in Belfast. He was pleased with our progress so far and was given an interim report and lots of other relevant material. We will give him our full report and all the requested work by January. Our report and application will then be re-assessed at their March/April meeting and a further inspection carried out. The EGN members have now been elevated to Global Geoparks (a UNESCO designation) and their executive insists that new geoparks must demonstrate sustainability, both financial and managerial, before they are accepted as members. Hence the need to become a Company. After Belfast, we travelled in haste to get our boat back- the 5.45 fast ferry, from Dunlaoghaire. Two miles from the port we hit a traffic jam- missed the boat and had to catch the later

one which arrived back in Holyhead at 2.30am. Rather a long day, to say the least and one night's lost sleep- such is our dedication to the cause!!!!

As a Company Limited by Guarantee we have changed our management and are now run by a "Board". Currently, the board is composed of the former Project Management Team, which will be the case until we hold the Annual General Meeting at the end of the first year, at which time non-permanent members of the board can be voted on from the "Friends of GeoMôn". The "Friends", subject to approval, will consist of all partners and members. We will of course be consulting partners and members about this at the next Partners/Members meeting, which will be held in the New Year. We will, as a company, have to become financially viable and this could involve a small annual fee payable by each "friend" (to be discussed at the Partners meeting).

We are continuing to raise some money with our publications, one of which, "A Field Guide to Anglesey" is currently being printed and will cost £9.95. It is an A5 size, 180 page educational book, aimed at 6th form, college and university students and is written by Dr Jack Treagus of Manchester University. It is also suitable for interested amateurs. For the general public, Dr John Conway and I have written a book on the rocks around the Coastal Paths and the AONB. This is not intended for students but will also include an insert showing where there is disabled access and facilities. This is nearly ready for publication but we will need funding for printing it.

We have been busy displaying and selling our wares at various places including the Anglesey Show, and also giving talks. Recently we spoke to "Friends of the Coastal Path" and Probus. We provided geologists for 17 of the walks during the Anglesey Walking Festival in Geopark Week and this was most successful. We have also produced 2 trail leaflets, which were published in the AONB magazine (Swyn y Mor) this year. They were for South Stack and Breakwater Country Park. A further one, Llanddwyn and Newborough Forest will be in the Christmas issue. We also sell these trail leaflets at various venues and events.

Our congratulations go to two of our "Food Partners", Hootons Homegrown and Derimon who were in the final 5 winners for Wales of the UK TV Food awards "Local Food Heroes". Hootons won the competition for Wales. It is a great feat to have 2 Anglesey producers in the top 5 for all of Wales. Well Done.

Anyone wishing to see what geological sites we have on Anglesey can look at our website www.geomon.org.uk to see a short statement on each site that I (and other geologists) identified as usable for research, education, aesthetic or historical use in my survey of Anglesey, done prior to the Geopark project. Further information about any site is available when required from Cofnod Record Centre in Bangor, which keeps all the site records for us. The reports do not contain any information on ownership or management issues, they only contain scientific data. Cofnod replies, on our behalf, to any planning issues or other queries.

Finally, on behalf of the GeoMôn Board, I hope you all have a very Happy Christmas. My best wishes and thanks for all the support, help and interest you have given over the year.

Margaret (Wood)

And

Carolyn Davies (Office Manager)

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