

## Chairman's Wanderings

At the Association AGM in January, we were very pleased to welcome a new editor for the Newsletter, and if you are reading this, Lawrence must be doing the job correctly. I know that he has a number of ideas for the future and some projects to promote, so please help him out by sending in any submissions and get involved. One of those projects might just be the geology of Colwyn Bay's Football Club, or a variation on that theme!

At the AGM, we were pleased to meet the author of the new **Anglesey Geology Field Guide**, and to toast the success of this very colourful production. I hope to offer a review for a future newsletter, but in the meantime if you wish to obtain a copy and you are in no special hurry then I have a stock of the books which I will bring to meetings at the normal price of £9-95. If you are desperate for a copy, then you can come to my house or contact

**Margaret Wood** for a postal copy at £11-00.

It would be very good to follow this up by visiting some of the superb outcrops which are highlighted in the guide, and we will keep you informed of any meetings to be organised by **GeoMon** as part of their agenda.

I am sure that Lawrence will be pleased to see that another chapter in the urban geology of Colwyn Bay is about to open. One of the joys of being located in the 'Bay again is that I can go shopping in my lunch hour, although that pleasure has been diminished of late by the ripping-up of all the paving in Station Road, with attendant fuss and fencing. Last Wednesday I noticed the beginnings of the new surfacing, which will be the same as the area fronting the Bay View Centre. Many tons of granite paving are now in stock and a start has been made on pre-formed kerbs and some of the flat-work. I have not yet discovered the source, or obtained a sample, but you can be sure that I will, and that you will hear about it.

We look forward to another season of meetings, and hope that you will be inspired to come along and take part.

**Jonathan**

## Editor's Ramblings

As you may be aware, I broke the golden rule of the British Army and actually volunteered for the job of Newsletter Editor thinking it can't be that difficult! Wrong! Putting it together is not the issue, it's coercing a few brave souls to proffer some text as content is the hardest bit. Poor Jonathan has been bombarded with emails!

At the AGM I came up with the idea of building upon the excellent work of the RIGS initiative and developing the idea of a few "**Building Stones of....**" publications but going into more detail than has previously been published. My initial ramblings were along the lines of starting with Colwyn Bay with a page or paragraph on how Colwyn Bay arose and developed. Then a brief overview of the geology of North Wales (is that possible!?) Followed by another brief overview of the geology specific to Colwyn Bay and area. We would then need to trawl around the area looking for different building material types. Obviously there is tons of limestone around; Penrhyn Road where all the building societies are is an obvious street to have a look at and Station Road has a few bits. If I remember correctly, the block of shops including Guys Newsagents on Conway Road has some tiny bits including serpentine. The recently renovated cenotaph is begging a look over too. Then there is the "Cheshire Sandstone" of the railway bridge near the Toad Hall and a granite "dry" water fountain on the Prom somewhere. What about using the rocks protecting the Prom? Lots of good fossil examples in the limestone and are there ignimbrites in there too?

Not only would this get us out and about, locally but it would be ideal for learning more about the geology of the various building materials and hopefully become a valuable resource to make available via the website (increasing traffic there too) and to show prospective members just how dynamic the group really is! The geographic scope could be widened for those wanting to undertake a similar exercise of their local towns and there is still plenty of room in the Colwyn Bay group. And it also begets a few progress reports for this publication and a presentation to the group in the future!

**Lawrence**

**In the footsteps of Charles Darwin – NW Midlands and North Wales**  
**June 19-24 2009**



***A meeting jointly sponsored by The Geologists' Association, The Geological Society of London and The Quaternary Research Association***

To commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth in 2009, and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of Species*, this field excursion will visit a number of localities in his home area of Shropshire - Staffordshire and also North Wales. Besides the general Darwin related sites, the emphasis will be on his earlier work as a geologist and in particular his field trip in June 1842 to appraise the evidence presented by William Buckland in 1841 supporting the 'Glacial Theory'. A background to the latter may be found in *Quaternary Newsletter* **112**, 22-28, (2007) and *Geoscientist* **18**, 20-23, (2008). The excursion will be led by Professor Peter Worsley (University of Reading) and will be an opportunity to see aspects of the glacial geology of North Wales. Three nights will be spent at Keele University and two in Llanberis.

A significant amount of walking will be involved. Climbing over rough ground will be necessary in North Wales. The weather may necessitate modification of the programme. Maximum numbers – 26. The cost for this meeting will be £350-400 including transport and accommodation during the meeting. To register please visit The Geologists' Association website at: [http://www.geologists.org.uk/events\\_fieldtrips.html](http://www.geologists.org.uk/events_fieldtrips.html)

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**Saturday or Sunday 25/26 April—Visit to Anglesey Masonry, Moelfre.**

There are times when it appears that the supply of stone for building and landscaping has become dominated by the bland or foreign. Slates, flags and granites from Asia, China and South America are now so cheap that they appear in out-of-town DIY superstores. Look for yourself!

What a joy, then, to find that there is still an opportunity to source local and interesting materials from much closer to home; from Anglesey in fact. Anglesey Masonry is a small company with its own quarry that specialises in high quality and distinctive stone for the building trade.

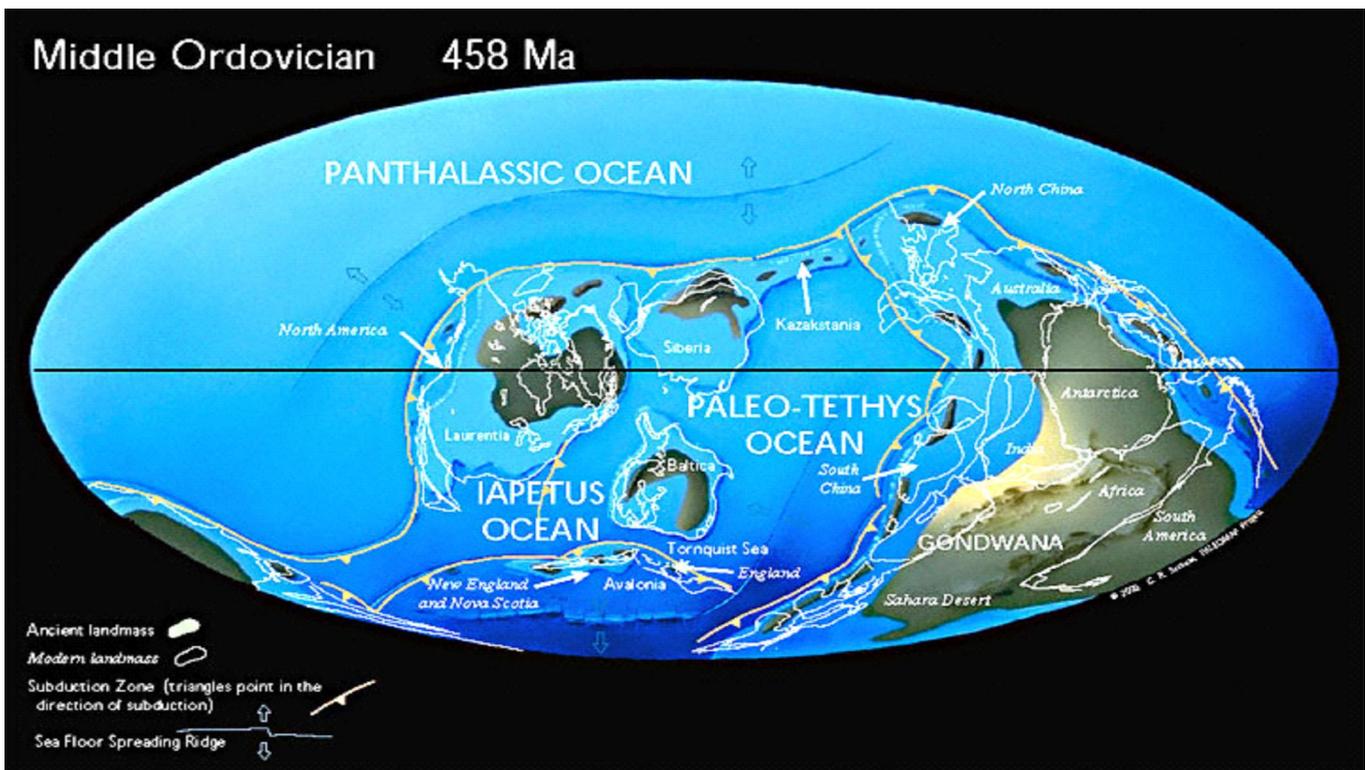
We are pleased to offer an opportunity to visit the quarry and workshops to view the material, the geology and some of the interesting stone and curiosities that Justin Kellet has brought together.

It is anticipated that we will spend the morning at the works, and then proceed for a short excursion in the vicinity after lunch. Full details and joining instructions may be obtained by registering for a place with Susan Brooks, contact details: [Db30madryn@aol.co.uk](mailto:Db30madryn@aol.co.uk) . Numbers limited to 15, so please make contact soon.

**Wednesday 20th May 2009, "The Lower Palaeozoic Welsh Basin: a Window on Deep Time Climate Change", Dr. Jeremy Davies, BGS Keyworth**

*Madoc Room, Coleg Llandrillo, Rhos-on-Sea. 19:30h.*

A twenty-year study by the British Geological Survey and its collaborators has elucidated the complex sedimentary architecture and geological structure of the Welsh Basin. The basin was the site of deep-water deposition throughout much of Ordovician and Silurian times and the mixed sand-mud succession is dominated by the famous turbidites. Thin, burrowed or laminated mudstones preserved between these resedimented units represent material deposited from suspension (hemipelagites) either during periods when the basin's bottom waters were well oxygenated (oxic), or when stagnant anaerobic (anoxic) conditions prevailed.



Biostratigraphical work, including the study of abundant fossil graptolite remains, has allowed the basin's sedimentary fill to be dated in detail and revealed complex lateral changes in thickness and sedimentary facies. Periods of rapid subsidence during the late Llandovery and early Wenlock were characterised by high rates of sediment accumulation and intra-basinal tectonism. These contrast with intervals of slower sedimentation which record the influence of external processes including global changes in sea level at various times. More recent investigations of the succession on the adjacent shelf have provided further insight into these contrasting processes and events and have underpinned detailed comparisons with successions of the same age preserved elsewhere in the world.

Such comparisons reveal the influence of glacial events on the palaeo-supercontinent of Gondwana. Periods during which oxic bottom conditions prevailed across the Welsh Basin floor equate with episodes of Gondwanan ice advance and global sea level fall; anoxic conditions were introduced and sustained by the elevated sea levels and warmer waters associated with interglacial episodes. The transitions between oxic and anoxic facies in the Welsh Basin therefore provide a record of repeated and linked changes in Lower Palaeozoic climate and oceanic processes and of their environmental impact. The detailed study of these key intervals allows the rate and impact of ancient global warming episodes and their value as analogues of modern climate change to be assessed.

**Contacts:****E-mail notices:**

Derek Jones,  
Natural and Built Environ-  
ment Dept.,  
Glyndwr University  
01978 293098,  
d.jones@glyndwr.ac.uk

**Event Liaison:**

Fred Owen,  
01565 651004,  
fredjowen@tbtinternet.com

**Chairman & Website:**

Jonathan Wilkins,  
01492 583052  
wilkins@ampyx.org.uk

**Meetings Secretary:**

Doug Hartill  
01745 825904  
doughartill@f2s.com

**Secretary:**

Susan Brooks,  
01248 715381,  
db30madryn@aol.co.uk

**Treasurer:**

Jan Heiland  
jan@vixenseven.co.uk

**Newsletter Editor:**

Lawrence Rodgers  
07932 175007  
rodgers46@hotmail.com

**Next Meeting:****11th March Conwy Civic Hall at 7.30pm, "The Gregory Rift Valley and its Associated Volcanism." Fred Owen**

The GA trip to north Tanzania explored a section of the Gregory Rift Valley and its associated volcanism. The area is part of the East Africa Rift system, which extends from the Gulf of Aden through Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and south to the Zambesi River. It is one of the few regions on Earth where continental plate break-up and magmatism are taking place at the present day.



After describing the tectonic setting and deformation phases, the talk will illustrate the variety of extrusives from, and the magnitude of, the volcanoes associated with the crustal extension and thinning as well as the extensive faulting. Regional seismicity has resulted in massive debris flows from unstable, oversteepened volcanic deposits, minor faults and associated tuff cones, all of which dominate the surrounding landscape. Particular attention will be given to the recently active carbonatite volcano, Oldoinyo Lengai; the only active one on Earth. (shown in the attached photo). The talk will also feature a few examples of the wildlife seen in the Ngorongoro Caldera and show the Olduvai Gorge, known as the 'Cradle of Mankind'

**Other Meetings:****Liverpool Geological Society**

**Tuesday, 3rd March 2009 - "Drilling For Oil"**

**Mark Jenkins** of INTEQ, Joint Meeting with the NW Group of The Geological Society

**Location:** Lecture Theatre Room 137, James Parsons Building, Byrom Street Campus, Liverpool, L3 3AF

**Manchester Geological Association**

**Wednesday 18th March 2009 at 6.30 pm – "Magnetic Lakes and Trees: What Environmental Magnetism can tell us"**

Professor Barbara Maher, University of Lancaster, Joint Meeting with Geographical Association, 6.30pm. **Location:** Williamson Building, Oxford Road, Manchester opposite the Museum.

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