



Ussher Society

Newsletter – March 2017



From the Secretary

Dear Membership,

It was very enjoyable to meet some of you at the start of the year at the Ussher Society Conference held at the Saunton Sands Hotel near Braunton, north Devon. The location was a stunning one, and the hotel was an ideal venue for a very friendly and sociable meeting. Without exception, the presentations were excellent and, as usual, spanned the full range of geoscience interests. Thanks must go to Sal and Chris Cornford for their excellent organisation of the event, and for the innovation of inviting some geology students from Exeter College to join us for the programme on the second day of the meeting. I understand the students very much enjoyed their experience at the Conference, and were inspired by the range of topics covered.

As you will see from the Draft Minutes of the AGM (attached to this newsletter), **the 2018 conference will be held in Falmouth!** Sam Hughes and Chris Yeomans will be our Conference Secretaries for this meeting, so look out for more details emerging during the year!

I am intending to step-down from my role as Secretary at the AGM in 2018, so if anyone is interested in taking over this role, please get in touch and I can provide you with a brief job description.

With very best wishes for a happy and successful 2017,

Louise

Louise Hollick PhD CGeol

Secretary for the Ussher Society

From the Chair

Those of you who were at the AGM at Saunton Sands will have heard the discussion about the Journal GiSWE. It has been becoming more and more difficult to obtain copy for the journal, for many different reasons.

In addition, printing and postal costs have been steadily rising so overall there is a problem that will not simply resolve itself even if plenty of copy is forthcoming. We have agreed that the current issue will go ahead but the committee will be looking at the options and cost implications, and an option amongst these will be the possibility of increased online access, though the implications (and there are many) need to be considered.

We hope to send out some ideas for the Membership to consider later in the year and have some firm proposals as to the way forward by the next AGM. In the meantime any thoughts or comments which might aid our discussions would be welcome.

Dr Jenny Bennett (jenny.bennett@rocketmail.com)

A copy of the Draft Minutes of the 2017 AGM can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Committee Changes

There are only minor changes affecting the Ussher Committee this year; Jenny Bennett remains as the Chair for this, her second year; Tony Brown has stepped-down from his role as outgoing vice-Chair, and Dr Andy Fleet has become the new vice-Chair (and so will become the next Chair in 2018).

Andrew Green – who works as a Senior Geochemist at IGI in north Devon – joins the committee as a new member:

Welcome Andrew!

Auditing the Ussher Accounts

As you will see from the attached Minutes of the 2017 AGM, Andrew Green agreed to audit the Ussher accounts this year, as John Merefield is stepping-down from this role. However, later in the meeting, Andrew was proposed and accepted as a new Committee member though it is not in line with the constitution of the Society for these two roles to be held simultaneously! Apologies that this was not picked-up during the AGM.

Dee Edwards has kindly volunteered to step in as an auditor for the coming year, and we would intend to officially appoint her at the AGM in 2018. If any Members have an objection to Dee fulfilling the role of auditor for 2017, please get in touch with myself (secretary@ussher.org.uk). Thank you.

The Geology of Devon [2nd edition] – a message from Malcolm Hart

As I am sure you are all aware, the 1982 volume of the 'Geology of Devon' sold out many years ago and was not reprinted as there were already plans in place for a 2nd Edition. This 2nd Edition was, I believe, financially supported by a grant to Exeter University Press from the Devonshire Association to assist in the costs of production. The production of the revised version was begun under the leadership of a group that included Deryck Laming but which eventually condensed down to Deryck and me (though Deryck was clearly the lead in the process). Work on this volume stalled, for various reasons, the most significant being the suggested reliance on the 'figures' provided by authors for the 1982 volume. These were eventually found, but were produced as line drawings on film (or even tracing paper): the norm for the early 1980s! They are, quite clearly, un-usable in today's technology and the quality is such that scanning is probably not a viable option.

Sadly, Deryck suffered an accident in January 2017 from which he has not recovered and it would be a fitting tribute to his contribution to S. W. England geology were the 2nd Edition of the book to be completed. I have all the files of the various chapters that were produced at various times in the last 12–15 years, many of which Deryck had begun to page-set (even though that was not a requirement of the deal with Exeter University Press).

There follows a list of the chapters that were proposed for the 2nd Edition and, where I have information, the authors involved. Sadly some of these well-known figures are no longer with us, while others are now retired or 'inactive'. The changes in our understanding of Devon have also moved on quite markedly, and many of the headings used in beginning the work on the 2nd Edition are probably out of date. Coastal geomorphology, Dartmoor glaciations, landscape, geoconservation, etc., are all missing from this list.

I ask, therefore, for the following information:

1. How many of the *original* contributors, identified in the following list, are prepared to revise their chapters with – or without – additional help from others?
2. Who in the geosciences community is prepared to either help in such a revision or take on the lead role for a chapter or chapters – including topics not included in the initial list?
3. What changes to the chapter headings are both required and/or desirable for the 2nd Edition?

If a 'team' can be assembled and demonstrate a willingness to complete the work by the end of 2017 (publication early in 2018) I will approach the potential publishers and establish the ground-rules and timescale. As well as being readable and understandable by an 'interested non-expert', colour printing (both figures and general images) is now more affordable and could be used to liven up the book – as has been done by both the DA *Transactions* and GiSWE. The original plan for a group of 12 b/w photographs is no longer tenable in a book of this sort and potential market.

In order to make this a viable proposal, there needs to be a willingness to deliver success in a relatively short timescale. I do, however, appreciate that in the REF-driven university sector, publishing a chapter in such a book will not come high on the impact list, and this will be an issue for many potential contributors. It is a regional venture, though I appreciate that it may fall more heavily on those that do not have a focus on the next REF.

One difficult issue may be the revision of Deryck's chapter on the Permo-Triassic but – sadly – it is, like the rest of the chapters submitted thus far, in need of up-dating. Those with an interest in the P/T will, I hope, rally round in doing this mindful of Deryck's dedication to this part of the geological column.

I would be very grateful if those, with an interest in seeing this 2nd Edition completed, could contact me as soon as possible using my usual postal address at Plymouth University or my email address (mhart@plymouth.ac.uk) or by telephone (University 01752 7584761; home 01752 709415). I may also be approaching some folks directly where I feel that they can make a contribution. If anyone has a digital image of Deryck that could be used in a commemorative way within the book, please let me know or send it as an email attachment: it would have to be of high enough resolution for reproduction.

With 2019 being the 180th anniversary of De La Beche's volume on the geology of Devon and Cornwall and 2020 being the 180th anniversary of the Devonian System I would like to see this book contributing to this important series of events.

There follows a list, which I hope is correct, of the various chapters and (?)authors that I find in Deryck's files. You will note, I am sure, the presence of the 'Plates' at the front, which I do feel will have to change once discussions with the publisher begin. You will also note that my records are now 10 years' adrift, and this is probably not the final list of headings going forward. I apologise if there are errors on this list and would be grateful if such errors could be explained by those that know better than me.

If Exeter University Press are no longer interested in the book, then both the Ussher Society and the Devonshire Association have relationships with other publishers that could be approached.

DRAFT CONTENTS – as of January 2007

Prelims

Plates

- Ch. 1 : Introduction to Devon's Geology*Eric Durrance, Deryck Laming and Brian Selwood*
- Ch. 2 : The Development of Geology in Devon during the 19th Century.....*Michael House*
- Ch. 3 : The Devonian Rocks.....*Brian Selwood and Alfred Whittaker*
- Ch. 4 : The Carboniferous Rocks.....*Michael Thomas*
- Ch. 5 : The Variscan Tectonic Structures... *Eric Durrance, Edward Freshney, Kevin Isaac, Brian Selwood, Michael Thomas and Alfred Whittaker*
- Ch. 6 : Permian Igneous Rocks : the Dartmoor Granites, Volcanic Rocks and Elvans..... *Jan Hawkes*
- Ch. 7 : Metalliferous Mineralization.....*Richard Scrivener*
- Ch. 8 : The New Red Sandstone: Permian and Triassic...*Deryck Laming*
- Ch. 9 : The Marine Rocks of the Mesozoic.....*Malcolm Hart*
- Ch. 10 : The Tertiary Sedimentary Rocks . *Richard Edwards and Edward Freshney*
- Ch. 11 : The Tertiary Igneous Complex of Lundy...*John Dangerfield*
- Ch. 12 :The Offshore Geology.....*Malcolm Hart and Michael Brooks*
- Ch. 13 :The Quaternary.....*Robin Cullingford*
- Ch. 14 : Industrial Minerals.....*Clive Nicholas and Gordon Witte*
- Ch. 15 : Hydrogeology.....*Cliff Tubb*
- Ch. 16 : Environmental Geology.....*Peter Grainger and Michael Heath*
- Appendix: Geological/Geomorphological Sites...*Kevin Page*

References

----- **Ussher Fieldwork Bursary Scheme** -----

Eligibility to apply for funds from the Ussher Society Fieldwork Bursary will remain unchanged from 2016; that is, **all fully paid-up members of the Ussher Society may apply for funds to fund (or part fund) fieldwork in the South West of England.**

We would be pleased to hear from Members who would like to apply for this fieldwork fund; the **maximum value is £500**, and would be for fieldwork, or expenses relating to work directly linked to the south-west area (i.e. to fund geochronology; preparation of thin sections). The expectation is that the successful recipient(s) would present their research to the Ussher Society Conference, and subsequently submit a paper to Geoscience in South West England.

In the first instance, please send an expression of interest to the Secretary, who will be able to forward a form for completion. **The closing date will be 1st May 2017.**

Mid-year Ussher field trip to Dartmoor

We are pleased to announce that there will be a fieldtrip to look at soils on Dartmoor on **20th May 2017**. The trip will be led by Tim Harrod, and there will be a charge of **£3 per person**. The trip will be run in conjunction with the Devonshire Association.

To find out more details and/or to book a place, please get in contact with Mike Barr to book a place – his e-mail address is: barr.shenley@dsl.pipex.com

Online magazine – Earth Heritage

Members may be interested to take a look at the new issue of *Earth Heritage*, an online-only magazine which spans a wide range of topics relating to aspects of conservation in the geodiversity sector. It can be viewed for free, or downloaded as a pdf at: www.earthheritage.org.uk

Dr. Deryck Laming

The Society is very saddened to report that Dr Deryck Laming, of Exeter, passed away on 30th January, after contracting pneumonia following a fall for which he was hospitalised. His funeral was held in Exeter on 24th February, and the Chair of our Society, Dr Jenny Bennett, attended.

Please see the article in this newsletter about the **Geology of Devon**, by Prof. Malcolm Hart, which proposes a fitting tribute to the huge contribution that Deryck made to Devonian geology.

Events of interest to members

20th May **Dartmoor Soils fieldtrip with Tim Harrod**
See details above.

9th July **Boat trip from Exmouth to Lyme Regis, sailing along the Jurassic Coast.**
This will be a full day trip, and the cost will be £20. The trip will run in conjunction with the Proprietary Chapel of St Luke in Crediton. The departure time and booking details will follow. For further details, please contact Dr. Richard Scrivener by e-mail: rcscrivener@geologist-uk.co.uk

I hope to produce another newsletter around **June 2017**. If you have any knowledge of events which you think may be of interest to your fellow Ussher Members, please send them to me for inclusion in the next newsletter by the **end of May at the latest**. Thank you. secretary@ussher.org.uk

Draft Minutes of The Ussher Society
55th Annual General Meeting
held at the
Saunton Sands Hotel, Braunton
on
Thursday 5th January 2017 at 6 pm

Present: Jenny Bennett (Chair); Frank Howie (Treasurer); Louise Hollick (Secretary); Malcolm Hart (Editor); Andy Fleet; Tony Brown(vice-Chair); Chris Yeomans (Website Contact); David Allen; Sam Hughes

Approximately 30 Members were present.

1 Apologies were received from:

Brian Leveridge; Geoff Warrington; David Roche; Eric Robinson; Mike Taylor; Mike Barr; John Macadam; Roger Hedge; John Merefield.

2 Minutes of the 54th Annual General Meeting held on 3rd January 2016 were held to be a true and complete reflection of the meeting, with the exception of:

Section 7 Bruce Webb was the Editor of the Journal for 4 years

Section 12 Greg Price is no longer a member of the Committee

3 Matters Arising (other than those in the Agenda items)

Jenny Bennett reported that CPD (Continuing Professional Development) hours for attendance at the Ussher Society conference were available via Bill Gaskarth, and the procedure on how to apply for these was indicated on the Geological Society website.

4 Items brought forward by the Chair

Jenny wished to thank Tony Brown for the suggestion that the conference could be held at Saunton Sands, and also to thank Chris and Sal Cornford at IGI for their excellent organisation and generous sponsorship of the conference. The Chair was looking forward to the attendance at the sessions the following day by some sixth-form students from Exeter College. The dates of this conference had been moved slightly to ensure that travel on a bank-holiday was not necessitated; the high numbers attending suggest that this was appreciated.

It was reported that the meeting at the accommodation of the Geological Society in London on 8th December to celebrate the life and work of Bob Symes (a past Chair of this Society) had been well attended – 88 delegates – and this included representatives of many Societies, including: the Ussher Society; the Russell Society; the Geologists' Association; the Geological Society; the Harrow and Hillingdon Geological Society the History of Geology Group and the Natural History Museum.

The death of one of our founder members, Colin Exley, also occurred this year; prior to this, however, Richard Scrivener and Bob Winchester were able to attend celebrations to mark his 90th birthday.

5 Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported that the number of Members for whom we hold e-mail has increased during the year; it is now around 120 from a membership total of 180. This helps to reduce costs and increase convenience of communicating with the membership, and for this the Secretary expressed thanks.

A mid-year field trip with Tim Harrod, looking at the soils on Dartmoor had been arranged (in conjunction with the Devonshire Association) for May 20th. Further details will be forthcoming.

The Secretary wished to make the Membership aware that funds for small projects were available upon application, with the only prerequisite being that the work done is presented at a subsequent Ussher meeting. Details of this scheme would be circulated in the next Newsletter to all Members, but those who may have students for whom a Bursary application may be appropriate were encouraged to send their e-mail addresses to the Secretary so that they can be added to a list of southwest researchers to whom prompts to apply for bursaries will be sent.

6 Treasurer's Report

FH circulated a copy of the Ussher Society Accounts (see *Appendix 1*), and reported that the Ussher Society had a good level of funds at present. In recent years the Society has benefited from back-payments from the Publisher's Licensing Society - for reproduction of papers in the GSWE – but this will decrease in the future. Taking in to account a possible increase in the cost of printing the Journal, a small increase in Membership rates may need to be considered. FH commented that we have plenty of funds for subsidising field excursions, and have recently benefitted from several donations specifically for Student Bursaries, which have been much appreciated. Around 10 to 15 Members are still paying the previous rate for Membership, and these will be contacted by the Treasurer in due course.

Danny Clarke-Lowes queried why funds are being received from the Publishers Licensing Society; FH explained that this is the fee payable to the Society when members of the public reproduce papers from GSWE.

Danny Clarke-Lowes enquired why, in the Ussher Society Accounts summary provided by FH, the line for 'Subscriptions' in 2015/2016 was showing as £117.00. FH checked this and has identified a minor transposition in the data; the corrected version of the sheet is attached as *Appendix 1*.

Approval of the Accounts by the AGM was proposed by Chris Cornford, and seconded by Richard Scrivener.

JB brought forward the issue of auditors for the accounts, and suggested that it was not ideal to have John Mather as an auditor during her term of office as Chair. Andrew Green was willing to stand as an alternative. The new auditors of Andrew Green and Phil Stephenson were proposed by JB and seconded by Tony Brown.

7 Editor's Report

MH had the following points to bring forward to the meeting:

1 MH wished to thank Bruce Webb (previous Editor) for passing over information relating to the post in an organised way. Ideally, the publication date for the Journal would be moved back to be within a calendar year, but this failed due to slow accumulation of copy, meaning that the first papers for the next volume of the Journal are only now (early January) being sent to the printers to be type-set. This volume is also relatively short on copy; MH appealed to potential authors that if they were able to produce any completed papers in the next 3 weeks, there would be potential for getting them in to press in the coming months. MH also commented that authors for the next Volume – 14(part 2) – from this meeting should notify him by e-mail at their earliest convenience as to whether they intend to submit a paper or extended abstract.

MH wished to ask for a volunteer for the upcoming fieldtrip on the 7th January to write up a summary of the geology for the Journal; in addition, if weather conditions were conducive, to take a portrait-style photo of some distinctive geology for use on the Journal cover!

2 With regard to the print-run, MH commented that the journal is expensive mainly due to the fact that the print-run is small (300 copies); producing 1000 copies wouldn't make the printing bill proportionally much more expensive. There is a very strong correlation between price and quantity. From the Accounts, it is evident that for this year the income from the Publishers Licencing Society has covered the costs of printing, but this income will decrease year-on-year, so we need to consider the future. Digital copy and being able to print papers on demand are appealing to many people; yesterday MH presented a paper to the Committee to explore options of moving forward and this included the option to review and type-set submitted papers – in common with existing practise – and to then publish them online, with restricted access to Members; printing of the papers in hard-copy would only occur when enough copy had been submitted to justify a volume.

MH summarised the issue as that the Society needs to make a decision whether we continue in the present format, with the Editor struggling to pull a volume together, or make a move to go online and offer Member access. There is need to consider issues such as how this will affect Institutional members and libraries, but there is precedent: the Field Studies Council Journal has an online process such as described above and the quality of their output is good. Another consideration had been having a differential Membership rate for those requiring paper or digital copy but the unit cost of this would be too high to contemplate as the Society is not big enough. The Committee decided to have a discussion now rather than leave the issue until the Journal is struggling.

JB added that the Committee had had a long discussion relating to this issue yesterday, and had agreed that the current issue (Volume 14, pt1) would go ahead in the standard format; the changes being discussed would be implemented for future parts of the volume. Positive aspects of online publishing were that the turn-around time would be accelerated and that the presence of papers from our conferences online would help to attract younger people to the Society. JB also mentioned she had had a discussion about this issue with the Serial Librarian at the Geological Society and the situation is extremely variable but that more and more publications were offering online access - there is no consistent approach to electronic publishing. Comments from the assembled Members were invited.

Ramues Gallois commented that he was aware that for the Geological Society, only 10% of the Membership took a paper copy of their Journal.

Bruce Webb said that he would support a move to an online format of the Journal and that careful costing of this option would be needed. He emphasised that the final version of a paper seen in the Journal is the result of intensive work by a professional typesetter, not just the work of the Editor, so that costs for the typesetting stage would need to be incorporated in to the process if the end-product is to have the 'finished' look that people are familiar with from the printed format.

Colin Bristow enquired as to whether there would be a concomitant reduction in Membership fees if the cost of publishing the Journal decreases.

Kevin Page commented that if the papers were to be printed they would need to be appropriately formatted and enquired whether this would be done by the Editor; Bruce Webb responded that the level of workload to achieve this would not be practical for a part-time Editor. Malcolm Hart joined in the discussion and agreed that typesetting is not feasible for the Editor to do; negotiations on how the work-flow would be organised, and the costs associated with this, would need to be undertaken, as professional typesetters would require a 'block' of work at a time, not a single paper.

Chris Cornford contributed that when IGI were in the process of digitising the archive of the Ussher Society, the papers were first scanned and then passed through character-recognition software, which generated a text file which was formatted to replicate the appearance of the Journal. Bruce Webb asked for some clarification of this process, which will need to be further explored.

Peter Scott commented that it would be very useful to understand how much of the £4500 'printing' costs refers to the actual printing, and how much is related to the type-setting process, and there was general agreement that this information would be useful.

Robin Shail added that it would be relatively cheap to employ a typesetter to generate the pdfs of papers that the Society would need; Sam Hughes concurred that once a template had been established this should help to reduce costs.

Kevin Page queried how we would be able to get income for members of the public making use of papers from our Journal once it was online.

Andrew Green asked whether the website in its current format is able to support sign-in access, or whether improvements to the site may be needed to accommodate changes.

Sid Geake suggested that attracting people to the Society is a very important aspect of finding new Members, and that considering printing more copies of the Journal – around 500 – so that spare ones could be circulated.

David Alderton commented that his younger colleagues do not have paper journals on their shelves, and that the Society, in his opinion, should make a move to be online.

Jenny Bennett asked for an informal, non-voting show of hands to indicate:

How many people would be in favour of the Journal going online	29 out of 39
How many people would support no paper copies at all?	22 out of 39

Malcolm Hart commented that he had abstained for both these votes, as he would be the one to implement whatever changes were decided upon!

Ramues Gallois asked how many people would accept a rise of costs – of any amount - to keep the paper copy of the Journal; very few people (less than 5) indicated they would be willing to accommodate this.

Jenny Bennett asked the assembled Membership if they would be happy for a sub-set of the Committee to put together an analysis of the cost implications of changing the Journal format for circulation to the Membership prior to any decisions being taken. There was general assent that this was an acceptable way forwards.

Malcolm Hart contributed that even with an online Journal there will still be costs associated with maintaining the quality of output, managing online access to the Journal and dealing with library subscriptions. These changes will have implications for the Societies income and budget in the future.

Jenny Bennett said that the comments and feedback on this issue from the Membership assembled were very much appreciated, and had raised some excellent points which would need further investigation.

Chris Yeomans commented that he felt the current website was not able to support the infrastructure needed for online log-in to the Journal.

Deryck Laming added that he had previously been in the roles of both Editor and producer of a journal for another society, and that the workload of this was such that the journal concerned ceased to be published; he indicated his support for investigating how the GSWE journal could be evolved.

8 Web Manager's Report

CY reported that the website was running smoothly and that he would like to pass on thanks to Chris Cornford and Martin Evans who updated the website with the Conference 2017 information at a period when he was busy with work.

JB suggested that an honorarium of £50 be paid to Martin, as in the last few years, as a small token of thanks for the work he has done on the website: there was general agreement that this was a good idea.

Action: FH to organise payment of honorarium to Martin Evans in conjunction with JB

9 Conference 2017

Thanks were expressed by JB to Chris and Sal Cornford for their excellent organisation of the conference in a very enjoyable setting; to Tony Brown for the original idea to bring the Ussher Society to the venue at Saunton Sands, and to the staff at the Hotel for making the event run smoothly.

10 Conference 2018

JB announced that the Conference in 2018 will be held in Falmouth; the exact venue had yet to be confirmed; the Conference Secretaries for the event would be Chris Yeomans and Sam Hughes, both of whom were based at CSM.

11 Other events of interest to Members in 2017

Other events during 2018, potentially of interest to Members include:

20th May – fieldtrip to look at soils on Dartmoor with Tim Harrod; this trip will be run in conjunction with the DA, and booking details to follow.

9th July – Boat trip from Exmouth to Lyme Regis, sailing along the Jurassic Coast. This will be a full day trip, and the cost will be £20. The trip will run in conjunction with the Proprietary Chapel of St Luke in Crediton. The departure time and booking details will follow.

12 Election of Committee Members and Officers

JB summarised the Committee for 2017 as follows:

- Changes: Tony Brown to step down as vice-Chair
Andy Fleet to become the new vice-Chair
Andrew Green to join as new Committee Member
- Continuation: Jenny Bennett to remain as Chair
Frank Howie to remain as Treasurer;
Louise Hollick to remain as Secretary
Malcolm Hart to remain as Journal Editor;
Chris Yeomans to remain as Website Contact
Chris Cornford (for one year);
Richard Scrivener
David Allen
David Roche
Sam Hughes

Please note that the Secretary gave notice of her intention to stand down from this post in one year's time (at the next AGM), so **a volunteer for this post from 2018 is sought**. A job description is available from the Secretary.

The membership of the Committee was proposed by John Mather and seconded by Bruce Webb.

13 Appointment of Auditors

Already appointed earlier in the meeting (see item 6).

14 Any Other Business previously notified to the Chair/Secretary

None

15 Date and Venue of next AGM

4th January 2018 – time and venue to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 7.10 pm.