



Chair: Ray Pratt



The West Midlands Regional Group of the Geological Society (WMRG) has been one of the most active regional groups of the Geological Society for a number of years. Regional Groups exist to further the objectives of the Geological Society;

- i. Holding meetings and other activities of interest to Members.
- ii. Informing Members and Friends of the Society resident within the groups designated area of the activities of the Society and promoting co-operation between geologists, between the Group and other Groups, between geologists and other kindred professions and with kindred geoscience organisations active in a Group's designated area;
- iii. Bringing to the notice of the Council opinions and proposals designed to promote the interests of the Society and advising Council on matters of local interest or concern;
- iv. Providing Fellows seeking Chartership with help, advice and information to assist the process in support of the Society's Chartership Officer including but not limited to support for identification of suitable mentors;
- v. Actively supporting members in the formative stages of their careers;
- vi. Fostering relations with primary, secondary and tertiary education establishments within the Group's area to raise the profile of the Society and interest in the geosciences

Clearly to fulfil these objectives takes a lot of time and effort. Thanks to the dedication of your committee these objectives are being met. However, with a small contribution of help from you, our members, we could do a lot better as you will discover in this newsletter.

The committee meet informally 1 hour before each monthly lecture for those who are able attend. We have 2 formal meetings annually where all committee members are expected to attend. There is currently a vacancy on the committee for the role of Public Relations Representative. If you would like to become a committee member then please get in touch.

We appreciate that our region covers a massive geographical area. To many of our members living outside the Birmingham area opportunities to come along to our talks are few and far between. Our field events are more likely to be an area where you can participate and network with colleagues. We have forged relationships with a number of local geological groups and would encourage our members to go along to local gatherings where possible. You can find a list of such groups and their meetings on our webpage; Under the **Other Events** heading <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Groups-and-Networks/Regional-Groups/West-Midlands>

Secretary: Elisabeth Andrews



Communication with our members is a delicate balance. On the one hand we have a desire to keep you informed of your societies local activities and on the other we



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understand that most do not want to receive too much correspondence. At the moment we send you 2 notifications for each meeting. This information is also posted on Twitter, Facebook & LinkedIn, as well as on our homepage. We have decided to augment this with 2 newsletters each year to give you a fuller understanding of what your society is doing in your region. We hope you will take the time to follow our activities and where possible get involved.

Other society events, conferences and meetings of interest are often shown on our social media pages. Please visit our pages and follow the WMRG to ensure that you are kept informed.



Treasurer: Stephen Preedy



The Geological Society fund our activities based on projected spending. What is not covered are awards and certain travel costs e.g. schools attending a regional heat of the schools challenge. This year our application for funding was only partially met meaning we could run out of funds before new funding is available. To avert this we have taken two actions;

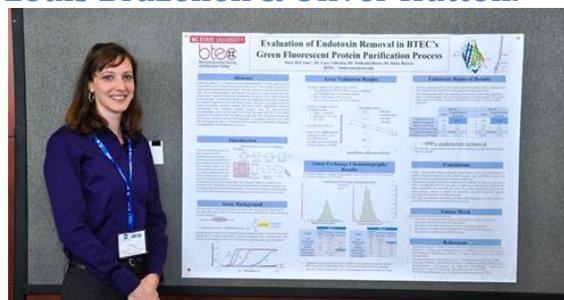
- **Appeal for sponsorship.** earlier in the year some of you received a letter to be passed onto your employer requesting sponsorship support to maintain our activities. This attempt generated zero positive responses, but only 1 negative response. We would ask those of you who received this request to follow up on it. If you can help, a copy of the request is available for download on our

webpage or simply email **Ray Pratt** who will be pleased to send you a copy.

- **Cut Costs.** We will hold our September evening meeting at Saint Martin in the Bullring. This will be about half the cost of holding the meeting at the BMI, and if suitable will become the new location for future meetings. To gain access use the cafe entrance on the side of the church



Education Champions: Louis Brazenell & Oliver Hutton.



On election to the committee in December 2018 our immediate task was to organise the regional heat of the societies **Schools Challenge** event. All schools offering earth science related subjects to A level are invited to enter into a national competition. Each school creates a team of students who prepare a 6 minute presentation, a poster and participate in a quiz. Regional heats are run and each region then selects 1 team to participate in the final held at Burlington House, London.

This was a baptism of fire for us as we had to do this before the end of January 2019. It



was very rewarding to see the enthusiasm of the students rising to the challenge.

Since then we have been building our earth science school teacher contact list. This has been a slow and painful process. Very few of the emails we send to schools actually generate a response. We therefore do not know whether or not the actual earth science teacher has received our letter or if so are simply not interested. We could really do with some help from the membership here. Do you know any earth science teachers (Geology, Geography)? Do you know who teaches these subjects at your local school? Any help that you can provide in setting up direct communication channels with these teachers will be greatly appreciated.



The next regional heat will be held at The **Lapworth Museum** at the University of Birmingham in January 2020. In addition to the event the students will be given a tour of the museum as well as a short talk about studying geology at university. This should be a great event for the students. We appreciate that the costs of attending this event for some schools may be prohibitive, so if we can secure some funding we would like to contribute / cover these costs.

In addition to the Schools Challenge we are working to establishing contacts with **universities** in our region. We would like to attract some of the students to participate in our events and in so doing become

Geological Society fellows in due course. Student participation in our events has traditionally been very low.

Through the society we can offer schools and universities support on **talks, field trips and careers advice**.

Mentoring and Chartership Champions: Alex Deltenre and Nick Watson



In January 2019 the regional heat of the societies **Early Careers Award** was held at Atkins in Birmingham. The winner of the regional heat was chosen to represent the region in the national event at Burlington House London. The prize for the winner of this event is the opportunity to publish their work in a journal of the society.

In the WMRG region we call this "The Colin Knipe Award". In our region the best 3 presenters receive a small financial award. All entrants receive a certificate of commendation for their efforts. The winner also gets the opportunity to present their work to the WMRG members at one of our evening meetings. This year the standard was so high that we have invited two of the entrants to present to the WMRG in November. We will be inviting young professionals to enter the competition from October onwards for the 2020 competition.

In June 2019 we held our first **Chartership** workshop. The idea behind this was to



informally discuss how fellows pursuing Chartership were progressing and to offer some helpful guidance. In addition to the annual Chartership lecture, this year scheduled for September, 2 or 3 supplemental workshops will be scheduled. If you would like to participate and be kept informed about these activities please make contact with Nick Watson.

Website Editor: Sebastian Drew



In the past maintaining our web page has been a nightmare and a lot of work has been required. So far this year the site has been relatively stable and modifications to the site have been reasonably prompt. This has allowed efforts to be made to improve and update our web page. Here you will find;

- Up-to-date WMRG programme of events
- Other society events (within our region)
- Schools Poster
- Sponsorship Request Letter
- Write up of Field Excursions
- Abstracts and notes of evening lectures

We have also changed the photo of our page. This was donated by Graham Worton and is a photograph of the limestone mines in Dudley. We will be looking to change the photograph annually so if you have any photos from within our region please send them in to Sebastian Drew or Ray Pratt.

Annual Photo Competition - Sebastian Drew



The society has decided to hold a national photographic competition to coincide with Earth Science week (12-20/10/19). Details of this competition will be released shortly. This is not the same as the joint regional competition that had been championed here by the WMRG. We do not see any benefit in having 2 separate competitions. We will be looking into ways in which we can modify the competition in a way that we can honour the best photographic entry from within our region.

Programme Co-ordinator: Rob Meredith



The WMRG has a full programme of talks. These are organised to engage as many of our members as possible and as such cover a diverse range of topics from environmental, industrial to academic. The common denominator is that we have all studied geology. Consequently we believe that topics of interest are much wider than those we practice in our day to day lives. Sometimes



talks attended on a topics outside of your professional expertise can have an impact on your thinking and consequently on the way you approach your discipline.

We have been fortunate to attract some excellent speakers to address WMRG members, some leading researchers in their field. Despite this attendances have been poor. Strenuous efforts have been made to advertise these talks via email, social media and on our web page. These events are great opportunities to network with your peers and also count towards your CPD record.

Attempts to stream and record WMRG presentations have so far been thwarted due to limited available technology and expertise. We will continue with our efforts in the belief that some individuals and groups that are unable to attend lectures of interest can participate online either real time or at a time of their choosing. Your Chair continues to request this service as standard for Burlington House lectures.

Please visit our webpage for an up-to-date listing of our scheduled lectures and field excursions under the **Our Events** heading; <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Groups-and-Networks/Regional-Groups/West-Midlands>

Field Trip Co-ordinator: Andrew Harrison



The first excursion for 2019 was an evening walk in May looking at the building stones of Birmingham. This was well attended and concluded the 3 trails available for download

from; <https://bcgs.info/pub/local-geology/building-stone-trails/>

A day trip was run in Southern Shropshire looking at the glacial and periglacial landforms. This was also well attended and by all accounts an excellent day out.

Write ups of our trips can be found on our webpage.

In September we shall be heading to Dorset for a long weekend field trip. We shall be visiting some classic geological sites. There are over 20 people registered for this trip such is the popularity of this area for geologists.



A common phrase banded around is; *"the best geologists are the ones that look at the most rocks"*. This may not be true 100% of the time, just most of the time. Visiting geological sites with colleagues is a great way to improve your knowledge and understanding. It's impossible to attend a field excursion without learning something. Working with computer based models makes a lot more sense if you can relate it to field examples.

During Earth Science week we have a planned trip to the famous Oxford University Museum of Natural History, 19/10/19. Here we will be given a behind the scenes tour of the collections. Numbers will be strictly limited so if you and your family wish to attend please register your interest with Andrew Harrison ASAP.



All trips organised by the WMRG are free to attend, members simply covering their own costs. If you have a particular area you would like us to arrange a trip to or if you have the desire to lead a trip then please contact Andrew Harrison.

Footnote

Committee members and their email address can be found listed on our web page

<https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Groups-and-Networks/Regional-Groups/West-Midlands>

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