

U3A. REGIONAL GEOLOGY GROUP

This long established group draws in members from all over South Wales. We meet for field trips which are usually on a Monday, roughly once a month except in winter, and often involve a day at the seaside and a picnic lunch.

Some of the members have studied Geology to some degree in the past, but others just have a general interest and curiosity for their surroundings. Whatever the background, there is something for everyone.

On the whole, the leader is a retired professional Geologist who frequently provide detailed hand-outs which are very helpful. Occasionally our own members lead a trip, for example in recent years to Caswell Bay, Gower; Rest Bay, Porthcawl; Dunraven Bay, Southerndown and St Fagans, Cardiff.

Great care is taken with safety but in order to study the rocks it is often necessary to walk on rough paths and/ or rocks and pebbly beaches and a degree of clambering may be involved. It is not for anyone with cardiac, general health or mobility issues.

Weather plays a big part in the enjoyment and viability of each trip, and we have been unlucky in the past having to postpone trips because of the rain. As the arrangements also have to take into account the tide times, it is not necessarily straightforward to re-schedule.

In 2023 our first trip was to Oxwich Point. Originally it was to have been in March, but it actually took place a month later. However, we were rewarded for our patience and had a great day looking at fascinating rocks, and learning about the landscape and the effects of the Ice Ages, the volcano that was Lundy island and much else besides.

The second planned trip, to Southerndown and the Glamorgan Heritage Coast again had to be postponed because of the rain (and hail!) but took place successfully in June. Here there are excellent exposures of Limestone and Mudstones of the marginal Lias of the Jurassic, with associated fossils waiting to be found.

Some of the trips are inland and we had a glorious day in May in the Upper Swansea Valley, in the area around Dan yr Ogof. From the Craig y Nos Country Park we walked north- to-south from the edge of the Old Red Sandstone, across the Carboniferous Limestone and Twrch Sandstone to Cribarth, to see the effects of the Swansea Valley Disturbance.

In July, we were back to the coast in Glamorgan, studying the rocks of the Swanbridge and St Mary's Well Bay area. This stretch of coast from Sully to Lavernock Point is a continuous exposure of the Upper Triassic and Lower Jurassic sediments.

In August, the trip was to Kilvey Hill, Swansea, where we learned about the industrial history and ecology as well as the geology, looking at the Pennant Sandstone in relation to the development of the copper industry. Then, in September we travelled to Goodwick and Fishguard, Pembrokeshire. Here the geology is extremely complex with extrusive igneous

rocks, mainly rhyolitic lavas and tuffs from ancient volcanic eruptions, and intrusive igneous rocks consisting mostly of dolerites and diorites. There are also metamorphic rocks in the form of slates and much more recent peat deposits.

The final trip was to Ogmore on a cold and windy day featuring the Carboniferous Limestone with its many and varied fossils overlain unconformably by the Triassic Breccias washed in by flash floods from desert wadis.

There is a wide range of backgrounds and interests amongst the members, so the discussions are not only about the rocks of course. It's easy to be distracted by the flora and fauna, local history, folklore and anecdotes all of which add a great deal to the general enjoyment of the day.

Teresa Jenkins.