

GEOLOGY & PHYSIOGRAPHY SECTION of the NATURE CONSERVANCY

INFORMATION CIRCULAR 6

JUNE 1971

Two very important changes have affected the Geological Section of the Nature Conservancy since the appearance of Information Circular No. 5 in November 1970 - one a change of location and the other a change in function.

NEW ADDRESS

From the 16th June 1971 the Section will be housed at the

Nature Conservancy Offices,
Foxhold House,
Thornford Road,
Headley,
Nr. Newbury,
Berkshire. (Telephone - Headley 429).

The new office is a large converted house at grid reference 41/512639 and, like Oak Cottage, will also accommodate the South Region office. Thornford Road leads from the A.339 between Newbury and Basingstoke, approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Newbury and $13\frac{1}{2}$ from Basingstoke. The buildings stand on rising ground on the north side of Thornford Road and are reached by an entrance drive which joins the public road approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the A.339.

The new premises are much larger than the present accommodation and provide the improved facilities required by the Section to cope with its newly enlarged responsibilities.

WIDER RESPONSIBILITIES-PHYSIOGRAPHY

For 20 years, the Physiographic Section of the Nature Conservancy concentrated its research efforts on marine processes and their effects on the shore. On the 1st October 1969 the Unit of Coastal Sedimentation was established to undertake research in the near coastal zone and in a reorganisation of research effort, the Nature Conservancy transferred the research then being carried out by the Physiographic Section to U.C.S. on the 1st April 1971. Most of the existing staff of the Section at that date also transferred to the Unit and in their place the Conservancy is setting up a small physiographic group whose programme will be almost entirely concerned with the application of physiography to the work of the Conservancy.

The group has been merged in the Geological Section which has been re-titled the Geology & Physiography Section. Its duties now include the selection and conservation of geomorphological and geological sites, the provision of geomorphological and geological advice to the Conservancy and liaison with geographers and geologists.

REPORTED MISUSE OF GEOLOGICAL LOCALITIES

Cow Low Nick, Castleton S.S.S.I., Derbyshire

This site is one of the best known goniatite localities in the Peak District and is therefore a popular locality with educational parties and amateur geologists. As the fossil-yielding exposure is quite small it is subject to intense pressure. Reports have been received that this site is deteriorating and that there is an alarming waste of goniatite chips.

Co-operation from geologists at all levels is requested. Unless this site is treated with greater care, its high research value will be greatly reduced. It is believed that the deterioration has been particularly rapid since an account of the fossils from this site was published about six years ago. There is no need to emphasise the harm that will be done if research workers dare not publish their results for fear of their sites being wrecked in this fashion.

West Angle Bay S.S.S.I., Pembrokeshire

It has been drawn to our attention that the superficial deposits at the back of West Angle Bay are being dug away at a relatively rapid rate by University groups. Whilst research digs to further geological knowledge on the site are welcome, it is essential that a reasonable quantity of deposits should remain for reference and further study in future years. The removal of the entire deposit would reduce the value of the present studies in that, as new techniques become available, they cannot be applied to enlarge or confirm our knowledge of the site.

Whilst the situation is not yet critical, it is as well to draw attention to the need to consider the long term policy for the site before there is a case parallel with that of many former cave deposits. The repeated removal and build up of talus can destroy a section as surely as direct removal of the deposit.

Ravenscar Nature Trail, Yorkshire

The North York Moors National Park authorities have published a Nature Trail covering the classic Lias sequence in the Ravenscar/Robin Hood's Bay locality.

The Trail has been designed particularly for the general public and educational parties. It will be particularly helpful to teachers taking a party to this area for the first time. It is useful as a basic route guide to exposures and for general geological setting but for 'A' level studies and above it would need supplementing with more detailed information. At the price of 6d. (2½ n.p.), however, it is well worth obtaining. It is on sale at the local shops and cafes by the start of the Trail near Raven Hall Hotel.

Woodditton Chalk Pit, Cambridgeshire

The pit is being infilled by Newmarket R.D.C. following a compromise agreement with the Conservancy in 1959, by which a representative section of the Top Rock (Upper Chalk) would remain outside the tipping area.

Illicit tipping had partially filled the geological portion of the pit and Top Rock has not been visible for several years. The R.D.C. made a drag line available and the section was cleared under direction from the Conservancy.

Oakley Railway Junction Pit, Bedfordshire

This site was scheduled for its folded Cornbrash, disturbed, it is thought, by the passage of ice sheets. The site consists of two pits, one of which was accidentally filled with rubbish by Bedford R.D.C. The latter bulldozed out much of the material and created a rough transect through an anticline. This exposure was cleared to provide a demonstration section by a group from Luton College of Technology raised by Mr. Lutford. Tools were loaned by the Conservation Corps and the work supervised by the Conservancy. Visitors to this site (Grid ref. 52/027520) should contact Mr. Matthews, Engineer and Surveyor, Bedfordshire R.D.C, Council Chambers, 41/43 Goldington Road, Bedford.

Wren's Nest N.N.R.

At Easter a Conservation Corps party (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) carried out maintenance work on the revised nature trail route. Creation of new paths and improvement of exposures and view points were among the tasks carried out.

Work has begun on infilling the underground workings by the owners, Dudley B.C., on a programme agreed with the Conservancy.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

Flamborough Head S.S.S.I., Yorkshire: South Sea Landing Marina Proposal.

The Conservancy has been consulted by the planning authorities over the proposed construction of a large marina within the SSSI. Advice has been sought from a number of geologists representing Chalk and Drift interests and discussions are currently in progress with the developers to clarify points of design detail.

CURRENT ROAD SCHEMES

A. 12	Mountnessing By-pass
A. 30	Exeter-Bodmin; Kennards House Diversion, Cornwall
A. 35	Folkestone-Honiton: Yarty Bridge Diversion, Devon
A. 38	London-Penzance: 2nd Crossing Exeter Canal, Devon
A. 38	London-Penzance: Ashburton/Buckfastleigh, Devon
A. 38	London-Penzance: Ivybridge By-pass, Devon
A. 38	Chudleigh By-pass, Devon
A. 39	Taunton-Fraddon: Helebridge, Marhamchurch, Cornwall
A. 46	Bath-Lincoln: Grichstone Bend, Gloucester
A. 50	Sudbury Diversion
A. 58	Manchester-Rochdale, Lancs.
A. 303	London-Penzance Trunk Road, Mere
A. 303	London-Penzance: March and Newhaven Bridge, Devon
A. 303/A36	Connecting Roads, Wylie, Wiltshire
A. 435	Bath-Lincoln: Oxenton Diversion, Gloucester
A. 470	Cardiff-Merthyr Trunk Road
A. 604	Barton Seagrave - Harwich Road Hare Green-Poplar Hall, Essex By-pass at Wix
M. 3	Lightwater - Sunbury, Surrey
M. 5	Edithmead-Dumball, Somerset
M. 5	Cribbs Causeway - S. of Almondsbury, Gloucester
M. 5	Huntworth-Willand, Somerset/Devon
M. 40	Gerrards Cross By-pass
M. 41	Hemel Hempstead By-pass