

ABERDEEN GEOLOGICAL ALUMNI NEWSLETTER 2004

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DEPARTMENT INSTALLS NEW HEAD AND GEOLOGY INCREASES IN POPULARITY

It may come as something of a surprise to those who know me (and those who have never heard of me!), to discover that I am now Head of the Department of Geology and Petroleum Geology. It certainly came as a surprise to me! As of the 21st of July I officially took over the reins from Gordon Walkden, since then it has been a bit of a roller coaster ride in terms of trying to understand what the reorganisation of the University means to us. As I write this we are to become one of 8 departments in the College of Physical Sciences (basically a slimmed down Science Faculty). For a year we have been part of the School of Resource, Environment and Society (joint with Geography and Land Economy), however this is now to be disbanded in favour of the largely financially autonomous College structure. Universities appear to be rather good at the industry trend towards

restructuring but about 5 to 7 years later. What are the implications of this reorganisation for the Department? Well on a day to day basis hopefully not a great deal and it shouldn't impact on the students at all.

In July this year we graduated 40 students, the largest number we've ever had! Indeed it looks like geology is becoming an increasingly popular subject, as our undergraduate intake has continued to increase steadily over the last 5 years, although the high numbers from last year is likely to be an exception. I put this down to more 'disaster' and 'dinosaur' programmes on TV. What a shock it must be to the poor first years when they are confronted by 'real' geology in the shape of a greasy bit of Rubislaw Granite! Anyway if anyone feels like popping in and saying hello and looking round the department, please feel free.

Dr Adrian Hartley



M.Sc Petroleum Geology Fieldtrip to Utah April 10th -23rd 2003

Our first day started with the rendezvous of 23 tired and weary people which included 19 students, who at least had the excuse of being delayed, diverted and newly jet-lagged and the four fieldtrip leaders/drivers - Anne Schwab, Adrian Hartley, Chris Butler and myself, who didn't have a decent excuse. Maybe it was the heat.

Our objective was to study large scale examples of a wide range of geological phenomena with just the right amount of emphasis on petroleum geoscience and a context in the hydrocarbon industry. Not to mention to appreciate some of the world's most spectacular scenery in which these examples were located.

The leaders broke everyone in gently on the first day as we all struggled to absorb the immense vistas and studied the relatively easily accessible road sections close to Salt Lake City. The next few days were slightly less sympathetic with a great deal of sedimentary logging and scrambling. The main aim for the students was to encourage

them to improve their observation and synthesis skills.

We covered some very diverse geology, including the Great Salt Lake of Utah where we looked at modern lakes and basin and range fault tectonics, the Green River Formation to look at fluvial and lacustrine outcrops, the Book Cliffs for their mouth bars, distributary channels, shorefaces, incised valley fill, aeolian sediments and of course to learn the science (and art?) of sequence stratigraphy.

Naturally, the opportunity to see more of the fantastic scenery of Utah was never missed. We studied large-scale basin fills and mixed fluvial-aeolian sediments (which happened to be found in Canyonlands National Park), large scale faulting and aeolian sediments (which were nicely located in the spectacular Arches National Park), the giant oilfield, Aneth (conveniently near the wonderful Goosenecks meanders), aeolian sediments (at the magnificent Zion

National Park) and the floodplain soils and ephemeral rivers (.. at ooh... Monument Valley, and... did I mention the Grand Canyon?). The highlight of the whole experience for me was the freshwater lacustrine sediment sequence which was to be found at the other-worldly Bryce Canyon.

The appeal perhaps had something to do with the snow or the fact that in order to get down into the canyon many decided to sledge on their posteriors!

The trip was simply amazing, the scenery 'awesome', the geology was easily accessible and aided understanding, the two 'professional' trip leaders made it educational and fun, and the weather was good to us. Thankyou to all involved in the organisation of the fieldtrip (including staff at the University) and all participants.

*Nicola Tessen
(Ph.D Aberdeen University
1994-1999)*

AGA - A Growing Global Community

The University of Aberdeen has geology graduates scattered all over the world. When AGA was established in 1998 it aimed to improve contact and links between the University, its Department of Geology and Petroleum Geology- its alumni and industry. Over the years membership and support to the association has steadily grown, and AGA continues to be one of the most active alumni associations at the University - however, there is scope to create a far larger AGA global community.

The committee is always on the look out for alumni who

have lost touch with the University, and we'd be delighted to hear from geology graduates who are not yet members of the association. Not only will you receive publications like this, you will also be given booking priority at fundraising events- will receive the University's new monthly email news bulletin from the Alumni Relations Office (full of the latest news stories), and you will be part of a huge business network of geology graduates across the globe.

If you are an Aberdeen geology graduate, please ensure that you keep your

contact details updated with the Alumni Relations Office. You can update your details on-line at where you can also inform us of other news such as career developments- family news and basically any other information you would like to share with your alma mater! If you know of any other Geology alumni who are not in touch with the University, please also encourage them to update their contact details. The Alumni Relations Office might even be able to help you track down former classmates who you have lost touch with!

To find out more about becoming an AGA member contact
Laura Moncur

Alumni Relations Office
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AGA Hydrocarbon Enterprise Award 2003

From 2003 the AGA will award £250 to the student who gives the best presentation from the MSc Hydrocarbon Enterprise, during their Venture Capitalist day in the second term.

This is part of their course - which is run by Dr Bryan Cronin -, includes Dealing and Negotiation; Politics, Organisational Psychology and Entrepreneurialism. Each student, based on what they have seen in all areas of business and technology in the previous two terms, has to choose an idea (whether a piece of technology with a future, a mechanism of enhanced recovery, a play type, a business opportunity, whatever), which has appealed to them. They then must draw up a business plan and present the idea as a going concern to a group of Venture Capitalists, many without technical or Oil backgrounds, after a three week preparation time. This final presentation allows them to focus on the marketing of their idea, having previously honed their presentation skills.

The Venture Capitalists, co-ordinated by Prof Andrew Hurst, were represented this year by 3i, Bank of Scotland and Simpsons. As a trial of this assignment it was a remarkable success. The winner of the AGA Hydrocarbon Enterprise Award 2003 went to Kimberlea Greene, from Newfoundland, Canada, whose presentation was entitled: 'Stranded Gas offshore Newfoundland: market and transport'. The VCs were also asked to guess the academic background of each student. Kim, a geoscientist, was guessed incorrectly as an Economist. Congratulations Kim!

Bryan Cronin

MSc Petroleum Geology Group Poster

£250 prize for the MSc Petroleum Geology Group Poster! I have attached a photo of the winning group being presented. Many thanks to AGA for the prize by Angie.



The winners are from left to right: Simon Haworth, Caroline Burke, Alessandra D'Alessandri and Jamie Vinnels.

The prize was awarded on Feb. 26 at the end of the 8 day long Exploration Exercise. Angie Holland and

Emma Preston from AGA were on the judging panel.

The Exploration Exercise simulates a foreign country licencing round. Each group is given access to varied data from 5 potential blocks in a fictitious country. The data is in the form of pieces of seismic, rock samples, well logs reports, biostrat etc.....a real hodge-podge of data. Each group is also given a budget of 50 million\$ to spend, and they have to come up with a poster that represents the strategy of their company and ranks and chooses the top three blocks that they want to apply for a licence. They also need to present an exploration programme for each block. To give them the sense of a 'data room', the

data trolley is only accessible during certain hours of the 8 days. The groups can also buy the consulting expertise of David Macdonald who runs this exercise. At the end of the eight days, each group has 10 minutes to present their poster. All posters should include a description of the geology in the blocks, an analogous producing area and the risk of the parameters in each block. We had five groups this year, and all the posters were very comprehensive and professional. The judges felt the winning group had the best understanding of the geology and risks associated with each block.

Dr Anne Schwab

AGA Fieldwork Prizes 2002-2003

One of the direct benefits (and indeed stated aims) of AGA's successful programme of activities and social events is the use of its funds, so raised, to assist students of Geology and Petroleum Geology during the course of their studies in the Department of Geology & Petroleum Geology. In recent years AGA has helped all Geoscience, Geology & Petroleum Geology undergraduates with the purchase of essential field equipment. Some students have, in addition, received generous AGA cash prizes that have made a substantial contribution towards the payment of the fieldwork costs of independent study projects.

In the 2002-2003 session, all Level 2 geology students were delighted to receive the high quality hand lenses, gifted by HRH and Pathfinder (two of AGA's industrial sponsors). Most of AGA's direct financial support is however focussed on Level 3 (Junior Honours) undergraduates, who (with over 3 weeks of compulsory "taught" field courses in their Junior Honours year and a further 4 weeks of independent fieldwork in the summer vacation that precedes their Senior Honours Year) have the greatest need of assistance. The Department is only able to offer each student a limited contribution towards fieldwork subsistence costs (£7 per day for the taught courses, and a total of £150 for the 4 week independent fieldwork project). Whilst some students (on average, one student each year) compete successfully for a Carnegie Vacation Study award, and one student per year receives the Austin Weeks Award of \$500 from the Aberdeen Student Chapter of the AAPG, most Level 3 students have to find £500-£1,000 of additional funding to support their compulsory fieldwork activities.

In the 2001-2002 session AGA donated 8 fieldwork prizes of £250 to be distributed within the Department's largest ever Junior Honours class of 40 students. This year, with a relatively small Junior

Honours class of only 24 students, the AGA committee felt that the donation of 5 fieldwork prizes of £250 was appropriate. The prizes are awarded to the students who have the best overall performance in their "taught" Level 3 field courses. This year's prize winners are:-Ian Brightmore, Lynn Bruce Victoria Cambell, Darragh Flanagan and Gerold Tischler.

Congratulations are offered to these students for their achievements. Congratulations too, to James Haughs, the recipient of the Austin Weeks prize on the basis of his performance on the Helmsdale field course. All of these prizes are currently being used to support a great range and variety of independent field-based projects, both here in the British Isles and in various parts of continental Europe. The importance and value of these projects as training exercises in the undergraduate curriculum has recently been emphasised by the Department's External Examiner and AGA member (Prof. Martin Menzies), and underscored by an increase from 20 to 25 in the coursework credits attached to the independent field mapping based project.

Dr Alan Crane

MSc in Petroleum Geology: 30th Anniversary

The 2003/04 academic year sees the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the Petroleum Geology MSc course and the start of the transformation of the former Department of Geology & Mineralogy into the Department of Geology & Petroleum Geology. During that time, about 410 people have graduated from the MSc course, many now occupying high positions in the petroleum industry. The course has achieved national and international recognition; in 2001 NERC assessment, it was the highest rated vocational masters course in the country.

We have decided to mark this significant milestone in the history of the course with an event timed to coincide with the graduation of the 30th class in November 2004. The provisional programme is:

25 November 2004: Alumni gather; informal tours of the department; Thursday evening dinner.

26 November 2004: Seminar on the future of "energy geology" teaching, research and knowledge transfer in Aberdeen. Introduced by Principal Rice. Evening ceilidh.

27 November 2001: Graduation of 30th class. Saturday afternoon reception in Meston Building.

The University are giving this event their wholehearted support, and the AGA committee are also involved. Any graduate of the course who wishes to help should contact David Macdonald.

David Macdonald
d.maconald@abdn.ac.uk

Dr Martin (Ian) Munro, Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geology and Mineralogy from 1953 to 1982

Dr Martin (Ian) Munro, Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geology and Mineralogy from 1953 to 1982, died, from a heart attack, at his home in Melrose, on the 1st of January 2003.

Although born at Finzean in Aberdeenshire, where his father was headmaster, Ian was brought up and educated at St Andrews, in Fifeshire. There he attended Madras College and St Andrews University. National Service, with the Royal Air Force, interrupted his academic training. However, he returned to St Andrews to gain a PhD for his study on the Strontian Granite Complex.

During his fieldwork at Strontian, Ian met Lena, the daughter of the factor for the Loch Sunart Estate and they married in December 1953, after Ian was appointed to the Department. Might this encounter have been a subconscious reason for the importance Ian placed on fieldwork in the training of geologists? Their house, at Blairs, was called Ariundle after a mature oakwood, now a nature reserve, on the Sunart Estate.

Our class of six, the 1954 graduates, were the first honours class to be inspired by Ian's teaching of igneous petrology.

In Aberdeen Ian worked on the challenges presented by the mineralogy, structure, petrogenesis and timing of emplacement of the Basic Igneous Rocks of N.E. Scotland.

The Australian "Poisedon Nickel Bubble" of the 1970's created enormous interest in the economic potential of Basic Igneous Rocks. Consequently Ian's studies were aided by the availability of "core" and geophysical data from exploration programmes. The collapse of the "Bubble" returned the studies to the academic world.

Changes to the structure of the British Geological Survey resulted in the remapping of certain sheets being put out to contract. Ian, with a group of post graduate students and research assistants, secured the contract to remap Sheet 77, the Aberdeen Sheet. The Drift Edition was published in 1980; the Solid Edition in 1982 and the Memoir in 1986.

Ian volunteered for early retirement during the University's funding crisis of 1981/82. The family retired to Southend, in the Mull of Kintyre, to a large garden, rejuvenated golf and a very attractive participation in community life. With daughter Rona in London and son Martin in the USA, Ian and Lena moved to Melrose in 2002. Ian missed his garden but was able to reengage with his much earlier sport of rugby by watching Melrose play at the Greenyards.

Ian will be remembered with affection and sadly missed by all who knew him as a teacher, colleague, and friend.

George Downie



1962 Honours Field Trip
Ian Munro in Characteristic Stance

Annual events planned

If you want to attend any of the events or if you are interested in serving on the committee we don't bite. For further details goto

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/geology/aga/index.htm> or contact

Laura Moncur

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Quiz HRH Challenge Cup Evening in February 2004

Granite City Geology Ball in March 2004

Stonehaven Boat Trip - June/July 2004

Wine Tasting in September/October 2004

Ceilidh in November 2004

Where are they now?



The Honours Class (Geology and Mineralogy) 1978-1979

Back Row (left to right)

Euan W. MEARNS; Alexander W. MILNE; Frank W. RENNIE; David I. ROSS; Neil C. TAYLOR; Alastair R. THOMSON; Bruce M. TOCHER; James M. WOOD

Front Row (left to right)

Gillian A. AITKEN; Helen M. DUNCAN; Colin J. FAIRWEATHER; Gordon FORBES; Keith R. JORDON; Charles A. MARDALL; Neil A. MATHIESON

Absent

Graeme S. BROWN and John L. WOOD

If you know where the people are in the photo can you let the AGA know by contacting

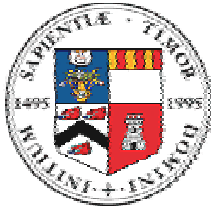
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The Class of 94

The Geology Petroleum Geology Class that graduated in 1994 are in the middle of organizing a reunion if you were in this class and have not been contacted yet please contact the AGA and let us know where you are. Colin MacPherson and Ailsa Dixon are the main organizers and can be contacted through the AGA.



6th A.G.A. Quiz Evening



Sponsored by
HRH Limited



for the HRH Quiz Challenge Trophy

Aberdeen University Geological Alumni

Invite teams of up to 5 people to come and join in yet another fun evening of geological, trivial and general knowledge questions.

- Wednesday 25th February 2004
- Elphinstone Hall, High Street, Old Aberdeen
- 7.00pm for 7.30pm start
- HRH Quiz Challenge Trophy & main prize to overall winners
- Other prize categories include best non-geological rounds
- Best student team prize
- Raffles, Spot prizes & Bar
- Ticket entry - £5 per person for teams of 3 - 5 people
- Students & AGA Members £3

Reserve your Team Table NOW!

Poster and information available at www.aberdn.demon.co.uk/agaquiz
For any more information contact gordon.holm@total.com (01224) 297419

To be sure of your ticket
email your reservation request & team details to agaquiz@hotmail.com
or mail the slip below to

**AGA - Quiz, c/o Laura Moncur, Alumni Relations Office, University of
Aberdeen, Regent Walk, Aberdeen, AB24 3FX**
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