Window into the Past - Platform for the Future 
Promoting Geotourism in the Peak District

A report of the geotourism conference held in Buxton, Derbyshire, November 2015, supported by the English Geodiversity Forum and the Peak District National Park Authority.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BACKGROUND</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session One</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynote Speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Peak District - window into the past, platform for the future</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Darmon, CEO, GeoSupplies and Past President, YHA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynote Speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geotourism, geoparks and my business</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Powe, Director, Kent’s Cavern &amp; Chair, English Riviera Geopark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Two</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make it Digital – 3D visualisation of landscapes in deep time</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Brooks, smartphone app designer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Ideas</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham Worton, Keeper of Geology, Dudley Museum and Art Gallery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk Through Time</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guy Kerr, Community Coordinator, Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Class Geology!</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Devos, Programme Manager, Limestone Landscapes Partnership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martley – the Geovillage model</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Nicklin, Teme Valley Geological Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q&amp;A panel</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session Three</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhodri Thomas, Peak District National Park Authority</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans for a Peak District Geopark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Benghiat, East Midlands Geological Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Discussion</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEEDBACK, OBSERVATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Poster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Last Call Flier</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Programme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak District Geotourism Brochure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation slides: Keynote Speaker, Chris Darmon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation slides: Keynote Speaker, Nick Powe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation slides: Case Study 1, Mike Brooks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation slides: Case Study 2, Graham Worton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation slides: Case Study 3, Guy Kerr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation slides: Case Study 4, Tony Devos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation slides: Case Study 5, John Nicklin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation slides: A Peak District Geopark</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

On Wednesday 25th November 2015 a day conference on geotourism was held at the Palace Hotel, Buxton, Derbyshire. The unique feature of this conference was that it was an event intended to inform, inspire and listen to people from the local tourism industry, rather than a gathering of geologists telling one another how they have promoted geology. As such, this conference was probably the first of its kind in England.

The title, Window into the Past – Platform for the Future, made subtle reference to the geology of the Peak District, whilst pointing, clearly enough even for non-specialists, towards the tourism potential to be discussed, especially when followed by the sub-title Promoting Geotourism in the Peak District.

Geotourism has been defined as "a form of natural area tourism that specifically focuses on landscape and geology. It promotes tourism to geosites and the conservation of geo-diversity and an understanding of Earth sciences through appreciation and learning. This is achieved through independent visits to geological features, use of geo-trails and view points, guided tours, geo-activities and patronage of geosite visitor centers" (Newsome, D. and Dowling, R.K. (2010). Geotourism: The Tourism of Geology and Landscape. Goodfellow Publishers). It should link to the culture and heritage of a place and support the well-being of residents by raising their sense of pride and ideally, contributing to the local economy. Tourism revenues and residents in turn should be part of the plan to care for and conserve local geodiversity assets (rocks, landscapes and associated heritage features).

Geodiversity is the variety of rocks, minerals, fossils, landforms and soils, together with the natural processes that shape them. Geodiversity is a foundation for life and our society. It influences landscape, habitats and species as well as our economy, historical and cultural heritage, education, health and well-being. (Geodiversity Charter for England. English Geodiversity Forum).

BACKGROUND

The idea for this geotourism conference was generated by discussion at the English Geodiversity Forum, which was established in 2013 to bring together all of the national organisations with an interest in raising the profile of, and support for, England’s geodiversity. The first action of the Forum was to develop a Geodiversity Charter for England, a formal document setting out the nature and value of our geodiversity, why it should be promoted and protected and how various sectors of society should contribute to that (http://www.englishgeodiversityforum.org/). The Charter was launched at a briefing for Members of Parliament at Westminster, with Ministerial backing, in October 2014 and received widespread support. Following this success, the Forum considered how it would support the aims of the Charter in 2015. A conference introducing geodiversity to the tourism industry was proposed.

Why the Peak District?
The Peak District was chosen as the area for the event not only because of its central location and excellent geology, but because local enthusiasts there were, and still are, actively seeking to raise the profile of geodiversity and recommending the area as a geopark, a concept that was explained to the audience during the event. The conference could help their cause and in turn, they formed a ready-made team to deliver the conference.

Planning and advice
A member of the English Geodiversity Forum living in the Midlands made contact the local geologists in March 2015 and an exploratory meeting was called immediately. The planning committee formed was composed of a representative of the Peak District National Park Authority, a member from each of the two geoconservation groups in the area, a lecturer from the Univerisity of Derby, a member of East Midlands Geological Society resident in the heart of the National Park and leading on the geopark proposal, and the English Geodiversity Forum representative. At their first meeting, they were joined by a tourism officer from Visit Peak District & Derbyshire with experience of organising the annual local tourism industry conference, which normally happens in March.
Discussion took place about the format for the day: should it be a full or part day conference, or should it be a half day indoors and a half day tour ‘in the field’? Advice from the tourism officer indicated that the best attendance was likely to be:

- mid-week in autumn or winter (to avoid weeknds and high season for businesses)
- between 10 am and 3 pm (to allow children to be taken to school)
- in a central location in one of the larger towns (simpler and safer travel routes, especially if the weather turned bad).

She also advised allowing plenty of time for networking (i.e. lunch and coffee breaks that were long enough) and providing some useful item for delegates to take home with them. It was decided that sufficient time was needed to introduce the concept of geotourism to a new audience and that they may not appreciate a field trip in winter anyway! A day conference was planned with a range of speakers in the morning, a lunchtime exhibition and discussion in the afternoon. Two keynote speakers would introduce, in simple terms, the geology of the Peak District and its potential for geotourism, and the commercial benefits of geotourism linked to the idea of geoparks. These were to be followed by five short talks describing ideas and successes from other parts of the country. The ‘take-home’ item would be a colour brochure that delegates could later use with the public, encapsulating the first keynote talk on the rocks and landscape of the Peak District and the many geotourism attractions for visitors to explore. Time would be allowed for group discussion to hear what the delegates thought about promoting geotourism, having heard the presentations and their ideas for how this could work in the Peak District.

Promotion and bookings
The conference was advertised by Visit Peak District & Derbyshire through their regular e-newsletter and a purpose-written bulletin sent to the 4000 contacts on their mailing list. This was picked up and circulated further by The Environmental Quality Mark Community Interest Company (www.eqm.org.uk /peakdistrict) which recognises around 80 businesses in the Peak District that actively work to improve and safeguard the local environment and heritage for the well-being of communities and the benefit of residents. The Peak District National Park Authority representative also informed a grouping of the most prestigious tourism attractions, including the stately homes and caverns, and further promotion was done by the planning group through personal contacts. Bookings were made online through the Eventbrite service and the planning group set up a dedicated email address (PDgeotourism@gmail.com) via which they could personally receive and respond to enquiries, and receive feedback after the conference.

Attendance
The well-established Visit Peak District & Derbyshire annual conference covers a broad variety of topics and usually attracts around 130 delegates. This geotourism conference had capacity for 80 – 100 delegates, but given that the subject was very new and relatively narrow, and that the conference was a one-off event in addition to the annual tourism conference, the planning group were satisfied with the 50 delegates that attended. This included the members of the planning group and the seven invited speakers. The remainder came from the following sectors:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local authority</th>
<th>Grant fund HLF</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Natural England/BGS</th>
<th>Activity providers</th>
<th>Show Caverns</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Education / Interpretation</th>
<th>Tourism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

The tourism group included six students from the University of Derby training for a career in ecotourism.

Contributions
The conference benefitted from the following support:

- The conference fee was £25 per delegate, but the Peak District National Park Authority covered the remainder of the costs up to a sum of £2000.
- The speakers gave their time free of charge; only their expenses were covered. They came to share their wealth of experience and enthusiasm for the potential of geotourism to boost business and regenerate communities.
- The brochure content was produced by the planning group, but the design work was provided free of charge by the British Geological Survey design team and the printing costs were covered by a grant.
from the Curry Fund of the Geologists’ Association. 2000 copies of the brochure were produced and will be freely available for the tourism industry to use with members of the public over the coming months, propogating the conference message that the rocks and landscape of the Peak District are inspiring, and giving ideas about where to go to appreciate them, learn more and have a great day out.

- The members of the planning group put in many hours of volunteer time and travel to ensure the success of the event and production of the brochure.
- Useful advice and practical assistance was provided by Visit Peak District & Derbyshire, Natural England and the English Geodiversity Forum.
REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE

Session One
A welcome and brief introduction was given by Martin Whiteley, of the University of Derby and member of the planning group, followed by the two keynote speakers. All speakers had been briefed about the purpose of the conference and presented geology in accessible, non-technical terms, linking it with spirited accounts of how geotourism works for them. See appendices for prints of the presentations.

The Peak District - window into the past, platform for the future
Chris Darmon, CEO, GeoSupplies and Past President, YHA

Chris outlined his background in geo-education, as a school teacher, as the leader of a popular university extra mural studies class and now as the owner of a flourishing geotourism business, based in Sheffield, taking international visitors to sites across Britain and native students to locations in the UK and abroad. He produces the widely read geo-newsletter, Down to Earth, and sells geological publications and equipment online. He recently stepped down as President of the Youth Hostel Association.

An overview of the geology of the Peak District, Britain’s first National Park, was given, describing the White Peak, Dark Peak and the third, less well known Peak – the ‘Volcanic Peak’. The talk was peppered with examples of places, people, geotourism opportunities and little known facts about the Peak District, from how the Dukes of Devonshire made their money (owning the world’s richest copper mine at Ecton Hill) to the origin of Pickford’s Removals (moving coal from Whaley Bridge) and the location of the Peak District’s own Giant’s Causeway (Calton Hill). The rocks of the Peak District, their nature, structure and development over deep time, were linked with the landscape, history, prosperity and potential of the area, set within the context of Britain’s globally unique geology. Chris said that it is no wonder that Americans beat a path to his door – they want to come to see the birthplace of the science of geology!

The established range of visitors to the Peak District and why they come was discussed, with the potential for introducing them to geotourism. Chris went on to outline the existing external market for geotourism that Peak District businesses could tap in to – hundreds of active geology groups across the country that might seek accommodation for 10 – 50 people, plus the international market, all interested in visiting in every season of the year. The needs of this market include accommodation that is affordable, available and accessible. Consideration should be given to how broadly welcoming advertising is – a hotel with a website that only highlights its wedding packages may be missing a trick. Examples of geotourism attractions and supporting literature (books, trail guides, information boards and online resources) were described, from little-known countryside locations and attractions such as the mining museum and the National Stone Centre, to some of the finest show caves in Britain (indeed, how many people know that some famous caves in southern England bought stalactites from the Peak District in the nineteenth century and cemented them in place?)!

Website: http://geosupplies.co.uk/
Geotourism, geoparks and my business
Nick Powe, Director, Kent’s Cavern & Chair, English Riviera Geopark

Kent’s Cavern is one of the most popular caverns in England with excellent ratings on Trip Adviser and Gold tourism awards including Best Attraction in South West England and VisitEngland’s 2013 Tourism Superstar badge. Nick explained that aligning to the Geopark concept (see below) and geotourism have been core drivers to recent growth at Kents Cavern, where turnover has doubled since 2000.

Kent’s Cavern is located on the Torbay English Riviera, so named not because it is sunny all year, but because it is open all year. It is a predominantly urban area including the towns of Torquay, Paignton, and Brixham. The limestone caves were formed 2.5 million years ago, carved in the Devonian rocks by a river that left a bed of mud and sand that now forms the floor of the cavern. They have been known in historic times since the Roman era, but have yielded the bones of ice age animals and proof of mankind living there over 500,000 years ago; this is one of the few places in the world with evidence of three different human species and specimens of modern human jawbone dating back over 40,000 years, the oldest known in Europe. The first detailed excavations took place in the 19th century, when it was unthinkable that mankind may have co-existed with now-extinct animals. The caves became famous and were mentioned by authors Agatha Christie and Beatrix Potter. The location is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

When Nick took charge of the cavern 15 years ago, he felt that this was a story that needed to be told and capitalised upon. He knew he had to work with and build upon what was there:

- Heritage – outstanding, but could he give people a reason to come again if they had visited once?
- Weather – it rains in England – but at least this is an underground attraction.
- Visitor numbers – there was no way he could increase the number of people visiting the area, but perhaps more could be enticed to Kent’s cavern, and new and overseas markets engaged.

The first step was to build a new visitor centre, and he visited Marble Arch Caves in Northern Ireland, a Global Geopark, for ideas, where he encountered the concept of using geotourism to attract groups of people and broaden the offering. The geology of the caves could provide a theme for products, education, science, culture, activities and experiences at Kents Cavern, but better still, if the cavern was in an area defined as a geopark, this could be delivered in coordination with other business in Torbay.

Global Geoparks come under the wing of UNESCO and are “single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development”. They provide a catalyst for unity and are not solely about geology. “While a geopark must demonstrate geological heritage of international significance, the purpose of a geopark is to explore, develop and celebrate the links between that geological heritage and all other aspects of the area’s natural, cultural and intangible heritages.”


Across Europe there are 64 geoparks. Globally there are 120 in 33 states. In the UK there are 7 – at Marble Arch Caves, Shetland, North West Highlands, North Pennines, the English Riviera, Forest Fawr (western Brecon Beacons) and GeoMon (Anglesey).

http://www.globalgeopark.org/

Global Geoparks have no legal status, so the designation does not affect planning decisions, but the badge is a prestigious one. When the Torbay English Riviera Geopark was proposed, the tourist board saw new opportunities for geotourism offering packages linking with other interests, e.g. Mussels by Moonlight (local food); the local council recognised the value of UNESCO status; and the private sector was keen to align with a badge of quality. The English Riviera is centred around three towns, not open countryside, and on account of that, its first application in 2004 was turned down, but at the second attempt succeed, becoming the first urban area geopark. Nick Powe has become a leading figure in the geopark movement and as Chair of the English Riviera Geopark Organisation, led the successful bid for the area to host the 7th International Global Geoparks Conference in Torquay in September 2016, which will attract an international audience and £1.6 million to the local economy.
Kent’s Cavern developed a business plan to:

- Create quality, innovative products for existing and new audiences
- Attract new visitors by aligning to the natural environment
- Focus on group business and added value products
- Identify with the geological heritage of the area

They offered:

- **Events in the caves**, including weddings, concerts, dinners, parties and themed evenings such as Halloween.
- **Specialist tours**, including ghost tours, bush craft, stone carving, receptions, corporate events and cream teas for shore visits from cruise ships.
- **Festivals**, including events in the Geopark Festival Week and a Shakespeare week in November, capturing a completely different audience, who follow actors and theatre on foot through the caves.
- **GeoActive** - activities aligned with other providers offering activities including kayaking the coast, cliff jumping, education visits and scientific trips, all focussing on the wider geology of the area, and all telling the same geological story.

Nick emphasises that he is not a geologist, but is able to convey the geological information in a simple way, of interest to the public, including through the use of cartoon methods. The focus is on just three major time periods, the Devonian, Permian and Quaternary. The area is the definitive (type) locality for the Devonian strata, with work by celebrated 19th century geologists, Murchison and Sedgwick. A simple but dramatic story is told, starting with land south of the equator, life in warm seas, continental collision and mountain building, deserts scorched in the Permian sun, continental drift to the north and finally the connection with Europe and the development and history of the caverns.

Focussing on geotourism has been the making of Kent’s Cavern’s business in the last decade and being part of a Global Geopark, for which the Cavern is one of the Gateway Visitor Centres, has added:

- local, national and international networking opportunities
- a united, coordinated package delivered by businesses and organisations across the area
- new funding options, including support from the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund and links with projects across Europe
- a catalyst for bringing other activities to the area, e.g. sports events
- a renewed interest in scientific research at the caves
- media interest and publicity

Nick Powe describes geotourism as a golden thread that creates a visitor experience connected to the Earth.

Websites: [http://www.kents-cavern.co.uk/](http://www.kents-cavern.co.uk/)  
**Session Two**

The mid-morning tea and coffee break was followed by five 10-minute presentations of case studies from around England, intended to provide an array of ideas for geotourism. Following this, all seven presenters formed a panel and took questions from the audience.

**Make it Digital – 3D visualisation of landscapes in deep time**

*Mike Brooks, smartphone app designer*

Mike runs a small business designing smartphone apps mostly for geotourism purposes, as well as for some cultural / heritage societies. His first geotourism project developed apps for each of the seventeen sections of the Geopark Way long distance trail, which highlights and explains the rocks and landscapes along a route from Bridgnorth, Shropshire to Gloucester cathedral. The trail explores 700 millions years of Earth history and the app provides interactive geological maps, annotated photographs, 3D cut-away images of the landscape, information on past environments and global context relevant to the rocks that can be seen at the user’s walking location at the time, as detected by GPS.

Digital technology is used to complement, rather than replace traditional printed guides and information panels, as these certainly still have their role to play for some locations and audiences. Unlike printed media, however, the apps allow interaction; additional ways of displaying information, including animations; and options to progress to deeper levels of detail or to link to live data from other sources. They are aimed at the general public, not at a professional audience. With that in mind, they convey the concept of deep time: the geological time scale is illustrated at the base of the app screens, and it is shown that if the 4.56 billion years of Earth history is scaled down to one year, then mankind arrived in just the last hours of New Year’s Eve.

A clear advantage of the apps is that the content can be updated online within hours, without the delay, cost and the potential waste generated when printed materials are replaced. The Geopark Way apps are illustrated with around 4000 photographs, which means that the terrain, landscape detail and associated geological interpretation can be viewed before visiting the area. Although this means that the some people may use the apps for educational purposes remotely, it also acts as an excellent advertisement for the area. There has been global interest in the Geopark Way apps, with almost 16,000 downloads in the two years since they were launched: for example, there were five downloads the day before the conference, including two from Japan and South America. The ability to track the quantity and location of downloads is another clear marketing asset of this digital technology.

The concept of using of GPS to locate the user and give local information can be utilised in many ways for tourism. Another of Mike’s apps uses crowd sourced information to tell the user where the daffodils are in bloom on the Daffodil Way in Gloucestershire, and even indicates where tea is currently being served. It then provides direct links to hospitality websites, such as those of local B&Bs.

Where GPS cannot be used, for example, in caves, small devices known as iBeacons (from Apple) can be emplaced. These will communicate with apps on smartphones (running on both iOS and Android devices) within a certain range (up to 100 metres), providing limited packets of information or instructions to an app. Beacons can broadcast information at set time interevals. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/iBeacon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/iBeacon) or [http://www.ibeacon.com/what-is-ibeacon-a-guide-to-beacons/](http://www.ibeacon.com/what-is-ibeacon-a-guide-to-beacons/)

The cost of bespoke app development can be high (£10,000 to £100,000) but models / templates are available much more cheaply (<£100 to £1000) and some are free of charge.

Website: [http://www.brooksdesigns.co.uk/](http://www.brooksdesigns.co.uk/)
The Black Country has also grown up, lived and worked in the area and is now a senior geologist at Natural England and Vice President of the Geologists’ Association.

In order to make the most of your geodiversity for tourism, Graham recommends:
• remembering that the overall offer is stronger than any individual asset
• knowing your audiences
• creating a destination – in this case, The Black Country Global Geopark
• identifying and promoting unique visitor experiences
• linking your geoactivities to the diverse hospitality offering of the area.

The Black Country has a strong track record of delivering projects that involve local people. Amongst them are:
• Wrosne – engaging young people from two deprived communities to protect the remarkable local rocks and tell the geological story through creating a sell-out theatrical performance in the underground limestone caverns. This was a project that re-focused and changed lives. See http://blog.stuartjamesphoto.com/wrosne-an-underground-experience-musical-performance-dudley-charity-project/
• Ripple Through Time – a project that vastly improved access at Wren’s Nest National Nature Reserve, interms of physical improvements, parking, themed trails relating to the geology, archaeology and wildlife, educational events and materials and community volunteer involvement. See http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/environment/countryside/nature-reserves/wrens-nest-nnrwrens-nest-nnr/ripples-through-time/
• Waves – an arts project involving six primary schools working with museum staff and artists to create geological ‘inspiration boxes’ and geoart, inspired by the fossils of Wren’s Nest and exhibited at the museum.
• Rhymes from the Rocks – a project that started with a group of local poets visiting the Dudley Rock
and Fossil Festival and local geosites, followed by public geo-poetry performances and further reach out to involve young people who created poetry about other geosites.

- William Smith Map Bicentenary Exhibition – the museum hosted the launch of a touring public exhibition displaying a pristine original copy of the first geological map in the world, first published by legendary geologist, William Smith in 1815.

Recently, new tourism infrastructure has been put in place, contributing to the preparation for the Black Country becoming a UNESCO global geopark. Geology is in theme running through all of this development. It includes:

- A new visitor hub and access road at Castle Hill in the heart of Dudley
- A new canal heritage centre
- Town centre trails with poetry
- New interpretation panels at geosites
- Rebranding and update of current literature about the area.

Marketing of the Black Country Geopark concept has been helped by promotion at the Black Country Festival and the International Festival of Glass held in Stourbridge, by a feature on the BBC Countryfile programme and by podcasts from History West Midlands. The geopark management team draws together a wide range of specialists who will weave geotourism into their current offering from biodiversity, cultural, industrial heritage, strategic planning and the visitor economy. The backing of the four local authorities is essential to the Geopark initiative and in turn, the local authorities benefit from the professional expertise of geologists from the Black Country Geological Society, the local group leading on geoconservation and public / non-formal geological education.

Graham’s recommendations for success are:

- Use what you have! The Black Country will never again have countryside, but it has wonderful fossils, underground mines, and some great stories. It is a large (>200km²), densely populated area with huge opportunities to link heritage with people.
- Look for unique combinations.
- Include hospitality.

Geotourism is a stable economic strand. The visitor economy in the Black Country already generates £880 million / year. If geotourism can add just 1% to that, it will bring in another £80 million.

Websites:  
http://www.blackcountrygeopark.org.uk/  
http://www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums/dudley-museum-art-gallery/
Walk Through Time
Guy Kerr, Community Coordinator, Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site

“The Jurassic Coast is a Walk Through Time. With its rocks and fossils we can uncover detailed stories from Earth’s ancient past. Through its landslides, cliffs and beaches we can learn about the natural processes that formed the coast and continue to shape the world today. The layers of sedimentary rock along the Jurassic Coast can be read like a book. They reveal the history of Earth across 185 million years and form a near complete record of the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. Exploring this immense story takes us on a walk through time across deserts, tropical seas, ancient forests and lush swamps, recorded in rock and laid out along the 95 mile stretch of coast between Exmouth in East Devon and Studland Bay in Dorset. It is a site of outstanding international importance for Earth Science. For this reason the Dorset and East Devon Coast – the Jurassic Coast – was designated as England’s first (and only) natural World Heritage Site in 2001.” See [http://jurassiccoast.org/about/what-is-the-jurassic-coast/](http://jurassiccoast.org/about/what-is-the-jurassic-coast/)

The key scientific feature of the Jurassic Coast is that it is the only place in the world where a third of the record of life, 185 million years in the story of evolution, can be seen in a continuous rocky exposure; the key marketing message of the Jurassic Coast is that this can be explored as a ‘Walk Through Time’. Both statements are true because the stacked stratigraphy has been tilted by powerful Earth movements in our geological past, so that a traverse of the coast from west to east, crosses all of the rocks from oldest to youngest. It is a landscape where geodiversity is built in.

Guy Kerr, as Community Coordinator employed by the Jurassic Coast Trust, the charitable arm of the World Heritage Site, is directly involved in conveying this message to the public. He is delivering an 18-month, Heritage Lottery Funded project called Growing the Jurassic Coast Community. This aims to recruit:

- 40 ambassadors – local people with a love and knowledge of the area, willing to speak about the Jurassic Coast in their community. Many also use their skills or expertise to devise activities to convey the ‘Walk Through Time’ message.
- 40 business partners – willing to provide business expertise and cash contributions.
- 200 volunteers – to assist with all types of project, working together and telling the same story.

The Ambassadors work to increase public engagement and to educate the people of the local area to love their own home place and connect with the overall story of the Jurassic Coast. They are people of diverse backgrounds and interests and have initiated many small, successful projects:

- A few Ambassadors work together to run events in towns or villages to help people learn more about the World Heritage Site and sometimes invite speakers from the Wildlife Trust to participate.
- A coastal walks leader and amateur fossil hunter gives talks to community groups and schools about responsible fossil hunting and using it as a good family activity.
- A Forest School teacher developed a Jurassic Coast themed game using Forest School techniques, which is used during the Fossil Festival and by other ambassadors.
- A young local science graduate takes childrens activities out to schools and visitor centres along the entire coast, and has even been invited as far as Hampshire. The activities include a sand-filled box in which children can dig for fossils.

The Ambassadors receive training during the winter months from experts, including geologists, so that they can talk with some knowledge to people at events during the summer season. See [http://jurassiccoast.org/get-involved/ambassadors/](http://jurassiccoast.org/get-involved/ambassadors/)

Many local businesses use the Jurassic Coast name for their own purposes in advertising. Acknowledging that this is acceptable, Guy visits them and invites them to become Business Partners. These fundraise or donate a minumum annual contribution based on turnover to the Jurassic Coast Trust and provide business expertise. In return they are listed on the Jurassic Coast website, can use the Business Partner logo and have access to the support of Jurassic Coast staff, Ambassadors and volunteers. Many develop their own events and business initiatives supporting the Jurassic Coast. For example:

- Wine has a most intrinsic link to geology in that local bedrock dictates the soil type which affects the taste of the wine. The Furleigh Estate winery near Bridport has added ‘Tyranosaurus Red’ wine to its
range and gives 10p per bottle sold to the Trust. Their popular Ammonite and Wine evenings include a tour of the winery, a meal and a talk on Jurassic Coast.

- **Jurassic Skyline** is a tower by the coast offering a good landscape vantage point. It was rebranded to this name, with mutual benefits for the business and the Trust. Last year the business ran a week of activities, including asking visitors what they love about the area and posting videos on their website.
- **City Cruises** offers guided tours by boat along the coast and back from Poole, with 2 geologists from the Jurassic Coast team on board giving commentary en route. By far the best way to see the geology is from the sea.
- **Highlands Ends Holiday Park** called on local primary schools to nominate a teacher to come to an event to be trained about the Jurassic Coast and gave a £300 grant for each school to spend in a supporting manner of their choice, e.g. for a geoart project, a bus trip, or to buy a fossil box.
- Some farms have run activity weeks and a B&B runs a Talk and Walk programme.


In summary, Guy says, "Geotourism has been of enormous benefit to our area. The Jurassic Coast is now a widely recognised brand, and even if people don’t fully understand the complex geology of the area, they are inspired to visit and learn more by the promises of fossils, dinosaurs and intriguing ancient landscapes."

Website: [http://jurassiccoast.org/](http://jurassiccoast.org/)
World Class Geology!
Tony Devos, Programme Manager, Limestone Landscapes Partnership

Limestone Landscapes was a multi-year project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Landscape Partnerships scheme. It delivered a range of sub-projects drawn together by their relationship with the Magnesian Limestone Plateau which fans out across an area from Darlington to the north-east coast, from South Shields to Hartlepool, or from the estuaries of the Tyne to the Tees. The underlying rock controls the landscape, and the interaction of people, plants and animals with the Magnesian Limestone has shaped that landscape in a unique and distinctive way. The project website explains:

“The underlying rocks have provided many generations with building materials, coal to sell and export, and lime to sweeten the land for agriculture. It also contains many fascinating geological features of national and international importance.

The unique conditions of the Magnesian Limestone support rich and unusual collections of plants and animals. The area holds two thirds of the UK’s Magnesian Limestone Grassland which is important on an international scale.

It has supported communities and industry over several millennia. In turn, these communities have shaped much of what is present in the landscape today. The amount and variety of evidence of occupation and activity provides an intriguing and highly visible record of the area’s social and economic history.”

Hence, Limestone Landscapes delivered projects relating to landscape, wildlife, geodiversity, historic and built heritage and cultural heritage, to conserve these things and “enable communities to learn about, enjoy and celebrate their local area.” See http://www.limestonelandscapes.info/Pages/unique.aspx.

The geodiversity projects started with a robust evidence base. The British Geological Survey helped with preparing an audit and action plan for the geological sites. The projects then aimed to:

- Conserve and restore geodiversity
- Increase access to and learning about geodiversity
- Increase community participation
- Develop training and skills

A range of innovative projects, some with geology as the main theme, and others where it complemented other topics, included:

- Kingdom of Quarries – cleaned and cleared scrub from some very overgrown but important rock faces, improved access, produced information leaflets and invited visits from schools and community groups. A white horse was repainted and some Magnesian Limestone sculptures were installed in one quarry. Miniatures of the sculptures were made and hidden around the quarry, so that if children found them, they could keep them. See http://www.limestonelandscapes.info/Pages/KingdomofQuarries.aspx
- Quarries Live! – highlighted fantastic geology and the economic importance of four active quarries. Viewing platforms with information boards were installed at the quarries, a set of downloadable booklets written and a series of school and community visits arranged. At a nearby primary school, a `Fish for Fossils’ bay was built, where children and tourists can search through fragments of rock (replenished from the quarry) for fossil fish from the famous Marl Slate. See http://www.limestonelandscapes.info/Pages/QuarriesLive.aspx
- Trails and Tribulations – worked with communities to research and establish five trails interpreting the rocks and the built environment, including a sensory rock trail in a park and others in the countryside, a city centre and by the coast. In Sunderland, the trail looks at how stone has been used in houses and includes a wonderful example of actively growing tufa that has been incorporated into the dock buildings as a feature. The trails also signpost visitors to yet more places to visit. See http://www.limestonelandscapes.info/Pages/TrailsandTribulations.aspx
- Village Atlases – involved the people of villages in researching how their place developed and what makes it special. People gathered memories, maps and archives, learned about archaeology,
architecture and landscapes, and linked these with the geology, streams and wildlife to provide a fuller understanding of how each settlement came to be. The project worked with six villages as they compiled their atlases, but there is now a target to do the same for every village by 2020; 40% of them have been completed so far.

See [http://www.limestonelandscapes.info/Pages/VillageAtlas.aspx](http://www.limestonelandscapes.info/Pages/VillageAtlas.aspx)

- Built on an Ancient Sea – is the title of a book that will describe the geology of the area and show how it is linked to local industry, culture and ecology. A readable, well-illustrated publication can increase access and learning about any area.
- Using experts – has benefitted all of the projects through the input of all kinds of specialists. Volunteers have benefitted from working alongside experts and at one location joint research is being carried out by an ecologist and a geologist studying the wild flowers growing on unique rocks.
- Changing messages – sums up the transformation of the area with regard to how people view their local geology. Old warning signs at accessible rock faces that said DANGER – FALLING ROCKS, now say DANGER! WORLD CLASS GEOLOGY! Rather than a blunt message implying that rocks are dangerous, the new boards provide challenging interpretation of the rocks with a proportionate warning to take care.

Tony says, “Since we have started promoting the geology of the local area, the increase in people understanding what they are living on and why it is special has changed significantly. Many of these individuals who have learnt – especially through the Village Atlas Projects – have made it their mission to conserve and restore not only the geological sites, but also the special wildlife sites that find their home on the Magnesian Limestone rocks”.

Website: [http://www.limestonelandscapes.info/Pages/HomePage.aspx](http://www.limestonelandscapes.info/Pages/HomePage.aspx)
Martley – the Geovillage model
John Nicklin, Teme Valley Geological Society

Martley is a small rural community of 1400 people, 8 miles north-west of Worcester. It has a Norman church, a shop, two pubs, a village hall, a sports club, a well-maintained network of public footpaths, a range of active local societies, a primary school and an excellent secondary school, next door to “the finest B&B in Worcestershire”, owned by the speaker, John Nicklin!

The village occupies a beautiful setting with the Malvern Hills to the south and the Cotswolds on the distant skyline to the east with the Severn plain in between. A ridgeline of limestone runs through the parish, affording views west to the Welsh and Shropshire hills.

As good as this looks and sounds, Martley, which is mainly a dormitory village with local industry dominated by mixed farming, is considered by the European Union to be an area of rural deprivation because:

- rural broadband is poor to non-existent
- the main towns and public transport routes are distant
- local work provides a low income and few opportunities
- shops and pubs struggle
- there are no affordable homes (the cheapest new house is on the market for £300,000).

These points mean that most young people move out. Martley had become a pleasant place for commuters and the older generation to live, but there was nothing to drive the community forward, until in 2010, an asset, which had been in plain sight all around, was discovered, and is now transforming the lives of John and many others in the area.

Just south of the village centre, an old pit at the edge of a field exposes a small bit of ancient Malvern rock, known as Martley Rock, several miles north of the main Malvern Hills ridge. Exploration revealed that there is a major fault zone and five geological time periods in just that one field! Across the whole parish, there are eight geological time periods. Martley has geology in spadefulls, telling the story of moving plates, volcanoes, mountains, deserts, flash floods, oceans and glaciers.

As they comprehended and were enthused by the rarity of their situation, the local community considered how they could make the most of their discovery. They:

- Took technical advice from geologists, mostly from the county geoconservation organisation.
- Constituted as Teme Valley Geological Society (TVGS) and opened a bank account.
- Obtained European funding through the LEADER scheme, which was pleased to support such an unusual application (not the usual request to repair a village hall).
- Surveyed the area and produced a detailed guide book for local people to understand their local rocks and landscape.
- Continued a programme of annual trenching (after the crops are cleared) in Martley Rock field, which has led to scientific study and published papers.
- Developed marked trails around the parish with information boards and a geo-information point with free leaflets in the village centre.
- Worked on building their Society with varied activities and a monthly geological lecture programme. They now have 85 members, over 300 contacts and attract prestigious speakers, as well as giving an audience to local young people who are invited to return and share their experiences geological.

The activities of TVGS have more than fulfilled the requirements of their European funding. They have demonstrated:

- Rural regeneration, including a marked increase in visitor numbers. Over 600 visitors signed the book at Martley Rock in 2015, including six groups of 15-20 people, all spending money locally.
- An increase in community cohesion, including good links with landowners and combating rural isolation.
- An expansion of education for people both young and old, as TVGS reaches out and works with schools and U3A and Ramblers groups.
The value and engagement of older people, involved in running the Society and using their experience for its benefit. Most are not geologists but have many skills between them.

Opportunities to improve health and well-being through outdoor activities related to Martley’s marked trails.

The members of TVGS like to think ‘out of the box’ and other activities in the last year or two have included:

- Working with the Teme Valley Brewery to produce Martley Rock Ale, which they launched at a Three Pubs Challenge walk, taking in key geological sites, including, of course, Martley Rock.
- Craft shows with geologically inspired crafts.
- A rock cake competition.
- A geo-photo competition.
- Offering geologically themed guided walks for Ramblers groups.
- Production of a press pack which succeeded in getting media attention and spreading the word about Martley’s assets more widely.

The most ambitious of TVGS’s projects has been developing for a few years and still has much further to go. Martley has made a European connection; links have been made with other geologically rich villages in several countries to develop the Geo-movillage concept.

A geovillage is a community with significant local geology developed as a key visitor attraction and with local producers as part of the marketing mix. The main aim is to develop a self-sustaining community asset that will build the local economy. Using geology as the vehicle, visitors can enjoy local produce, hands-on sessions at local craft workshops, farm suppers, history and archaeological tours, and so on, all benefitting local business. The current participants are working towards a trans-European network of communities, working on the same criteria, with a shared portal linking to and promoting their individual websites.

The essential elements for success are:

- Quality geological assets
- Access to technical support from geologists
- An enthusiastic, self-starting group of local people to drive the initiative – they do not have to be geologists
- Wider community commitment and ownership
- The ability to hold and seek funds via a properly constituted group
- A good marketing plan
- Ongoing strategic thinking and planning.

Martley is truly making the most of its assets. John comments on the difference this has made thus, “There has been a leap in our community’s awareness of geology and a growing influx of visitors to see our sites. In turn this is benefitting our service outlets such as the B&Bs, shop, pubs and their restaurants. The geological initiative has cut across the bounds of different interest groups and formed a new reason to live in and be active in the area”.

Website: [http://www.geo-village.eu/](http://www.geo-village.eu/)

![Image of Martley Rock and fields]
Question and Answer Panel

Questions focused on the economic costs and benefits of the case studies described, businesses involvement and job opportunities. They key points from this discussion are included in the FEEDBACK, OBSERVATIONS, and RECOMMENDATIONS section at the end of this report.
Session Three
The afternoon session followed an ample lunch break during which delegates toured an exhibition area adjacent to the main conference hall. Each of the speakers and half a dozen other local organisations had a stand with illustrations and products from their projects/initiatives/businesses. Delegates made good use of the opportunity to collect literature and ask questions of the speakers and other exhibitors. See the Conference Programme, Appendix 3, for the list of exhibitors.

The session was introduced by Rhodri Thomas of the Peak District National Park Authority, which provided funding for the conference. He outlined the reasons for this support from the National Park and then introduced a short presentation from Albert Benghiat of the East Midlands Geological Society, on a proposal for a Peak District Geopark. The afternoon ended with group discussions, inviting input from the delegates.

Rhodri Thomas, Peak District National Park Authority
Geology underpins everything that National Parks are about, yet it remains the ‘Cinderalla’ subject, so the Peak District National Park Authority is please to be doing something practical to bring it to the fore.

The Environment Act 1995 revised the original legislation on National Parks and set out two statutory purposes for national parks in England and Wales:
- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.
- Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public.

When national parks carry out these purposes they also have the statutory duty to:
- Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the national parks.

http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/learningabout/whatisanationalpark/aimsandpurposesofnationalparks

Plans for a Peak District Geopark
Albert Benghiat, East Midlands Geological Society

The Peak District, a large and beautiful area of countryside in central England, flanked by towns and cities, is the location of work, learning, recreation or relaxation for many thousands of people, and also home for some. From a tourism perspective, it ‘has it all’ - a wealth of assets, from pre-historical sites to the modern economy, cultural and industrial heritage, wildlife and agriculture, and the strikingly contrasting landscapes of the White and Dark Peak – all of which is underpinned by the geology.

The Peak District became the birthplace of geotourism, when in 1678, a book called Wonders of the Peak was published. There have been visitors to the area ever since, particularly since it has been recognised as a National Park, and some sites have crowds arriving in summer and at weekends. If the Peak District already has so many visitors, does it really need to be a Geopark too?

Visit England research shows that:
- Only 6% of the day visitors to the UK visit the East Midlands.
- They spend only 5% of the national tourism expenditure (about £10 per visitor).
- Overnight stays amount to 7% of the national total (compared with 22% in the South West).
- Overseas visitor numbers are worse - just 3% of the total and only 2% of visitors from the USA.

Clearly, the area COULD do better. Although the Peak District ‘has it all’, there is no focal point. It is not easy to construct a day out, visitor experiences are not well-connected with few packaged itineraries. There are many stories to be told in the Peak District, and a Geopark could be used to connect them, making the whole greater than the sum of the parts.

Renewed interest in geotourism in the Peak District has already led to:
- This conference.
- Work to complete a Local Geodiversity Action Plan (LGAP), which sets out the actions needed to conserve and enhance the geodiversity of the area.
• A proposal to establish a Peak District Geopark, the boundary of which would extend just beyond the National Park (see map in Appendix 12).
• Development of a new 130 mile Peak District Geotrail which will visit many geological highlights.

The East Midlands Geological Society has, over the last year, sponsored a Peak District Geopark Feasibility Study, from which a Propsectus has just been published and will be consulted upon. More than 30 organisations are supporting the proposal, which will be presented to the Peak District Local Nature Partnership in December 2015. If the concept is accepted, a Geopark could be launched in April 2016 and seek UNESCO accreditation in 2018.
**Group discussion**
With these inspiring points to add to the ideas conveyed by the morning speakers, all of the conference delegates, speakers and organisers split into six groups to discuss geotourism in the Peak District. They addressed five questions:

1. **What could geotourism do for your business or town / village and what could a geopark add to that?**
2. **What modes of delivery would work best for you?**
3. **Who is missing today – what other types of business would benefit and how can we reach them?**
4. **How would you like to be involved in this initiative as it goes forward?**
5. **Is a conference such as this a good way of introducing geotourism?**

From these, arose a list of ways in which the tourism business and geologists could collaborate and contribute to a joint aim of developing local geotourism.

1. **What could geotourism do for your business or town / village and what could a geopark add to that?**

**VISITORS**
- Increase visitor numbers overall and the number of paying guests using accommodation.
- Bring in visitors mid-week or during the off-peak season (November - March), especially if reduced rates could be advertised then.
- Bring in more groups.
- Allow businesses to specialise by catering for geotourists.
- Bring ‘quality’ guests, keen to take care of the area, i.e. people interested in the environment.
- Promote awareness and understanding that will lead to increased responsibility in all visitors – even if this did not bring in more business, this improvement would be a real benefit.

**QUARRIES**
- Quarrying is viewed negatively in the Peak District but can be presented with a positive angle through geological stories linked to tourism. A link/connection can be made to the industrial, cultural and historical **heritage** of the Peak District.
- Minerals industries would have the opportunity to improve their image by encouraging visits by groups and individuals to the quarry overview platforms, by providing information about the usefulness of minerals to society, by informing visitors about the history of Peak District mining, by pointing out that quarries reveal geological sections which would not otherwise be visible (of use to education and science), and by providing career choice information to student visitors.

**COMMUNITIES**
- Geotourism could be a **catalyst** to encourage action for a common purpose for some local communities (both within & between communities), as well as for identifying funding sources. The Martley geovillage example suggests that a community could potentially expect a 20-year period of gradually increasing project development before it stabilises at a sustainable level.

**LOCATIONS and INTERPRETATION**
- Add an extra layer or dimension to interpretation information about the Peak District.
- Geology provides a link between other interests, e.g. landscape, plants, wildlife, archaeology, settlement, transport, industry, buildings and the character of a place.
- Geotourism could redistribute and widen the area of the visitor footfall by encouraging people to visit lesser-known places, even out to the Cheshire plain or the eastern boundary as far as the M1.
- Geology can be used to better connect different locations and businesses (this is sometimes difficult to achieve at present). Group bookings and coach tours are important for local businesses (larger numbers and more financially viable), so it would be good to develop a geological ‘highlights’ tour including short stops at geological viewpoints.
A GEOPARK COULD:
- Be a focal point for promoting the Peak District nationally and internationally.
- Provide a theme to connect many different interests, as geology underpins so many things.
- Facilitate mutual promotion for businesses (linking each to the rocks or landscape).
- Act as a focus for all kinds of different offers – a route to finding out what is happening and where.
- Connect centres. The Peak District does not have one centre rather, it has multiple centres (similar to the Jurassic Coast) – the Geopark could help better connect these.

*Note of caution* – a geopark should not be seen as a competitor against business, but as an enabler and supporter of business.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
- Communicate the offer clearly. It is important to provide the right experience for the right guests – they could be disappointed if they think they are coming to something else.
- Varied offers and delivery. No one size fits all, so businesses need to identify target audiences.
- Outdoor and indoor options. Not everyone comes to the Peak District for an outdoor experience (e.g. Chatsworth is a major attraction). It would be important to promote non-outdoor activities and offers, including museums.
- Sale of rocks, minerals and fossils. In Castleton area businesses rely on Blue John sales. UNESCO geoparks are prohibited from selling original geological material. This means that such businesses could not be one of the directors of the geopark, but it is recognised that such sales are both an essential part of business and reflect the heritage of some areas, such as Castleton.
- Would the possibility of adverse winter weather in the Peak District discouraging advance booking?
- Would self-catering accommodation need to be more flexible, offering short stay (1-2 night) options?
- Is infrastructure in the Peak District a barrier?

2. **What modes of delivery would work best for you?**

**WEBSITE/S**
- Websites are the most powerful tool. Information can be on a central website and those of businesses, all interlinking.
- Geopark could have its own website or use the Peak District National Park (PDNP) website.
- Businesses may help with setting up a website or links, but few would have time to be heavily involved in this.

**SYMBOL**
- A badge is needed for food, literature, accommodation, etc., to link and integrate the offering.
- The PDNP millstone logo is so well known that it could cause confusion to have another symbol – a geopark could adopt or incorporate it.

**PAPER**
- Leaflets still work – people like things to take away.

**PEOPLE**
- Helpful, informed staff at visitor attractions.
- Guided walks.
- Tourism agencies.
- Involve volunteers.
- Involve communities. It is important to help local people to feel involved, not imposed upon - beware of making communities feel as though new regulations are being introduced.

**APPS, BEACONs, SOCIAL MEDIA**
- Apps are especially good for children and young people.
• Beware of app overload and do not ‘reinvent the wheel’. The PDNP already has an app – could geotourism be integrated into it?
• iBeacons and QR codes are suitable for some locations.
• Social media, including Facebook.
• An email address or means of asking for more information.
• A shared (internal) email contact list of people / businesses involved would be useful.

MARKETING and CONNECTIONS
• Marketing in the Peak District is good, given the resources available, but needs more funding to promote landscape and activities.
• Articles in countryside-themed printed magazines with national distribution.
• Publications and information dissemination directed at the ‘active ageing’ population who seek interest-themed excursions and are not restricted to work or school term schedules. For example – the U3A network, which is national and even international in scope (noting that the Peak District currently receives very few foreign visitors).
• Geopark status for the Peak District could give wider networking and publicity opportunities through the European and global geoparks network.
• Developing destination management – providing links and ideas for people, leading them from one place to another.
• An audit to compile and interconnect all the information provided.

CONFERENCES
• Another day conference led by or linked to Visit Peak District & Derbyshire.
• Half-day update / themed conferences, lasting from 10am – 1pm with no lunch break would suit many small businesses.

3. Who is missing today – what other types of business would benefit and how can we reach them?

NB. Conference delegates may have been unaware that some of these organisations were present or had been involved or informed about the conference, but were unable to attend on the day. The suggestions are all shown as they do provide a comprehensive list of organisations to contact in the future.

• Big hoteliers – e.g. those in Dovedale, although there are very few big / chain hotels in the Peak District; it is harder to reach all the small establishments.
• YHA.
• Quarrying companies.
• Wildlife Trust.
• National Trust.
• Buxton Water (Nestle).
• Retail outlets & manufacturers of local products.
• Education providers, including schools.
• Activity centres for outdoor pursuits.
• Climbers, cavers and ramblers groups.
• Natural history societies.
• Local authorities, including Derbyshire Dales & High Peak areas.
• Countryside management staff, including Natural England.
• Visit Peak District & Derbyshire.
• Independent stately homes, e.g. Haddon Hall, Chatsworth House.
  Chatsworth House – is the most famous and busiest tourist attraction in the Peak District, so it is a key organisation to have involved.
OTHER COMMENTS

- Even if there is not a geopark, all these organisations would benefit from knowing more about geology and from geotourism. Information could be delivered via the PDNP website and must be linked to landscape and other interests e.g. archaeology.
- Schools can help as a link to communities.
- Education initiatives work quite well already, but could expand to include geology. Information provided for schools needs to be simple and not over-complicated.

4. How would you like to be involved in this initiative as it goes forward?

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

- Build a database of contacts.
- Maintain group communication via email circulars.
- Recruit volunteers with specific skills.
- Survey local businesses and stakeholder interest and invite them to assist.
- Consult and engage communities.

INDIVIDUAL OFFERS or INTERESTS

- Chris Darmon - offered a day workshop (indoor and outdoor sessions) on Peak District geology for tourism practitioners early in 2016. This was scheduled soon after the conference to run in February 2016 and was booked up within days.
- Self-catering accommodation provider - offered the use of property for Chris Darmon’s workshops.
- Activity provider - would like to develop and promote walking routes, e.g. single or multi-day walks near the Roaches, helping to promote the proposed 130 mile geotrail, devising circular walks from points on the geotrail. An additional point was made regarding coordinating transport – who would check availability and find the right companies and drivers to contact?
- Ecotourism student – complete a university research project.
- Helping with a village atlases project.

5. Is a conference such as this a good way of introducing geotourism?

Delegates unanimously agreed that the conference was a very good way to introduce and promote geotourism. There has been no forum previously in which to discuss this issue in the Peak District. Further suggestions from this discussion are included in the FEEDBACK, OBSERVATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS section at the end of this report.
What do you (tourism businesses) want from geologists?

- Training to better understand geology and its potential - widely considered to be critical and wanted.
- Involvement in the development of the Geopark – early and on-going consultation.
- Help in raising understanding of the value and relevance of geology to different communities, groups, organisations and politicians (there are a lot of community groups in the Peak District).
- Establish a Peak District GeoFest and link it to other Peak District Festivals (e.g. Buxton Festival).
- Tourism needs stories and short, immediate and engaging activities.

What can you (tourism businesses) bring to geologists?

- Help to present and pitch geology to different audiences. ‘Geology’ (the word in particular) is considered boring – tourism needs short, immediate and engaging messages. A non-technical approach is really important.
- Market research – help to better understand what is the driver for people visiting the Peak District – what people want (and don’t like) and why.

A panel from the new Geotourism brochure. Delegates took home a bundle each to use with tourists over the coming months.
FEEDBACK, OBSERVATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Conference delegates asked questions and gave suggestions during the morning panel session, over lunch and during the afternoon discussion. A new email address PDgeotourism@gmail.com was provided on the conference programme and on the new geotourism brochure for future comments. The speakers were happy to respond to questions and shared their own observations of the day. The planning group and local keynote speaker, Chris Darmon, met a few weeks after the conference for a review session.

FEEDBACK

Was it worth holding this geotourism conference in the Peak District and how could it have been better?

Delegates unanimously agreed that the conference was a very good way to introduce and promote geotourism. There has been no forum previously in which to discuss this issue in the Peak District.

Suggestions / comments to guide future event-planning included:

- Repeat the full conference in a couple of years.
- Business owners may prefer a morning only session from 10am – 1pm, with no lunch but a tea and biscuit break mid-morning.
- Visit Peak District & Derbyshire may not be the best means by which to reach a wider interest audience, and is certainly not the only place to advertise a conference.
- The event may have attracted a larger audience if more detailed information, e.g. the draft geopark prospectus, had been circulated in advance so that there was better appreciation of what was being presented and why.
- The content of the conference was just right and presented in the right order.
- There is enthusiasm for future follow up sessions and training, and information about progress with the Geopark.

OBSERVATIONS

Planning Group Review

- All of the speakers gave excellent presentations, perfectly suited to the event and leading on from one another.
- The speakers and exhibitors enjoyed the event, meeting delegates and networking with one another. It gave their projects / businesses exposure to a new audience and they all felt it served a useful purpose for the Peak District.
- The venue was good (ample facilities and a central geographical location) and it appears that the right price for conference attendance was charged (£25, compared with £30 for the Visit Peak District & Derbyshire annual conference).
- The event was very well-received by the tourism practitioners who attended. They came from a broad range of business / work backgrounds (see Introduction) but were also attracted to the conference by a range of personal interests, including ecology, archaeology, geology, hiking, local history and voluntary efforts as a parish clerk.
- Key organisations / businesses / interest groups were missing, despite the Visit Peak District & Derbyshire e-bulletins to a contact list of 4000 recipients. Barriers may have included - the conference being the first of its kind; on a subject perceived to be of fringe interest; organised in the space of 6 months; and running in addition to the annual Visit Peak District & Derbyshire conference. Promotion included – three e-bulletins (the first with a poster introducing geotourism as a concept to be developed for economic benefit in the Peak District; the last flagging up the exceptional speakers presenting ideas from across the country – Appendices 1 & 2); individual emails to some of the major tourism attractions; and personal invitations from the planning committee members. Two of the famous caverns were represented at the conference, but none of the stateley homes.
• **Attendance may have been improved by** - highlighting the significance of the Geopark proposal; a broader range of advertising outlets; personal visits to the major tourism attractions; and possibly, allowing a longer lead-in time, although this was not mentioned as an issue by the delagates, but would have allowed the planning group more time to make personal visits. It is anticipated that now the conference has happened once, future events in the Peak District will benefit from word-of-mouth support and that repetition will lead to increased awareness.

• **Discussion participation was good.** An interesting range of ideas and points for consideration were raised and there is scope to seek more input like this from the tourism industry.

• It is important for there to be **follow-up activities**. Chris Darmon’s offer at the conference of a February 2016 training day to include indoor and outdoor sessions, was booked up within two weeks. The new geotourism brochure will be used by the delegates with visitors over the coming months and they can request more copies when needed. Ongoing communication and short conferences / training / discussion events for the tourism industry should be planned.

• **The Geopark initiative, its promotion, evidence-gathering and application process has been helped.** The conference was the first broad public announcement of the Peak District Geopark proposals and allowed the concept to reach some new audiences. This report of the conference can be used as a discussion document supporting the geopark prospectus as Geopark supporters go out to speak to more organisations and businesses, including the major tourism attractions.

• During the morning Question & Answer panel session and afternoon discussions, questions from delegates related to **economics, business interests and job opportunities**, the very first question being, “What have proved to be the financial costs compared with benefits in other Geoparks?”. The speakers were able to give good examples of profitable cost-benefits ratios, and respond to questions about the cost of developing apps, job opportunities in geotourism and the involvement of museums in other Geoparks. It will be important for a Peak District Geopark to confirm that UNESCO rules on the sale of original geological material will NOT prohibit businesses, particularly in Castleton, from selling the mineral Blue John.

The review meeting held by the planning group was in itself a useful spin-off from the conference. The planning group members had been discussion group facilitators at the conference and the whole conference planning experience had stimulated amongst them a lot more analysis of issues specific to the Peak District. The review discussion considered visitor trends, ways to extend the tourism season, the dearth of printed publications interpreting the local landscape, ways of infiltrating geology into other interests, the pros and cons of various delivery media, businesses and organisations to target, relationships with large organisations such as the National Trust and local government, future event ideas, alternative ways to advertise events and the location of visitor centres.

Since the conference, the group had already had a request from a B&B for the geotourism brochure in electronic format, and interest shown in future events. The group will seek feedback on the brochure in late Spring 2016, after it has been used over Easter and the May bank holidays.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Would it be worth holding such a conference elsewhere and what should be considered?**

YES, but it needs:

• A location with good geology.

• A groundswell of local enthusiasts to take it forward.

• Some tourism industry to be established. For example, it may be harder to raise interest in places such as Charnwood (in the shadow of the Peak District and Sherwood) and Abberley (in the shadow of the Malverns Hills and Church Stretton) but it may be possible in the Lleyn Peninsula (even though in the shadow of Snowdonia.)

• Preferably, ‘buy-in’ from a Local Authority, National Park or AONB.
The following should be borne in mind:

**Organisation:** keep it locally owned. This makes it easier for the planning group to meet, utilises their local knowledge, makes follow up events more likely and avoids delegates feeling that anything is being imposed from outside.

**Logistics:** choose the best season, day, time, location and venue for the event, all planned around the people that you want to attend (see advice in the Introduction of this report from Visit Peak District & Derbyshire). The venue needs to look professional, but not raise conference fees to the point of scaring off newcomers to geotourism who are as yet more curious than committed to the concept. The more speakers you invite, the more difficult it is to set a date. The shorter the lead-in time, the harder it is to find a venue.

**Funding:** depending upon the venue chosen, the conference costs could be covered by the delegate fees, but if this would take the fee above a desirable limit, then contributions from local organisations is needed.

**Marketing:** think broadly about the desired audience and how to reach them. Wide-reaching publicity is necessary but remember that personal invitations work best, especially with big organisations / businesses and when the concept of geotourism is new. Allow sufficient time to make these contacts.

**Language and Content:** remember at all times that the audience are NOT geologists, but they ARE specialists in communicating with the public. This is an event at which to talk more about rocks, minerals, fossils and landscapes than –ologies. Brief the speakers clearly about the audience, the aim of the conference and the content that you expect in their presentations.

**Participants:** choose good speakers, with an understanding of business - they do not all have to be geologists! Be aware that there may be some misunderstanding from geologists until they realise that the conference is not for them, and that the vocabulary and delivery of the conference will be tailored for the tourism industry.

**Involvement:** include plenty of networking and discussion time. Give delegates ample opportunity to ask questions. Use the opportunity to seek the ideas and advice of the delegates, rather than just conveying information to them.

**Economics:** as well as giving inspiration about rocks and landscape and ideas for geotourism, a conference such as this must address or be prepared to answer the economic questions that delegates will raise. Do not be afraid of these questions - all of the Peak District speakers were able to give very positive cost-benefit examples.

**Follow up:** a good conference will whet the appetite of delegates for more. Be prepared to follow it with ongoing communication and additional events, or provide ways in which delegates can find out more for themselves. Give them something useful to take away with them and have a way for people to follow up and contact you afterwards.