

Australian Geoparks Network Newsletter No. 7 April 2023



News about Geoparks, Geotourism, Geotrails and Geoheritage

FROM THE CHAIR



This is our first newsletter for 2023 and as always, lots is happening in the world of geoparks, geotourism, geotrails and geoheritage.

We begin by reporting on the four geopark projects in Western Australia. *Karen Morrissey*, Chair, **Murchison GeoRegion** Project Working Group, reports that they have recently welcomed a new Project Officer who comes to the position with a strong background valuable to geotourism, having lived and worked across regional and remote Western Australia. Read more in Karen's update.

The **Binjareb-Peel Geopark** Working Group has been gaining momentum locally under the leadership of local champions *Base & Jamie Jones*. The Peel Development Commission (PDC) & Geoparks Western Australia are currently working together to develop a drive geotrail in the region. A story about the trail was published in the PDC's *Peel Magazine* in its Spring/Summer 2022 Edition Volume 8.2 and is reproduced in the newsletter.

The **Nannup Geopark** is extremely active under the enthusiastic leadership of local businessman *Mark White* and his local group of champions and they are making a great start towards their goal of ultimately becoming a UNESCO Global Geopark. The group has established as an Incorporated body, has drawn up a logo, designed an app, and are working on a concept plan for a static display. Here we illustrate the Structure Plan and Static Display Concept.

AGN Board Member *Caroline Buck* from the **City of Wanneroo** reports that the city is developing the *Yaberoo Budjara Trail*, a 28 km guided walk trail which will ultimately form part of their geo-activities in their proposed geopark.

Under the active leadership of *Alan Briggs*, **Geoparks Western Australia** has recently been in the news and is currently investigating the feasibility of establishing a Drive Geotrail from Fremantle (mouth of the Swan River) to Kalbarri (mouth of the Murchison River). This is being supported by the working with the Mid West Development Commission. The proposed geotrail will focus on selected stopover places and provide information by sign and QR codes additional to that already available.

Mike Cleeland reports on the **Bass Coast Dinosaur Trail** which is currently being developed in Victoria. An 'Experience Framework' has been drawn up for the Bass Coast Council to allow visitors to experience the dinosaur fossils.

Pat James from South Australia provides a comprehensive account of his tour of Europe last year visiting his old geological haunts and new geoparks. It makes a great read!

In New Zealand the **Waitaki Whitestone Geopark** is getting excited as they move towards the final step of achieving the designation of UNESCO Global Geopark. This should occur next month. Together with my wife *Wendy Dowling*, AGN Secretary, we spent a couple of days in the geopark last month meeting with *Lisa Heinz*, Manager and a couple of the Trustees. We were also fortunate to be taken around the park by one of the pioneers, *Mike Gray*, a world class tour guide. Whilst there I gave a public talk on Geotourism and Geoparks.

We also feature the **Geopark Management Toolkit** which was drawn to our attention by *Jamie Van Jones*, a champion of the Binjareb-Peel Geopark Project and Board Member of Geoparks Western Australia. This is an incredibly useful resource.

Another useful publication is **Geoscience in Action: Advancing Sustainable Development** produced by UNESCO and the American Geophysical Union. The report is a call to action advocating for the important role that geoscience can play in efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Thanks to AGN Board Member *Mark Asendorf* for drawing this to our attention.

Our **Featured Member** is *Ian Lewis*. One of the pioneers of geoscience, geoheritage, geotourism and geotrails in this country, he was a Manager of the original Kanawinka Global Geopark. Today he is a hydrogeologist with the Groundwater Team in the South Australian Department for Environment and Water, and is currently completing his PhD on Geoheritage, Geotrails and Geotourism of South Australia. Ian is a Founding Board Member of the Australian Geoparks Network.

Our **Featured UNESCO Global Geopark** is Gunung Sewu UNESCO Global Geopark in Indonesia. Located in East Java it is a classic tropical karst landscape.

The park is managed by **Budi Martono**, a Foundation Member of the AGN International Advisory Board.

We draw your attention to an **International Intensive Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks** being held from 13-23 June at Lesvos Island UNESCO Global Geopark, Greece. It is also offered in an online format for those who are not able to attend the course in person.

In our **Conferences Section** we highlight the **10th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks** being held in Marrakesh, Morocco from 5-10 September 2023. It is the first Arab and African country to host such event. We note that Marrakesh has just been named as the second best place (out of 23) to travel to in 2023 by the US business magazine *Forbes*.

In summary, there is much happening in the world of geoparks and this is reflected in Australia. The AGN encourages members and anyone else interested to keep in touch with us so we can advocate on your behalf to promote geoparks and their benefits in your region. We love geoparks!



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AGN BOARD UPDATE

At a recent Board Meeting, the topic of the use of the term ‘Pre-Aspiring’ was raised as certain people prefer this term when referring to aspiring geoparks in Australia. So we checked with Dr Kristof Vandenberghe, Secretary of the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme, UNESCO, about the correct use of Geopark Terminology. His response is that the correct terms are:

1. National Geopark
2. Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark (normally through a letter of intent to UNESCO)
3. UNESCO Global Geopark.

The term ‘Pre-Aspiring’ is not part of UNESCO’s Geoparks lexicon, although of course any country has the right to introduce their own terms which he says ‘is something that falls under national authority and is internal business’. The Australian Geoparks Network does **not** use the term ‘Pre-Aspiring’ but we will now change the use of the term ‘Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark’ to simply ‘Geopark Project’. This is so we do not have two levels of terms for geoparks including the word ‘aspiring’.

On another matter, we understand that the Geoscience Working Group (GWG), comprising the heads of all of Australia's government geoscience organisations, has recently determined **not** to support the re-introduction of geoparks in Australia. There are a number of reasons for this of which the AGN is well aware.

My own person view it that the decision is very short-sighted as the original reason why geoparks were established was to put a spot light on both geology's *heritage*, that is, conserving what is significant through geoheritage, as well as its *resources*, which contribute to commercial and industrial use, aesthetic value, scientific interest, and cultural value. The fact that there are mines operating in a number of geoparks is testament to the educative role that geoparks play in relation to fostering greater awareness and understanding of the resources industry.

Our response to this situation is that we (the AGN and Geoparks WA) will simply keep up our mantra of advocating for the re-introduction of geoparks into Australia. We will do this through raising community support and by informing and educating both State and Commonwealth Governments on the power of geoparks to raise public awareness of the role that geology and the earth has to play in bringing about a better future for all Australians.

Geotrails and georegions will most likely get their support, but it will only be a matter of time before the GWG realises that geoparks have a huge role to play in raising a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, the geological resources which underpin the economy and well being of our country.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S GEOPARK PROJECTS

The Murchison GeoRegion

Karen Morrissey, Chair, Murchison GeoRegion Project Working Group, reports that they have recently welcomed Allison (Alli) Taylor as their new Project Officer. Alli comes to the position with a strong background valuable to geotourism, having lived and worked across regional and remote Western Australia in the areas of education, health, business and more recently, tourism. Alli understands the complexities and requirements to progress the Murchison GeoRegion, having worked in towns and Aboriginal Communities, including cross border negotiations with South Australian and Northern Territory departments and organizations. Alli is resident within the Murchison GeoRegion at Sandstone and is well placed to lead community and stakeholder engagement as the Murchison GeoRegion moves towards an independent incorporated body. A Project Working Group meeting is proposed for April.



Karen Morrissey OAM speaking at the launch of the Murchison GeoRegion on 20 September 2018. The georegion, Australia's first, has been operating for almost five years!

Binjareb-Peel Geopark Project

The Binjareb-Peel Aspiring Geopark has been gaining momentum locally under the leadership of Sebastian (Base) Jones, a geologist and co-owner of Salt and Bush Eco Tours (<https://saltandbush.com.au>). Working together with his wife Jamie, currently Australia's top Tour Guide, they are working hard to establish a geopark in the Peel Region. In the AGN Newsletter No. 5 we shared an article about the establishment of the geopark which was printed in the 'Peel', the Peel Development Commission's Newsletter (Vol. 8.1 Autumn / Winter, 2022).

Recently the Peel Development Commission (PDC) agreed to support Geoparks Western Australia in the development of a geotrail in the region. It is being developed by Sebastian and Jamie Jones along with Dr Alan Briggs, President, Geoparks WA and AGN Deputy Chair. A story about the trail was published in the PDC's *Peel Magazine* in its Spring/Summer 2022 Edition Volume 8.2. This is reproduced below.

177 UNESCO
Global Geoparks
across 48 countries

A Peel drive geotrail in the making



WORDS | Alan Briggs, Sebastian Jones
IMAGES | Salt and Bush Eco Tours

As part of the Peel Development Commission's goal of broadening the region's economic base and creating a diverse network of adventures to attract visitors and extend their stay, Geoparks Western Australia and the Australian Geoparks Network continue to work closely with the Commission, the Binjareb community, Visit Mandurah, and local businesses to promote and establish a geopark in the Peel region.

Since our last update on the Peel Aspiring Geopark, eight UNESCO Global Geoparks were established, bringing the total to 177 across 48 countries. The world understands geoparks and the good they can bring in terms of business growth, employment, community benefits and environmental sustainability.

A forerunner to establishing a geopark is to identify the geoheritage of an area (geosites) and to develop a geotrail that links these sites to better inform our community about the geology of the place. It is through education about these sites that we can conserve them.

Recently, the Commission agreed to support Geoparks WA in the development of a geotrail in the region, and local business Salt and Bush Eco Tours developed a report identifying likely geosites which might be incorporated into the drive geotrail.

GEOPARKS

Primarily geological areas which have unique or interesting features.
(Source: www.australiangeoparksnetwork.org)

Collectively, we will work with the UWA McCusker Centre to engage a student to research the geology and cultural association of the sites along the trail and design educational materials to interpret the sites. The material will include QR codes to enable visitors to access further information on the Australian Geoparks Network website.

We anticipate that the Drive Geotrail will be developed and in operation next year as a first, tangible step towards creating a geopark.

Establishing a geopark will place a national and international spotlight on the many attractions in the Peel region.

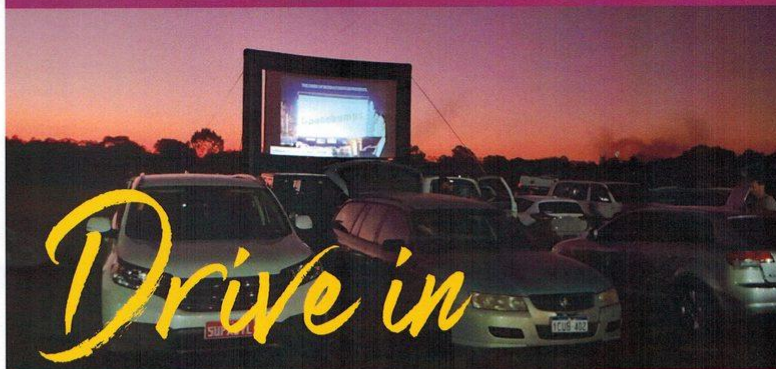
A visit to UNESCO Global Geoparks in Canada

In May this year, working group member Sebastian Jones of Salt and Bush Eco Tours visited UNESCO Global Geoparks in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

During his visit, Sebastian attended the first professional excursion of the newly established UNESCO Global Geopark at the Cliffs of Fundy. The three-day excursion included visits to key geological sites and discussions with the Cliffs of Fundy Geopark's founders and management. Key insights from this visit included: knowledge about science communication of internationally significant geological sites, funding strategies for geoparks, challenges with geopark establishment, and the necessity for cultural and community consultation. Overall, the field trip provided valuable opportunities for connections and learning.

Sebastian also visited several sites in the Stonehammer Global Geopark and the UNESCO World Heritage Site Joggins Fossil Cliffs. Geotourism is well established in this part of Canada and brings together educators, eco-tourism operators, accommodation providers, food producers, local governments, passionate locals, and academics to celebrate the rich geological heritage of the Bay of Fundy and the incredible geological story it tells.

Sebastian is now back in the Peel region and continues working towards gaining international recognition for the Peel region's landscape and environment. 



WORDS | Cr David Bolt, Shire President

IMAGE | Shire of Murray

The last few weeks have shown how important it is for communities to come together.

At probably the grandest event of the century so far, the global population found solace, together, at the solemn spectacle of Queen Elizabeth the Second's funeral. For a time, populations around the world were connected more by what they had in common than by what divided them. In London, the act of just coming together, of making connections with people not previously known, even just by sharing some time in a queue to see the lying-in-state, linked people from different backgrounds, histories and social situations. I don't doubt it brought comfort, new friendships, joy even, to those who took part, and good things blossomed from what was otherwise a sober event.

At a local level, it is much easier to find these opportunities.


In October the Shire of Murray organised a sell-out drive-in movie event, probably for the first time, in Pinjarra. People of all different walks of life came together to enjoy a communal event, and it sparked moments of community connection that had real value, even from something as seemingly inconsequential as a drive-in. Just by being there, by sharing the space with others, we felt connected through that common denominator. And it was a joy to see.

Children who'd never been to a drive-in before, who may not have even known they existed, were regaled with stories and memories of the relatives who'd done it all in the 60s and 70s.

The screen, the speakers, the popcorn, the novelty of watching a film from your car, sparked recollections and yarns across the park. I was asked about my first drive-in experience (The Sound of Music and Born Free!), and the event lit memories I've not thought about in a long time; I recalled that my first date with my now wife was at a drive-in (quite a bold choice given the choice of film-Alien!); for a lot of people the drive-in was the only way you could see colour movies in Australia. For many it was their first memory of seeing moving pictures in colour; and who else remembers the old Sandman panel van which would open up at the back and act as the perfect seating option!

These types of memories were being repeated throughout the evening, and you could almost see the connections forming as people who were together only for a drive-in, told each other their stories and recollections. It's what makes a community.

These things don't just happen. The event, which was the result of some funding from the Western Australia Primary Health Alliance for mental health month, took many people a lot of effort to bring about. The investment was worth it. Another generation of first-time drive-in attendees now have their own stories and memories that they will pass on to their kids in decades to come.

Community is an essential part of human life. Playing a part in one, whether it be big or small, creates a sense of connection, purpose and belonging, and studies have shown that it can improve our mood, our sense of wellbeing, and help combat loneliness and depression. I hope you find your community. 


Nannup Geopark

The group working to establish the Nannup Geopark is extremely active and making considerable progress towards its goal of becoming a UNESCO Global Geopark. The

association is now established as an Incorporated body, has drawn up a logo, designed an app, and are working on a concept plan for a static display.

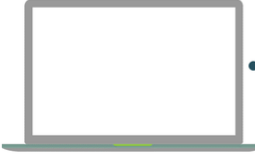
The Nannup WA Geopark Structure will include the following key areas.

Geopark App



Contains and enables access to all the information about the Geopark and its features, including 'locate me' mapping to help access trails highlighting geological, biological and cultural aspects.

Website



Provides a platform for organisations, groups and individuals to connect with the Geopark with information not included in the App.

Static display

Featuring

1. Timeline sculpture.
2. Global plate movements sculptures.
3. Large sculpture showing current river systems, Geology features, Lava flows, Hydrology components including the Yaragadee and Lake Jasper and much more.

Curated info and on ground interpretation

Signage, models and other displays to provide information to visitors – no technology needed.

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The Static Display concept drawing below illustrates the geology's vertical display showing our earth plate movement globes, vertical 3D geology display, and timeline fence. Mark says that this is a significant start but still has a long way to go.



The City of Wanneroo, Western Australia

The City of Wanneroo is committed to geopark development in the long term but its present focus is on developing nature based tourism experiences including trails, all of which will be useful attractions and activities for a future geopark.

The City was recently successful in obtaining a grant from the WA Department Local Government, Sports & Cultural Industries as part of the program to increase

opportunities and participation in hiking in WA (see [WA Hiking Strategy 2020-2030](#)).

Working in collaboration with award winning [The Hike Collective](#), the project, named ***Experience the Yaberoo Budjara Trail*** will involve the development and delivery of a guided trail series covering the five different sections of the Yaberoo Budjara Heritage Trail. This trail is a 28km walk trail from Lake Joondalup, north through Neerabup National Park to Yanchep National Park in WA and is based on Yellagonga’s tribes’ movement track linking the linear lakes of the coastal plain, later used by European settlers as a stock route. The trail also offers a wide range of different landscapes including the wetlands, limestone quarries, banksia woodlands, tuart areas and swamplands.

The new trial series will offer the chance for over 240 people over a three month period to join a guided tour, at a very low price point, as well as a chance to attend a ‘Become a Guide’ training workshop for free.



Above: The Yaberoo Budjara Heritage Trail

GEPARKS WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Geoparks WA News Item

Stephen Scourfield is Travel Editor of *The West Australian* Newspaper and a good supporter of Geoparks WA. In 2018 he spent 2-3 days in the Murchison Region covering the launch of the Murchison GeoRegion (see photo of Karen Morrissey at the launch earlier in the newsletter). This resulted in a two page news item in the paper illustrated with a number of Stephen's photos. A further item was noted by Stephen in *The West Australian* 'Travel Section' on Saturday 31 December 2022 (below).



A Drive Geotrail from Fremantle to Kalbarri

Geoparks Western Australia is currently working with the Mid West Development Commission investigating the feasibility of establishing a Drive Geotrail from Fremantle (mouth of the Swan River) to Kalbarri (mouth of the Murchison River). The proposed geotrail will focus on selected stopover places and provide information by sign and QR codes additional to that already available.

Geoparks WA recently completed a drive along the route identifying over forty potential geosites. Forty sites were identified based on a range of criteria including geotourism's ABC (Abiotic, Biotic, Culture) components, access, management and safety. Of the 40 sites 18 geosites have been nominated as prospective places for development. Several other prospective geosites might be added in the future as safety aspects are improved such as formalizing carparks and / or improving off/on road access.

The River to River geotrail will make a significant contribution to the safety of the drive providing a reason to stop, take a break from driving, while also providing information on the surrounding landscape. Views of beach lines, limestone cliffs and reef benches, mobile sand dunes, pinnacles, stromatolites, a pink lake and nominated coffee stops.

This is going to be a significant addition to the opportunities our self-drive and coach driven visitors will have of Western Australia. Geopark



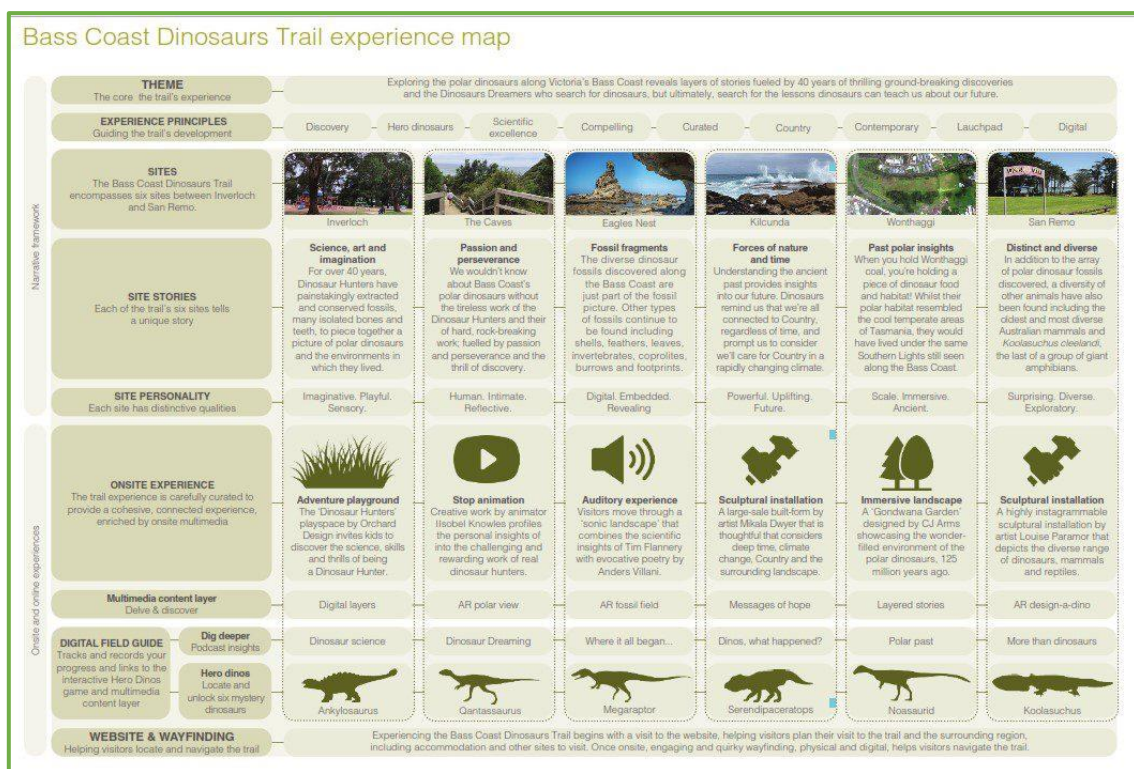
Proposed Geotrail sites

Upper Left: Limestone cliff erosion, Louise Point, Green Head; *Centre:* Warribanno Chimney for lead smelting at WA's first commercial mining for Geraldine Minesite, Galena; *Right:* Beach erosion, Cervantes. *Lower Left:* River gully showing underlying clayey, Galena; *Centre:* The Pink Lake, Port Gregory; *Right:* Stromatolites, Lake Thetis, Cervantes.

BASS COAST DINOSAUR TRAIL, VICTORIA

Mike Cleeland is a paleontologist, educator and Foundation AGN Board Member. Here he shares about the Bass Coast Dinosaur Trail which is currently being developed in Victoria. An ‘Experience Framework’ has been drawn up for the Bass Coast Council to allow visitors to experience the dinosaur fossils. The experience framework underpins the entire trail consisting of a narrative, theme, experience principles, site stories, site personalities, onsite and online experiences. Used in conjunction with the masterplan, the narrative framework informs the direction for trail’s visitor experience.

A strong experience framework provides the ‘glue’ for each element of the project, binding each to the project’s purpose articulated by the narrative framework. uncover the fascinating world of polar dinosaurs through creative works across seven sites; Inverloch, The Caves, Eagles Nest, Wonthaggi, Kilcunda and San Remo. The masterplan phase established a narrative for the project and an intent for each of the creative sites. Council has now engaged a team of specialists to build on the master plan and further develop the creative concepts for each site.



Above: Bass Coast Dinosaurs Trail Experience Map (Courtesy Bass Coast Shire)



Dig crew at the Dinosaur Dreaming Dig during February (Photo: Mike Cleeland)

PROFESSOR PATRICK JAMES' POST COVID GEO(PARK) TOUR OF EUROPE

My visit began with a guided tour of the Geopark headquarters, where especially impressive were its geological museum and also children's learning and activity rooms, where painting, drawing and fossil 'brass-rubbing' were evident activities. AGN Foundation Board Member Pat James reports on a tour of Europe post covid.

My last overseas trip before COVID was to attend the APGN conference in Lombok in September 2019. This was another vibrant and stimulating international conference and field experience which demonstrated the scale, quality and profusion of Geopark activities in our near SE Asian neighboring countries. Thus, following nearly three years of pandemic related isolation and only intra SA travel I was at last able to consider a return to the international skies in early June 2022. Prior to this the nearly 3 years of COVID enforced lockdown in SA only allowed me occasional field visits to Nature Foundation's Hiltaba & Witchelina Reserves in outback SA where I had been developing geotours and geotrails.

The initial plan for the 2022 escape was for a very short (2 week) visit to the UK to attend the 51 anniversary (delayed 50 anniversary of course!), of my graduation from the University of Leicester. This was planned to be followed by a rapid round-the-world return to Australia stopping off briefly in Toronto, Canada to visit two new grandchildren and as an aside revisit the Ohnia:kara (now renamed Niagara Peninsula) Aspiring Geopark.

Of course, during the deliberation & planning for the trip, other possible side trips looked promising; friends & family asked to be visited, exotic European locations HAD to be revisited and so eventually a six country 2-month long extravaganza replaced the initial "short" OS jolly. Thus, with some careful forethought I managed to visit 8 separate geoparks, some Global, some aspirational, some national and some informal; whilst soaking up and reminiscing about the joys of northern hemisphere summer travel and touring. Finally, and after much effort in completing multiple and complex forms

related to international COVID travel and with considerable trepidation I headed for Europe and the UK in early June.

En-route to Leicester, I managed a side trip to visit the recently established, & UK's newest, Black Country UNESCO Global Geopark in the West Midlands of England, near to Birmingham. This Geopark establishment had been delayed firstly by Brexit and then by COVID, but was finally proclaimed in (July 2020) - <https://blackcountrygeopark.dudley.gov.uk/about>

I was a guest of Dr Graham Worton the Geopark Lead Officer & Coordinator and interestingly titled "Dudley Museum Keeper of Geology", who with strategic Director (Jane Lamine) showed me around the Geopark Headquarters, sited conveniently next door to the famous "Black Country Living Museum" (<https://bclm.com>), and then to some of the main geosites and geotrails. Based within the greater Birmingham conurbation, the Black Country Geopark is one of the few truly "urban" Global Geoparks. It spreads over the six council districts of Dudley, Wolverhampton, Walsall, West Bromwich, Smethwick & Wednesbury, and is 360Km in area, with a population just over 1 million people. It does, however, as well as hosting many natural, geological, landscape & mining features, have a remarkable cultural history, because this area is unique in having a major role at the centre of the Industrial Revolution.

Of course, this Geopark has also been able to make much mileage from the publicity surrounding the Peaky Blinders television series, which highlights the development of the globally famous "Black By Day, Red By Night" Victorian landscape, where the geological basis of the Industrial Revolution was underpinned by the mining and quarrying of its coal, iron and limestone. These can be visited in the many (more than 40) geosites around the 6 towns of the Geopark.

My visit began with a guided tour of the Geopark headquarters, where especially impressive were its geological museum and also children's learning and activity rooms, where painting, drawing and fossil 'brass-rubbing' were evident activities.



Upper Left: The Earl of Dudley's Coal pits 1870; *Upper Right:* The Black Country Geopark logo – 'Black by Day, Red by Night'; *Lower Left & Centre:* Geopark classrooms for kids – Dinosaurs most popular of course; *Lower Right:* How to 'brass rub' your dinosaur.

One of the Geosites I visited was the Wren's Nest Reserve in Dudley. This was England's first national nature reserve and was established in 1956 for its exceptional limestone geology. Rocks and fossils here belong to the Silurian period of the earth's history and are known to be about 430 million years old. Graham showed me many of the spectacular interpretation and information signs highlighting the geological and mining/quarrying history of the geopark. I also saw much geopark art and geo-sculptures and plenty of active visitors.

I was thus able to watch a cohort of High School students (A-Level GCSE – equivalent to year 12 matriculation) undertaking a field excursion in the quarries of the Wren's Nest Reserve, which hosts four way-marked walks and many geo-art sculptures, plus viewing platforms and places to search in the scree for fossils of which there are 700 different types to be found here (and which may be collected by the public!).

I was then taken on a fabulous canal boat excursion beneath the Dudley Castle Hill Woods old Limestone Quarries, into the underground mines and caverns of the Dudley canal and Caverns Geosite. Before I entered the canal tunnels a canal boat emerged with 40 or so happy geotourists, who because of the Geopark now understand more about the geological basis upon which their region's prosperity was based. The underground Dudley Canal & Caverns canal boat limestone mining tour must be unique in its use of original tunnels and vessels to investigate the past mining history of this fabulous geosite. The whole tour took almost an hour and was enlivened by audio guides, spectacular light and video demonstrations and an inspiring atmosphere of peace, quiet (electric boat engines) and tranquility, in what must have been a dreadful experience to a nineteenth century limestone miner.



Upper Left & Centre: Keeper Graham Worton with Geopark signage and sculpture at Wren's Nest and with a student field excursion in the background quarry; *Upper Right & Lower Left:* Café, Bookshop, Visitor Centre and Canal Landing Platform; *Lower Centre & Right:* The awesome experience of underground limestone mining history by canal boat.

Overall, I felt a significant enthusiasm amongst both geopark staff and visitors about the Peaky Blinders having put the area on at least the TV global map. There was also great excitement in the Geopark area and community about the forthcoming Commonwealth Games, which as a global television event and significant input of visitors must have

significantly benefitted the Geopark by the added many more potential visitors to the tourism venues and activities now available in this area. I also felt there was much evidence of the impact of significant management, networking, interaction & collaboration brought to the geopark by its recognition as an equal partner and with neighbouring Geoparks from the UK & Europe Geopark Community.



The Brownhills 'Colossus' Miner – themed (geo)public art sculpture by John McKenna.
This is an inspirational and unmissable monument on a public roundabout.

My trip then continued with a short drive from the West Midlands to the East Midlands to attend the Leicester University Geology Department class of 1971 graduation anniversary. Leicester University will be a key contributor to the Charnwood Forest Aspiring Global Geopark which we were soon treated to hear about in detail and to visit.

My former classmates most of whom still lived in the UK, had been organizing our weekend get together at the University with related dinners, soirees and field visits for some time. Though a few of the original 15 graduates were unable to attend (one sadly died a few years ago, another caught COVID just before the event etc.), about two thirds of the class attended and we spent many pleasant hours reminiscing over our three years of study (1969-1971) with tales of our many undergraduate exploits largely on field trips to Sky, Arran, Wales and most memorably to Kansas & Colorado in the USA (August 1970). As you can see from the two photos we haven't changed at all! We were also given a guided tour of the Bennett Building teaching facilities, practical laboratories & geology museum with current faculty member Dr Marc Reichow.



Left: Undergraduate excursion to Kansas in 1970.
Right: The same faces in 2022 at Leicester Geology Museum.

We were then taken out to our former favourite local field site in Bradgate Park within the Charnwood Forest region close to the city of Leicester which is the focus of the new Aspring Charnwood Forest Geopark. Jack Matthews from the National Forest Company (see article in previous AGN Newsletter #4 on the Jeju GGN Conference) is leading the bid for UNESCO Geopark status for this area and he and Marc Reichow led an excursion to some of the key geosites in the Park.

Charnwood Forest is just over 200 km² in area, but is adjacent to many East Midlands major cities including Leicester, Coventry, Northampton, Nottingham & Derby with thus well over 2-3 million population. The Charnwood Forest area, as well as containing Bradgate Park, also hosts many other protected natural sites and many very significant aggregate quarries. All of these will be included within the Geopark bid.

There are already significant trails and signage around the park, which hosts some of the oldest known Ediacaran fauna (eg Charniodiscus), and I recalled seeing some of these fossils during undergraduate excursions, many years before I rekindled an interest in them from SA's own Flinders Ranges. The park also contains Neoproterozoic volcanic tuffs and sediments where I and my classmate colleagues first learnt to measure dip and strike of bedding, recognize slaty cleavage and be baffled by the profusion of local stratigraphic nomenclature.

Using a substantial grant from the UK Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Forest Company and 18 partner organisations, including Leicester Geology Department has resolved to develop significant interpretation, conservation, education, and arts programs to both celebrate the geoh heritage of the Park and to develop this into an application for UNESCO Geopark status.

After my flying visit to one real and another aspiring Geopark in the English Midlands, I found myself with a few spare days to visit the UNESCO World Heritage Jurassic Coast of South Devon and Dorset. Having visited this area many times I have always wondered why it never aspired to UGGp status.



Left: Jack Matthews adjacent to Interpretation panel.
Right: The class of 1971 return to Bradgate Park.

There are many geotourism features advertised on the local Jurassic Coast Trust World Heritage websites (<https://www.jurassiccoast.org/what-is-the-jurassic-coast>), most of which I visited. These include Charmouth Coast boat geotours, Sidmouth Museum walking geotrail tours, the Fine Foundation Centre at Beer, Seaton Jurassic and the Lyme Regis Museum etc. All advertise geosites, geotourism attractions & activities and visitor centres which include geological and geotourism materials.

However, even though they inhabit the UNESCO World Heritage Jurassic coast there was little evidence of coordinated management of the sites. Many of these were closed (Seaton) or unattended (Beer) and other than the Mary Anning inspired new interpretation at Lyme Regis Museum, there was little in the way of obvious coordinated branding, signage, brochures or other geotourism materials to welcome the rapidly returning holiday visitors. This time, I think I discovered, perhaps especially because of the COVID pandemic status, that maybe these institutions might do better if they attempted to join the UNESCO Global Geoparks movement.



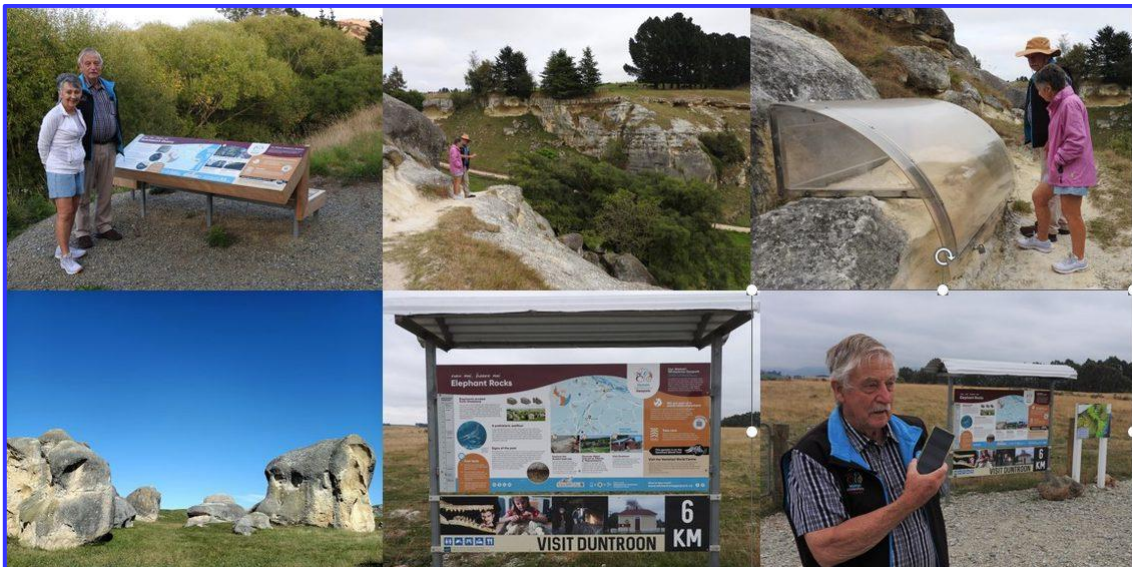
Above: A selfie on the walking trail above Sidmouth.
Not a geological sign in sight, but wonderful cliffs and coast.

NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND



At the time of publishing this newsletter Waitaki Whitestone Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark is waiting on a [recommendation](#) by the UNESCO Global Geopark Council to accept its application to become New Zealand's first UNESCO Global Geopark. The Geopark puts out a great monthly newsletter which can be accessed through the website (<https://www.whitestonegeopark.nz>).

In early March Wendy & I visited the geopark meeting with Park Manager Lisa Heinz and a couple of the park's Trustees. One of them, Mike Gray, spent a day showing us around the geopark which has an abundance of geological and geomorphological features.



Upper Left: Wendy with Trustee Mike Gray at Hutcheson's Quarry, Oamaru; *Upper Centre:* The Valley of the Whales; *Upper Right:* Wendy & Mike viewing the fossilised bones of an ancient baleen whale. *Lower Left:* Elephant Rocks, *Centre:* Geopark Signage; *Right:* Mike using the Geopark App.

Whilst visiting the Geopark I gave a public talk *on Geotourism and Geoparks: A Global Overview*. It was hosted by the Waitaki District Libraries in the Scottish Hall in Oamaru and was attended by about 40 people. It can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGCKRzd8OBU>



Above Left: Waitaki Whitestone Talk Flyer.
 Right: Ross at the start of his talk and Ross & Wendy with Park Manager Lisa Heinz.

GEPARK MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT



Jamie Van Jones, champion of the Binjareb-Peel Geopark Project and Board Member of Geoparks Western Australia, drew our attention to this useful resource which can be found at <https://www.geoparktoolkit.org>



This Toolkit has been developed under the auspices of the European Union Interreg-funded Atlantic Geoparks Project (2017-2020), a partnership of nine existing Geoparks, two aspiring Geoparks and a university located along the Atlantic seaboard of Europe.

The Geopark Management Toolkit is designed to offer advice and support to:

- assist aspiring Geoparks to attain full UNESCO Global Geopark status, and
- to provide additional guidance to new and existing Geoparks which have already achieved UNESCO status but wish to further develop their territory.

What the Toolkit offers

The Toolkit is divided into a series of topics which provide guidance on:

- how a Geopark might be governed;
- key management and operational considerations;
- how communities and businesses are communicated with and engaged in the Geopark, and;
- how the Geopark can be promoted to visitors, all with principles of sustainability in mind.

The Toolkit also considers a Geopark's important role in:

- the conservation of geological features;
- environmental education, training and research;
- sustainable “geoproducts” and “geoservices”;
- monitoring and recording projects and developments, and;
- enhancing the protection of an area's natural and cultural heritage.

Finally, it looks at Geoparks in the context of:

- national and international networks, and
- examines the scope for collaborative working.

The Toolkit may be just one source in a selection of tools upon which aspiring and new Geoparks might draw in developing evidence for an application to UNESCO. However, the Toolkit is specifically designed, through the provision of information and method, to provide guidance and facilitate the production of a relevant and robust submission document with supporting evidence.

The involvement of individuals and organisations from a range of disciplines is encouraged during the use of the Toolkit. Different sections will require greater or lesser input from different partners and stakeholders in the Geopark. In order to avoid unnecessary time and resource costs, and given the nature of some of the activities included in the toolkit, there is considerable potential for cooperation at an early stage whilst completing the various sections of the Topics – the ten chapters.

Included within the Toolkit are examples and Case Studies from the Geoparks in the Atlantic Geoparks Partnership. In some parts of the Toolkit Active Templates are provided to aid aspiring Geoparks in preparing their initial ‘Expression of interest’ to UNESCO, the first step to attaining the UNESCO Global Geopark designation.

Using the Toolkit

You should begin using the Geopark Management Toolkit by considering the Essential Questions for Geoparks. The Toolkit is then divided into ten Topics giving information and advice designed to assist in the further development of your submission documentation:

All the issues raised in the Topics will need to be considered and addressed before your Geopark is ready to submit the full submission document to UNESCO.

The Toolkit is designed to provide uniformity of approach and comparability of outputs for Geoparks seeking UNESCO Global Geoparks status. However, it is still the case that some Geoparks may find they have, or require, more detailed supporting evidence on which they might develop their submission. It may also be necessary to refine the generic approach outlined in the Toolkit to match your Geopark's requirements, though the Toolkit is designed to ensure dissemination of best practice.

Whilst working with the Toolkit, It should be remembered that the detailed responses to the questions posed will vary between Geoparks, or may not be relevant to your specific Geopark, as they will be dependent upon the nature of issues to be addressed, existing character and geological heritage of the Geopark and the new sustainable development opportunities in your particular territory.

Where to begin? [Essential questions](#) – fundamental issues you should be thinking about as you begin your Geopark journey.

GEOSCIENCE IN ACTION: ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Thanks to Board Member Mark Asendorf, we have been alerted to a new publication by UNESCO and the American Geophysical Union on [Geoscience in Action: Advancing Sustainable Development](#). The report is a call to action, advocating for the important role that geoscience can play in efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. It has just been released and can be downloaded from: <https://geoscienceinaction.org/-/media/Files/Geoscience-In-Action/023-4187542760-Geoscience-In-Action-Report-WEB.pdf>

The image shows the cover of the report 'Geoscience in Action: Advancing Sustainable Development' on the left and a 'SHORT SUMMARY' page on the right. The cover features the UNESCO and AGU logos, the title 'Geoscience in Action', and the subtitle 'ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT'. Below the text is a photograph of a group of geologists in safety gear working on a rocky coastline. The summary page includes the title 'Geoscience will play a vital role in solving the challenges we face', a paragraph about the profession's identity crisis, a paragraph about the need for sustainability, a paragraph about regional civil servants, and a paragraph about education. A circular graphic states 'More than 1 billion people in the world live close to an active volcano'. The UNESCO logo is at the bottom of the summary page.

SHORT SUMMARY

Geoscience will play a vital role in solving the challenges we face

It is estimated that more than 400,000 people work globally as geoscientists. The profession is, nevertheless, going through an identity crisis. University enrollment in geology courses is declining in many countries. There is a sense that the profession needs to find a new purpose that is more in tune with evolving societal needs and the expectations of budding scientists.

Consequently, appointments to academic posts in sustainability geoscience are becoming more common, traditional petroleum geology courses are being rebranded as geo-energy courses and many mining geology courses are now encompassing natural resource management. In industry, fossil-fuel and mining companies are beginning to extend their renewable energy and new minerals portfolios and to retrain their staff in sustainability thinking.

Written by leading geoscientists from across the globe, *Geoscience in Action: Advancing Sustainable Development* seeks to inspire geoscientists everywhere to give more focus to advancing sustainability by showcasing case studies of how geoscience is already addressing climate change and other global challenges. In Delhi, India, for instance, geoscientists worked with regional civil servants to alleviate a water crisis by utilizing overflow from floodplains, becoming a model for other riverine cities.

Education can use these case studies as manuals to show students the myriad ways in which they can make an impact with a geoscience degree. Scientists wishing to offer their expertise to find sustainable solutions can use this report to find organizations with which to partner.

We need more geoscientists in our society to be part of the decisions shaping our future. *Geoscience in Action* not only explains why—it shows us how.

More than **1 billion** people in the world live close to an active volcano

unesco

"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defenses of peace must be constructed"

FEATURED MEMBER - IAN LEWIS

Each newsletter we feature one of our members starting with those on the Board. In this edition we feature **Ian Lewis**. Ian is a Foundation Board Member of the Australian Geoparks Network.

Ian is a hydrogeologist with the Groundwater Team in the South Australian Department for Environment and Water, advising drillers and landowners about depths, locations and relevant aquifers for groundwater bores all over the State, including the Great Artesian Basin in the north. He is Coordinator of the Geological Society of Australia's South Australian Geotourism subcommittee and is completing a PhD at UniSA on the Geoheritage, Geotrails and Geotourism of South Australia.

Ian grew up in the Mount Gambier region of South Australia, an area of caves and sinkholes. After being introduced to cave exploring as a Scout in his teenage years, Ian took up SCUBA diving to dive in the sinkholes of the region and was on the investigating panel after a series of cave diving deaths of untrained divers in the early 1970's. Eventually he led the first two national expeditions to the Nullarbor Plains in 1972 and 1974 to explore the vast underground lakes and water-filled tunnels of that region.

Due to his interest in the underground structure of these features, Ian studied Geomorphology under Professor Rowl Twidale and Geology under Professor Vic Gostin at Adelaide University and completed an Honours thesis at Flinders University on the morphology of the cave and sinkhole forms of the Mount Gambier region. This was followed by three books – 'Cave Reference Book of South Australia', 'Discover Naracoorte Caves' and 'Cave Diving in Australia'. He then moved for a decade to Melbourne where he worked as a Secondary teacher and SCUBA diving Instructor on Port Philip Bay. While there he wrote the guidebook 'Shore Dives of Victoria' which has sold over 25,000 copies and is still in demand today.

Ian is Honorary Director of the Kanawinka Volcanic Geotrail which links visitation of the volcanoes across Western Victoria and the South East of South Australia. Through the GSA, Ian is developing a broader concept of Geotrails to link geoheritage sites and landscape features with environmental, indigenous, mining and settler historical elements. One such geotrail proposal is a 200-km Geotrail across the breadth of the Goyder Regional Council area including the Burra mine sites in South Australia to draw visitors to the Goyder community. Ian is a member of several working groups of the National Geotourism Strategy for the Australian Geoscience Council and of the Australian Geoparks Network. His long-term goal is to see the Kanawinka Global Geopark restored in its former form or in a more modern and flexible structure. After many years away, he has returned to Mount Gambier and lives at the edge of the city on the slopes of the volcano next to the famous Blue Lake.



Upper Left: Ian Lewis (Science Officer, Cave Divers Association of Australia) in full cave diving gear for water sampling and geological investigations in Little Blue Lake sinkhole, Mount Gambier, South Australia; *Centre:* Beautiful Valley Lake, Mount Gambier; *Right:* Holding the Kanawinka Geopark Banner at the AGN Workshop, University of Melbourne, 2012. Bernie Joyce is holding the other part of the banner; *Lower Left:* Ian with a groundwater drilling rig in Mount Gambier; *Centre:* Mount Gambier city and crater; *Right:* In a limestone solution pipe at Naracoorte World Heritage Region.

FEATURED UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

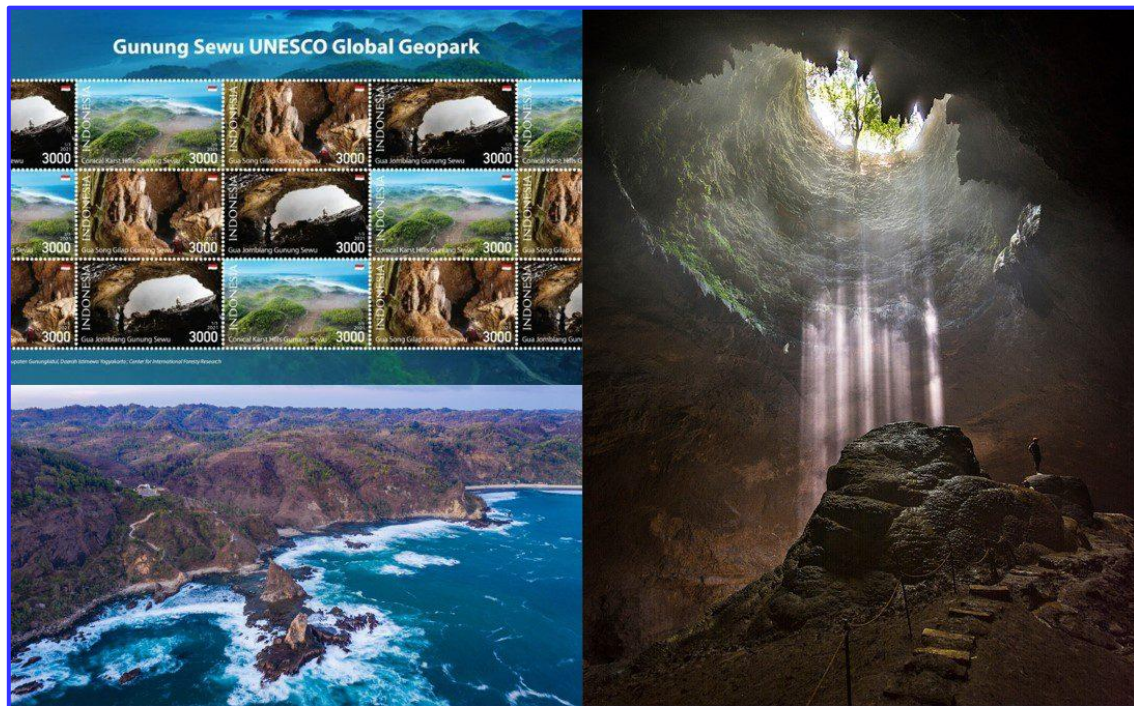
Gunung Sewu UNESCO Global Geopark, Indonesia

<https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/gunung-sewu>

Budi Martono is General Manager of Gunung Sewu UNESCO Global Geopark; an Expert Member of the Indonesian Geoparks National Committee, and Chairman of the Indonesia Geoparks Network Advisory Board. He is also a Foundation Member of the AGN International Advisory Board. Here he reports on 'his' geopark.

The Gunung Sewu UNESCO Global Geopark is located in the southern mountains of East Java and extends in an east-west direction for 120 kilometres. Gunung Sewu UNESCO Global Geopark is a classic tropical karst landscape in the south central part of Java Island well-known in the world, and dominated by limestone. There is still tectonic activity in the region because Gunung Sewu is located in front of an active subduction zone between the Indian Ocean, Australian and Eurasian plates. Active uplifting is taking place since 1.8 million years and produces very visible river terraces at Sadeng dry-valley as well as coastal terraces along the southern coast of the geopark.

The geopark is rich in biodiversity, archaeology, history and cultural aspects. It contains elements of prehistoric settlements indicating that some of the prehistoric people lived in caves, while others lived in open space. Today the park is inhabited by approximately 805,000 people and the local economy is derived from the agricultural and services sectors.



INTENSIVE COURSE ON UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS

UNESCO and the Global Geoparks Network are co-organising the International Intensive Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks 2023 which will deal with the topic 'UNESCO Global Geoparks and Earth Heritage Management'.

The International Intensive Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks will be held from 13th to 23rd of June, 2023 in Lesvos Island UNESCO Global Geopark, Greece. The Course will be organized in hybrid format being online for those who cannot travel. 35 participants will be selected to attend the lectures and have the opportunity to participate in field training in Lesvos Island. Other participants will attend digitally the lectures and virtual field trips.

The course provides an opportunity to discover how UNESCO Global Geoparks contribute to earth heritage management, how they can make a real impact in local communities and on society as a whole but also provides conceptual issues on UNESCO Global Geoparks. The deadline for application is 31 May 2023.



INTERNATIONAL COURSE ON UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS

UNESCO Global Geoparks and Earth Heritage Management

13-23 June 2023

Lesvos island, Greece



Be one of the 35 field participants in Lesvos!



CONFERENCES

10th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks 5 -10 September 2023 – Marrakesh, Morocco



Morocco will host the *10th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks in Marrakesh from 5-10 September 2023*. It is the first Arab and African country to host such event. The host Geopark is M’Goun UNESCO Global Geopark (<https://en.unesco.org/global-geoparks/mgoun>). It is located 100km from Marrakesh in the middle of the central High Atlas Mountain Chain.



Marrakech named as the Second Best Place to Travel in 2023

The US business magazine Forbes has just announced its '23 Best Places to Travel in 2023'. Being a kiwi I was pleased to see that Queenstown, New Zealand, topped the list, but in second place is Marrakech, Morocco. Their reasons for visiting include:

Why visit? Marrakesh is one of the leading locations for artisanal handcrafted wares, including tiles, pottery, wood crafts, hand-beaten metals, leather and glass. Plus, as travel advisor Fiona Bayne notes, it also “has some of the most revered hotels in the world where you can experience sublime luxury in historic ornate palaces, minimalist luxury in private pavilions, or the taste of Morocco in a secluded riad.”

Who should go? Marrakesh holds allure for those who enjoy mixing history with a unique cuisine. If you travel to find original handmade items for your home, you'll want to visit Marrakesh.

Don't miss: A day trip to the ancient coastal trading port of Essaouira, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with ancient stone battlements around the port. Explore Essaouira's markets, famed for the Thuya wood crafts and their skilled craftsmen.



Souvenirs on the Jamaa el Fna market in old Medina, Marrakesh, Morocco (Getty Images)

End of Newsletter

Well that's it from the Australian Geoparks Network. We are excited by the increased community interest in re-establishing geoparks in Australia and the AGN is committed to seeing the return of UNESCO Global Geoparks here.



AUSTRALIAN
GEO PARKS
N E T W O R K
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