

Australian Geoparks Network Newsletter No. 8 July 2023



News about Geoparks, Geotourism, Geotrails and Geoheritage

FROM THE CHAIR

195	48	60	1
UNESCO Global Geoparks	Nations	Million Visitors / Year	Network

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

The geopark world was excited by an announcement made on 25 May 2023 by UNESCO's Executive Board that they had endorsed the addition of a further 18 sites to the UNESCO Global Geoparks network. This brings the total number of geoparks to 195 in 48 countries.

So with our neighbours expanding their geoparks networks we are hoping it will not be too long now before we have our own State Geoparks and eventually Global Geoparks.

We start this edition of the Newsletter with a report on the new [UNESCO Global Geoparks](#) followed by a note on the new [Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark](#) in New Zealand.

Also in this Newsletter is a report on the [Australian Earth Sciences Convention](#) held in Perth in late June. AGN Board Members contributed significantly to the Conference with **Pat James**, **Karen Morrissey** and **Ross Dowling** presenting Oral papers and **Sebastian Jones** presenting a Poster. All were well received and many delegates congratulated us on our work towards re-establishing geoparks in Australia. A report of the Conference is given by Pat James.

Alan Briggs, Deputy Chair, AGN and President, Geoparks WA, is currently travelling around Europe and he describes some of the geology of Cornwall and the Islands of Scilly.

Notice is given that Geoparks Western Australia is holding an 'Invitation Only' **Geoparks Networking Workshop** on Thursday 21 September in Mandurah, Perth.

Over recent months the AGN and Geoparks WA have met with a number of Federal and WA State Government Ministers, the Chief Scientist, the Director General of the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, the Executive Director of the Geological Survey of WA and the Assistant Director General (Land Use Management) of the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. We have secured great support for the establishment of geoparks both in the State as well as in Australia. So it is full steam ahead.

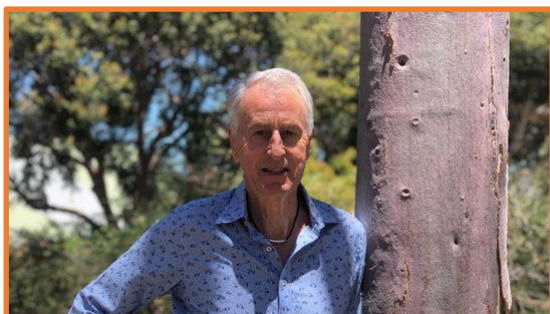
Our Featured Member is **Lauren Swann**, a Founding Board Member of the Australian Geoparks Network. Lauren is an Exploration Geologist, Science Teacher and Founder of the **Weekend Geology** Website in Victoria.

Our Featured UNESCO Global Geopark is UNESCO Global Geopark in Ireland. Last year **Pat James** undertook a Post Covid Geopark Tour of Europe. We reported on part of his tour in the last issue of the Newsletter and follow it up in this one with his take on the **Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark** in Ireland. One of the initiatives of the Geopark is their involvement in **GEOfood** which emphasises the connections between local food and the food traditions and geological heritage of the region where the food is produced.

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 an event.

Finally our featured book is **Geotourism in the Middle East** which has just been published by Springer. It is the first of its kind on the topic for the Middle East and includes four introductory chapters and twelve country case studies.

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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18 NEW UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS

The geopark world was excited by an [announcement](#) made on 25 May 2023 by UNESCO's Executive Board that they had endorsed the addition of a further 18 sites to the UNESCO Global Geoparks network. This brings the total number of geoparks to 195 in 48 countries. The new geoparks are in Brazil, Greece, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, South Korea, Spain, Thailand and the United Kingdom. In addition two UNESCO Member States join the network - New Zealand and the Philippines.

New parks close to us include the Indonesian geoparks of Ijen in East Java; Maros Pangkep in Sulawesi; Merangin Jambi in Sumatra; and Raja Ampat comprising four islands on the equator. Malaysia has its second Global Geopark in Kinabalu, Sabah, on the island of Borneo. Wendy and I have made a number of visits to Kinabalu over the years which is based on Mount Kinabalu (4,095m). Finally, in New Zealand Waitaki Whitestone became the country's first Global Geopark and their Trust and Staff work closely with the Australian Geoparks Network. So with our neighbours expanding their geoparks network we are hoping it will not be too long now before we have our own State Geoparks and eventually Global Geoparks.

WAITAKI WHITESTONE UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

New Zealand's first [UNESCO Global Geopark](#) lies on the east coast of the South Island, extending over an area of 7,214 km² from the Waitaki Valley to the base of the Southern Alps. The landscapes, rivers and tides of this geopark have enormous cultural significance for the local indigenous people, the Ngāi Tahu whānui. The geopark offers exceptional insights into the history of the Earth's eighth continent, Zealandia, or Te Riu-a-Māui in Maori. The geopark provides evidence of the formation of Zealandia, which broke away from the ancient supercontinent of Gondwana around 80 million years ago. The continent then became submerged under the ocean for millions of years before tectonic forces thrust New Zealand above the waves and the country's current mountain-building phase began. Today, about 94% of Zealandia remains submerged, stretching from east of New Zealand all the way north to New Caledonia.

Following the announcement of the official designation of becoming a Global Geopark, the locals held a celebration in the town of Oamaru which the Minister of Tourism attended along with a host of other dignitaries.



Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark Trust Members and Staff at their Designation Event held at the Oamaru Opera House and Brydone Hotel in Oamaru on 31 May 2023. Fourth from right is Helen Jansen, Trust Board Chair and second from the right is Lisa Heinz, Geopark Manager.

AUSTRALIAN EARTH SCIENCES CONVENTION

The **Australian Earth Sciences Convention** was held in Perth, Western Australia from 27-30 June. For those interested in the Program it may be accessed [here](#). The Australian Geoparks Network was represented at the Conference by Board Members Pat James, Karen Morrissey and Ross Dowling. We all presented papers in a Stream on 'Geotourism, GeoRegions and Geoparks'. Pat's paper was titled 'Back to the Future – 30 years of geotourism time travel'; Karen presented on 'Ancient Lands, Brilliant Skies – Murchison GeoRegion, the journey of a natural geopark'; and my presentation was on 'Geopark Development in Western Australia'.

In addition I presented a Poster on 'The Binjareb-Peel Geopark Project, Western Australia' on behalf of Sebastian Jones, AGN Board Member and Chair, Binjareb-Peel Geopark Project, and Jamie Van Jones, Board Member, Geoparks WA and Member, Binjareb-Peel Geopark Project Working Group.

Within the national and international Geoscience community at the Conference the contribution of the AGN was widely noted. We were thanked for our contributions at the Conference and many delegates spoke favourably on the progress we have made towards re-establishing geoparks in Australia.



Above: AGN Board Members at the AESC Conference in Perth. *Left*: Ross Dowling, Karen Morrissey & Pat James; *Upper Right*: Pat giving his presentation; *Centre*: Karen giving her presentation; *Lower Right*: The first of three slides of Sebastian and Jamie's Poster presentation.

PAT JAMES REPORT ON THE AESC CONFERENCE

Pat reports - the recent AESC conference in Perth was my first large scale interstate face-to-face conference since the COVID pandemic and it was a great relief to be able to wander once again in and out of the many meeting rooms, parallel sessions, keynote talks and exhibition hall of the stunningly large Perth

Convention Centre. Serendipitous interactions with colleagues old(er) and new made the experience greatly rewarding and re-emphasized the value in face-to-face engagement with colleagues as a means to discover new trends and old faces.

There was a great pre-conference excursion on Wadjemup/Rottnest Island led by Moyra Wilson (University of Western Australia [UWA]), Stephen White (Geological Survey of Western Australia [GSWA]) & Jim McCallum . After an early start on the darkest and coldest early West Australian morning about 20 attendees boarded the Rottnest Express ferry and arrived just in time for coffee and quokkas - who immediately helped Moira, Steve and Jim with the introduction to island maps, guides and notes.

We walked to a high point at Vlamingh Lookout and listened to tales of discovery, conquest and settlement based upon fluctuating sea levels, aeolianite dunes, coral reefs and colourful salty lagoons. As the sun eventually warmed up the group, a bus collected us and we joined the mostly clockwise travelling buses, many cyclists and even more walkers who visit and enjoy the marvelous vistas around the Island each day. It was a great introduction to WA geotourism with the ABC (Abiotic, Biotic, Cultural) aspects fully covered.

Most fascinating to me was my first observation and recognition of bizarrely curved Spirula shells and the intriguing colour changes of the saline lakes. Also of much interest was the story of the major sea level changes when Wadjimup was joined to the mainland as part of the Swan River Delta only a few thousand years ago, and well within the lifetime of the local Aboriginal population.

There was plenty of excellent geotourism interpretation with geological trail brochures and some very new and good digital '[StoryMap](#)' products.



Left: Moyra explaining the relevance of the fascinating multi-coloured salt lakes. *Centre:* A friendly Quokka scrutinising Moyra's notes. *Right:* On the fossil reef limestone outcrops at Parker Point.

The Conference Program started with a comprehensive *Welcome to Country* by the local people from the Murujuga/Burrup Peninsula area of far North West Western Australia. They are currently seeking World Heritage listing in part to protect their cultural and geoheritage of their 60,000 year old rock art petroglyphs.

The AESC sessions of greatest interest to this audience was under the theme of *The Critical Role of Geosciences in Australia's Future*. This began with an informative session on 'Geoethics' led by Silvia Peppoloni and Giuseppe Di Capua from the [International Association for Promoting Geoethics](#) [IAPG]. They both outlined the critical role that geoscience plays in modern societies and the practical support in terms of mining and other resource exploitation they provide as well as the crucial role in information distribution about ecological crises, climate change and pollution.

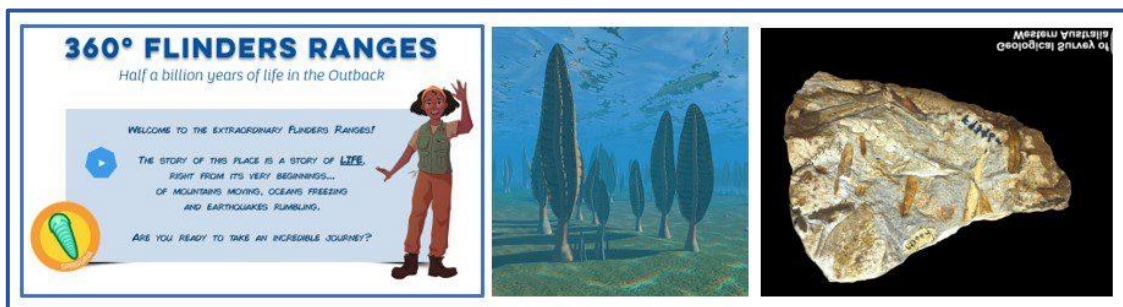


Upper Photos: Silvia Peppoloni and her presentation 'The Future of Geosciences: The perspective of geoethics'. *Lower Photos:* Giuseppe Di Capua and his presentation on 'Ten Years of Geoethics'.

The following session entitled *Geocommunication: Inspiring the next generation of geoscientists* was chaired by Heidi Allen (GSWA and member of the National Geotourism Strategy (NGS) Working Group 7 [WG7]). The session was inspirational in outlining the many challenges which Geoscience educators face in schools, universities and the general public, as well as how these can be overcome by the many excellent programs currently offered across Australia. Sally Budge and Jo Watkins from [Australian Earth Science Education](#) described an enormous array of free educational resources on offer, whilst Gresley Wakelin King talked about her challenges in trying to convince the Australian Government public services that geological mapping really is a ,science,. Peter Betts (Monash University) described the current dire situation in Earth Science student numbers and offerings at dwindling University departments, while Kelsie Dadd's [Curious Minds STEM Program](#) offered at least one shining light in an otherwise difficult session.

The general feeling was that the geoscience community needs to drastically and urgently improve its performance and perception during these challenging times of apparent mining vandalism, hydrocarbon induced global climate change (No more Oil, please?) and indifferent attitudes to University Geoscience offerings. Maybe a few geoparks on the horizon might be of some assistance?

Day Two began with wonderful talks on *The Critical Role session on Digital Technologies*. Tom Raimondo (University of South Australia) broke through all the barriers of geoscience communication with the first animal life on earth smoothly animated Ediacaran Sprigina's waving on the Ediacaran seafloor from his sensational **Project LIVE** program. Mark Williams (University of Tasmania and Chair, NGS WG1) revealed his new, hot-off-the-shelf Australian Geotourism Portal which will document and present the growing array of Australia's geotrails, geosites, mining and cultural sites. Heidi Allen (GWSA) introduced a high-tech digital scanner and the many thousands of very hi-resolution fossil scans that GWSA now holds. As well as a critical resource in case of possible disastrous loss of the real fossils and sedimentary structures, this digital library will provide a rich resource for future digital geotourism products. Likewise Stephen White (GWSA) demonstrated the power of new digital technologies with his recently released **WA ARCGIS StoryMaps**. Overall this was a morning of Delicious Digital (geo)Delights!



Project Live's 360 Flinders Ranges, Sprigina and WAGS 3D Digital Delights.

The following session on *Geotourism, Georegions & Geoparks* comprised myself, Ross and Karen from the AGN (as reported above) as well as John Martyn (Ku-ring-gai Georegion) and Sarah Kachovich (National Rock Garden). All spoke about their key projects to empower geotourism developments in their locales and maybe upgrade the race for Australia's next future Geopark?



Left: John Martyn's presentation on 'The Ku-ring-gai GeoRegion in the Sydney Basin'. *Right:* Sarah Kachovich's presentation on 'The National Rock Garden: The story of Australia and its people'.

On the final day in another session, the *Critical Role of Australia's Future* theme interrogated the many new Geotrails which are emerging across the country. This was another excellent session on Geotrail Development [Ed's Note: which Pat very ably chaired]. **Peter Manchester** (Tasmania) demonstrated how one passionate geology trained individual can develop a geotour guiding Small Business whilst promoting field geoscience and geotourism to local, mainland and even Cruise-Ship tourists. Guy Fleming (GSNSW) displayed the great array of wonderful digital geotrails being developed by the NSW Geological Survey, and leaving the best until last, Anett Weisheit launched her magnificent new Larapinta Geological Trail Guidebook.



Left: Anett Weisheit's presentation with photo of the Guide on the left. *Centre:* A diagram in the book which utilises Anett's arm to represent geological time. *Right:* Ross and Anett at the conclusion of her presentation.

The most important message from these talks demonstrated, whilst omissions from other likewise organisations in other states appear to be lacking in their support of this critical role, the 'critical' role that geological surveys (in particular GSWA, UNSWGS and NTGS), really is truly CRITICAL.

GEOPARKS WESTERN AUSTRALIA

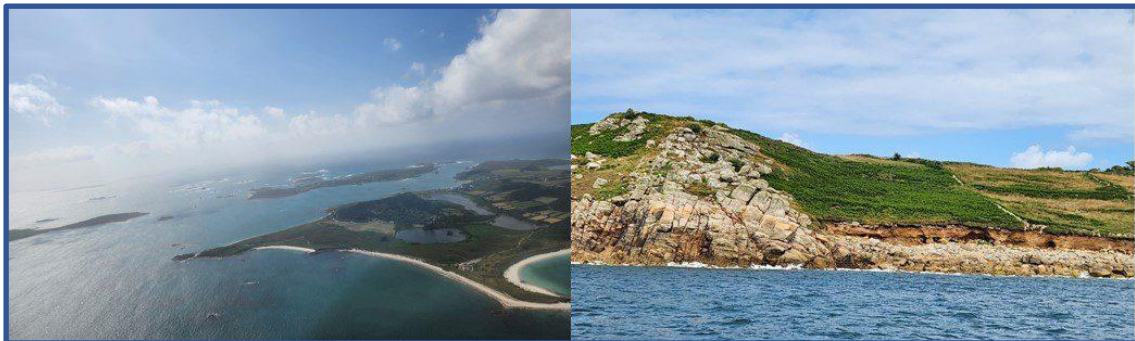
Alan Briggs, Deputy Chair, AGN, is currently travelling in the UK. He reports the following: While travelling through the west coast of Devon, I have been very impressed with the rugged geological terrain. Many visitors see the rolling green hills of the UK countryside while I seek the geological history behind how this landscape formed; how it gave rise to the plants and animals that evolved here; and how the different cultures adapted their lifestyles to live here. There are fascinating stories here but often they are not told, or if they are told, they are not obvious to visitors. Most of my stay has been in the Devon 'Combes' of the Exmoor National Park. A 'combe' is a steep, narrow valley of a large hollow on the side of a hill.

I also ventured to the Isles of Scilly for an excursion for four nights. The islands are amazing and have a unique cultural heritage dating back some 10,000 years comprising the Bronze Age, Romans, the Dark Ages, and more recently the English ([English Heritage Historic Sites of Scilly](#)). They also experienced glaciation about 20,000 years ago and the northern islands had moraines

pushed onto them at this time. Over 140 islands are remnants of a gigantic granite bubble that rose 290 million years ago and at one time extended across from the Isle to Europe ([Natural History of Scilly](#)).



Upper Left: Stonehenge. Upper Right: The romantic harbours of the Cornwall coast (and Doc Martin's territory). Lower Left: The Combes of Devon near the coast. Lower Right: The Devon beaches with fascinating geology.



Left: The islands of Scilly. There was once a single island but today there are around 140 islands as a result of erosion, subsidence and sea level rises. Right: The Isles of Scilly and their eroding coast line.

PERTH GEOPARKS WORKSHOP - 21 SEPTEMBER 2023

Geoparks Western Australia is holding an 'Invitation Only' *Geoparks Networking Workshop* on Thursday 21 September in Mandurah, Perth. The Workshop is being hosted by the [Peel Development Commission](#) and supported by the Australian Geoparks Network. The Workshop aims are to provide brief updates from the four Geopark Projects in the State with the majority of the day will be spent on active sharing and discussion. Updates will include presentations on:

1. The recent designation of the Waitaki Whitestone UNESCO Global Geopark in New Zealand in May
2. The Australian Earth Sciences Convention held in Perth in June
3. The International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks being held in Marakech, Morocco in early September
4. An update from the Australian Geoparks Network
5. An update from Geoparks Western Australia.

These will be followed by an in-depth workshop on each of the four geopark projects in WA – Murchison, Joondalup-Wanneroo, Binjareb-Peel & Nannup.

FEATURED MEMBER - LAUREN SWANN

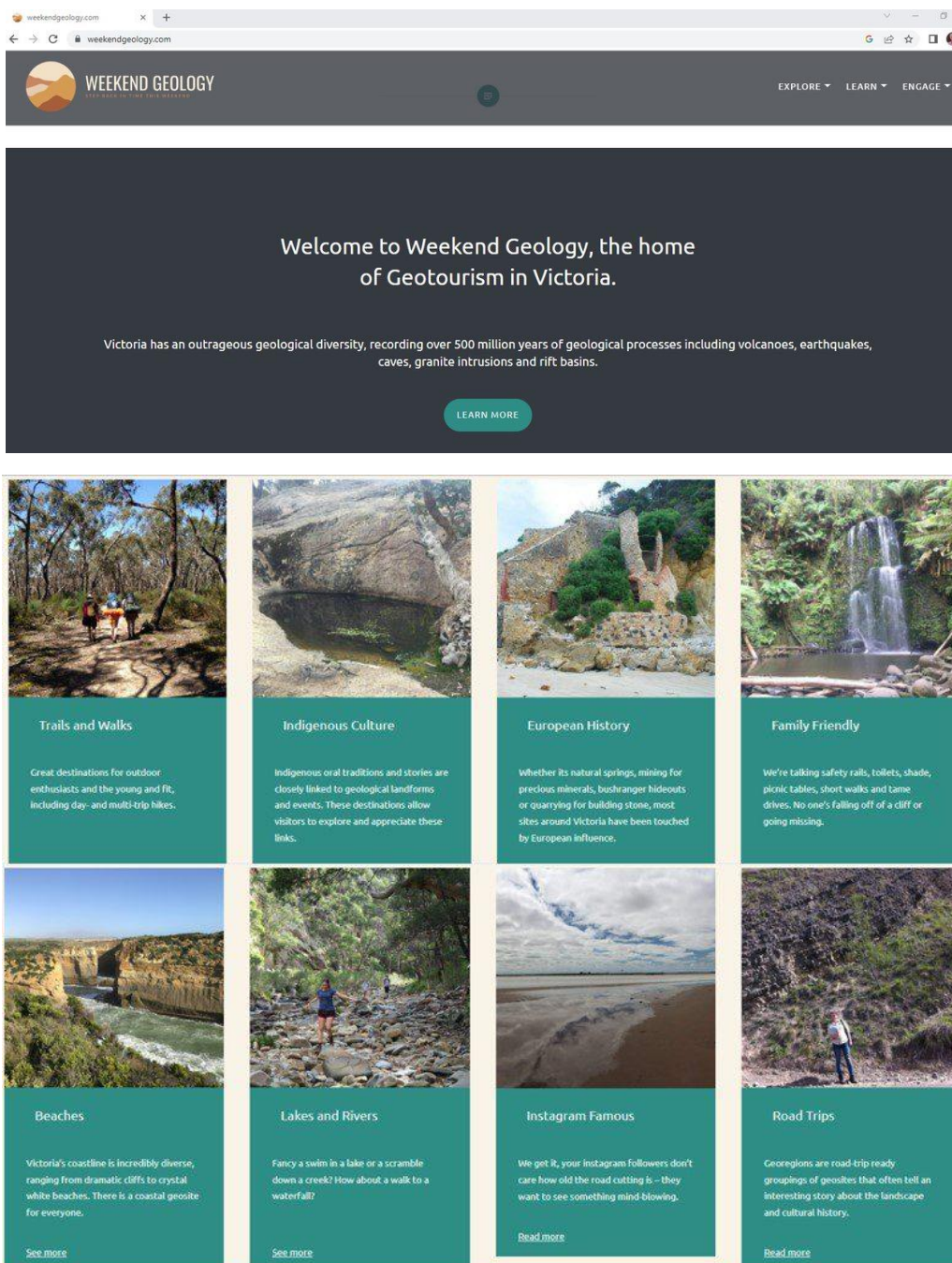
Lauren is a young geologist who first impressed us at the 'Geotourism for Geoscientists Workshop' held at the *Australian Geoscience Council Convention* held in Adelaide in 2018. She is an Exploration Geologist and Science Teacher and Founder of the [Weekend Geology](#) Website in Victoria. In addition Lauren is a Foundation Board Member of the Australian Geoparks Network.

Lauren has been working as a geologist since graduating from Monash University in 2016, devoting the first five years of her career to orogenic gold in Victoria. She then moved on to remote copper exploration projects on cattle stations west of Broken Hill and east of Cobar, as well as working at a small gold operation east of Canberra. Lauren takes great delight in regional mapping and creating geological models formed from drill hole data and potential fields as well as reading historical exploration and geological reports detailing the evolution of understanding of regions she has worked in over time.



Left: At the start of an important hole during a gold exploration drill program east of Canberra in Winter 2022. *Right:* Mapping highly deformed Ordovician Girilambone sediments, exploring for copper, west of Nyngan in Summer 2021/22.

Lauren's website *Weekend Geology* was first created whilst she was completing her Undergraduate Degree. In this she was motivated by the desire to creatively re-create for others what she had been learning about on her field trips and weekend hiking adventures. When she moved to Bendigo Lauren began volunteering with the Central Deborah Tourist Gold Mine where she experienced geotourism first-hand. Here she became involved with the board of the Australian Institute of Geologists and the Geological Society of Australia, where geotourism became an important aspect of our meetings and funding allocation. During this time Lauren also began a Master of Teaching degree part time whilst she continued to work in the industry. This was driven by a desire to find out how people think, how to engage and captivate minds in science, and how to create educational experiences. These influences helped her to improve and expand the website to its current form.



The Website identifies a number of Victoria's distinct geo-regions, for instance: the Port Campbell Limestone Coast, The Greater Heathcote Region (gold, wine and granite), and Daylesford Region (springs and falls). This is an attempt to create thematic day or weekend trips which link worthwhile geological sites that may be incorporated into a person's travel plans. Within those regions Lauren takes all the best sites as defined by ability to access, importance and aesthetics, from government reports and academic papers and re-creates them as a teenage-friendly (target age of language) guide.



Left: Sedimentologist Alan Tait explaining the importance of the stratigraphy to a group of volunteers at the Cape Otway fossil site on a Melbourne University Dinosaur Dreaming Dig in 2014. Lauren is in a white jumper third from left and she later turned this experience into an article for the website. *Right:* On a university field trip to Buchan, Victoria in 2013. This is the first time Lauren found fossils in-situ and was the place where her idea for a 'geological excursion' website was founded.

Lauren views geology as a science, a way of understanding the earth. She is inspired to help people connect with the natural world by giving them a new way of knowing a place. On average the website attracts 1200 views a month with the most popular articles being the *Geological History of Victoria*, an article and map about *The Bendigo Goldfields*, and a *Geological Tour of Phillip Island*. Visitors include students from inner-city high schools and local universities, prospectors from prospecting forums and curious google searches in relation to either 'historical gold reefs' or 'fossils'.

[Editor's Note: I think that Lauren is an excellent young ambassador for geology in general and geo-communication in particular. She is an outstanding example of the future generation of geoscientists and we wish her well in her career].



Last year Pat James, Foundation AGN Board Member, undertook a Post Covid Geopark Tour of Europe. We reported on part of his tour in the last issue of the Newsletter and follow it up in this one with his take on the [Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark](#) in Ireland.

Located on the west coast of Ireland, the Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark was established in 2011. It has an area of 530 km², it is bounded by Atlantic coastal cliffs (10-200 m high) to the west, the Gort lowlands to the East and by low hilly terrain to the south. Much of the land is at an elevation of 100 m-200 m above sea-level; the highest point is Slieve Elva at 344 m. The area of limestone which comprises most of the [UNESCO Global Geopark](#) has few rivers and only one (Caher River) which flows its entire length over ground.

The geological landscape is one of glacially smoothed Carboniferous (300 million years ago) fossil-rich limestone hills, dramatic sea cliffs, seasonal lakes, and vast networks of subterranean caves. This physical landscape hosts rare natural habitats and unique floral assemblages not found anywhere else on Earth, as well as abundant legacies of human settlement dating back over 6000 years.

The Geopark is managed by the Clare County Council and co-funded by the Geological Survey of Ireland. Interpretive panels include basic geological (ie: karst, limestone, sandstone etc) and geomorphological information as well as information about local biodiversity and conservation.

Pat reports on his visit to the Geopark

A friendly Geopark Guide welcomed me into the Visitor's Centre and introduced the most important item for any visit, a Geopark Map. This was a simple yet informative guide for any type of tourist or visitor. It included detailed information about access and transport services including roads, buses and ferries. It also included locations of both cycling and walking trails. The locations and names of more than 20 Geosites were included as well as the locations of other Visitor Centres, historic/heritage monuments, and viewing points. All of this information was layered most subtly on a simple geological base map.



The Burren Visitor Centre at Kilfenora



The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark Map

On the back of the map are useful and engaging snippets of information (vignettes) about what you might do in the Geopark, that is, walking, cycling, climbing or caving as well as the importance of its biodiversity and how this could be conserved. It also includes information about its cultural history including both current and recent communities to the fascinating Neolithic 'dolmens' from 7000 years ago, as well as the annual Burren Rocks Festival and the Burren Food Trail. This is one of the best interpretive maps for a natural area that I've come across and I used it extensively both on my trip and subsequently as a guide to how such maps should be designed and used. The Visitor Centre also offered a gift shop, bookshop, walking clothes and evidence of the Geofood Trail which is a welcome addition to geotourism in the Geopark.



The Doolin Cave Geosite

The most visited and spectacular Cliffs of Moher 'sacrificial' tourist site receives more than 1 million visitors a year. Busloads of tourists arrive for day trips from Dublin and are managed en-masse from bus or car parks to the visitor centre, clifftop views and then down to at least a dozen curio shops selling everything from Irish penny whistles to much needed windcheaters. My most interesting (and useful) purchase was a children's activity book of the site which magnificently interpreted the geology and landscape value of the area to children of all ages through colouring-in pages, stories, myths and quizzes, etc.

Most tourists headed to the clifftops on foot or by golf buggy (very important for accessibility), where they gazed with awe at the views and circling seabirds soaring along the dark craggy Carboniferous sandstones which make up these

towering 700 foot sheer precipices, and the howling wind and grey scudding clouds which clung menacingly to the clifftops. Then it was back down to the warmth and glitter of the many small shops, icecream stalls and magnificent and truly amazing souvenir-filled Visitor Geo-Interpretation Centre. Plans are now under way to remodel and expand the whole site by 2040 to cater for even more geotourists than the millions who currently visit the region each year.



Left: Interpretive panels, signs and sights at Caherconnell Fort. *Right:* Poul nabrone Geosite The Geosite is the oldest dated megalithic monument in Ireland.

GEOFOOD - CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH PLACE AND FOOD

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark is a proud supporter of UNESCO Global Geoparks GEOfood project. GEOfood is a global brand that promotes food that is sourced and produced in UNESCO Global Geoparks. GEOfood emphasises the connections between local food and the food traditions and geological heritage of the region where the food is produced. It is a brand that focuses on strengthening local livelihoods by connecting local food producers, restaurants, and retailers to each other. GEOfood increases opportunities for local people and visitors to savour and appreciate quality local food. It emphasizes the connection between local food and local geology, promotes sustainable food production, protects biodiversity, encourages responsible use of water and waste recycling, seasonality, reduced food miles, increased local economic impacts and worker rights.



The **GEOfood** initiative was led by **Magma UNESCO Global Geopark** in Norway in 2013 and has grown to include partners in Geoparks throughout the world. The GEOfood brand is now managed by GEOfood International, a new

private non-profit share company. Only a UNESCO recognised Geopark can use the GEOfood brand. The brand rules are that the raw materials of a GEOfood product comes from within or adjoining a UNESCO Global Geopark and that the story of the connection between the food and its geological and cultural heritage is promoted on labels, menus, websites and social media.

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark became a member of the international GEOfood network in 2021. It is proud to support and promote the sustainable development and appreciation of a great and ancient food tradition rooted in geology. The Geopark has been collecting a wide array of food stories throughout the Geopark and it is establishing GEOfood as a core part of its food offering.

With a rich culture of food production that dates back for thousands of years, and a unique geological landscape that sustains a wide array of biodiversity, the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark is a perfect fit for GEOfood. From 'winterage' beef to foraged haw ketchup, from farm ice-cream to hand-harvested smoked oysters, the diversity of food and production methods for food in the Geopark is vast. Every product has its own story to tell and that is just what the Geopark does through its GEOfood offerings.



10th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS



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**. It is located 100 km from Marrakesh in the middle of the central High Atlas Mountain Chain.



FEATURED BOOK - GEOTOURISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST



The book **Geotourism in the Middle East** has just been published by Springer. It is co-edited by Mamoon Allan and myself. A decade ago Mamoon, a Jordanian National, was one of my PhD students in Tourism at Edith Cowan University in Perth. While he was undertaking his studies he contributed to several 'Geotourism and Geopark' workshops held in Western Australia based

on the findings of his research comparing geotourism in Australia and Jordan. Today he is a full Professor of Tourism Marketing at the University of Jordan and a leader in geotourism development in the Middle East

The book is the first of its kind on the topic for the Middle East and includes four theoretical chapters; twelve country case studies including ones from Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, UAE and Yemen; as well as a Conclusion. The book includes a Chapter on 'The Geotourism Potential of Sand and Dunes' by Professor David Newsome, a strong AGN Member and supporter. Another chapter examines 'The Significance of Geotourism through the Lens of Geoethics'. This has been written by Silvia Peppoloni and Giuseppe Di Capua, Italy, both supporters of the AGN who, as reported on earlier in this Newsletter, presented papers at the AESC Conference in Perth. Another chapter is based on research undertaken by Sherry (Sherry) Khodayar from Iran who completed a Masters Degree in Tourism with me seven years ago. Her thesis was on 'Residents' Perceptions of Geotourism in Qeshm Island UNESCO Global Geopark, Iran'. Like Mamoon, Sherry presented parts of her thesis at several Geoparks Workshops in Perth whilst undertaking her studies.



Sherry undertaking an interview in Qeshm Island UNESCO Global Geopark

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.

<https://australiangeoparksnetwork.org>