

The Association of UK RIGS Groups



Regionally Important Geological/geomorphological Sites

UKRIGS Development Strategy 2006-2010

September 2006

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www.ukrigs.org.uk

UKRIGS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: 2006 – 2010

PREFACE

The British Isles enjoy one of the most diverse geological landscapes on Earth, with an incomparable range of rocks, fossils and landforms for such a modest land area. They provided the early inspiration for geologists and natural historians, who pioneered the development of the Earth Sciences here in Britain. This spectacular *geodiversity*¹ is the physical foundation of our rich mosaic of cultural landscapes, regional architecture and industrial development and also underpins the biodiversity of these islands. Together, these form natural archives of past climatic and environmental change whose interpretation holds an important key to our environmental future.

Britain's geodiversity and biodiversity are both under threat from accelerating rates of climate change, resource consumption and land surface transformation. An appreciation and understanding of our Earth and biological heritage are vital to sustainable development and the better management of Britain's share of Earth's land surface. *Geoconservation*² of our Earth heritage is therefore increasingly recognised as a core component of the holistic and successful stewardship of our natural environment.

The RIGS scheme was developed as the non-statutory, voluntary arm of the Earth Science Conservation Strategy (1990)³, devised by the former Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) for the conservation and management of *Regionally Important Geological/geomorphological Sites (RIGS)*.

The Association of United Kingdom RIGS Groups (UKRIGS) is the national organisation formed in 1999, with the encouragement and support of NCC's successor national statutory conservation agencies (English Nature⁴, Countryside Council for Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage) and the Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC), to represent the RIGS movement and its independent RIGS groups across the UK. Its constitutional duty is to

encourage the appreciation , conservation and promotion of Regionally Important Geological/geomorphological Sites for education and public benefit.

The first UKRIGS Development Strategy (2001-2005) emerged after a decade of RIGS activity and at the end of UKRIGS's first year in existence. This second UKRIGS Development Strategy (2006-2010) builds on this. Much has been achieved in the first five years of its independent existence and UKRIGS has been at the forefront of the growing emergence of geoconservation.

UKRIGS intends to build on the success which the RIGS movement has achieved since its inception, clearly focused on representing the independent RIGS groups which constitute its membership and recognises the importance of harnessing and enhancing their professional expertise and voluntary energies.

UKRIGS is pledged to further the appreciation, conservation and promotion of RIGS and other geoconservation sites for education, public benefit and the development of geotourism⁵. This is being achieved by providing a UK and wider British Isles perspective in relation to fund raising, recording standards, data handling, communication, interpretation and the promotion of good practice.

UKRIGS recognises the concepts of *geodiversity* and biodiversity and that these are fundamental to a balanced and sustainable environment. These are a key part of sustainable use of our urban and rural landscapes and resources. UKRIGS will work with other organisations and agencies to conserve our surviving heritage at local, regional, national and international levels.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to become an outstanding champion of geodiversity conservation in the British Isles so that through education at all levels, our Earth heritage is understood, cherished, cared for and sustained by individuals, communities and organisations for the future.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Objective 1

To secure the long-term future of UKRIGS as the principal national body for the RIGS movement in the United Kingdom

Objective 2

To support the operational needs and long-term development of member RIGS groups

Objective 3

To complete the RIGS network across the United Kingdom and promote similar networks elsewhere in the British Isles

Objective 4

To create a centralised national RIGS database and promote standards within RIGS groups for recording, assessing, nominating and notifying RIGS sites

Objective 5

To develop, strengthen and sustain relationships between UKRIGS and national, regional and local government, the statutory conservation agencies, commerce and industry, landowners and managers and other organisations

Objective 6

To raise awareness, appreciation and promotion of RIGS and other geoconservation sites for education at all levels, public benefit and the development of geotourism

OUR TARGETS

Objective 1

To secure the long-term future of UKRIGS as the principal national body for the RIGS movement in the United Kingdom

- 1.1 maintain a centralised, independent national office from which to coordinate RIGS activities
- 1.2 establish a secure income stream for geoconservation by developing funding agreements with major benefactors and fund holders on behalf of UKRIGS
- 1.3 provide a nationwide network of RIGS support
- 1.4 play a major role in the development of a National Geodiversity Action Plan
- 1.5 significantly upgrade the quality and quantity of RIGS work across the UK
- 1.6 act as a consultative body for documents of national importance for geoconservation, along the lines of recent work on Local Sites Guidance
- 1.7 to review annually and prioritise targets and actions as part of a UKRIGS Action Plan

Objective 2

To support the operational needs and long-term development of member RIGS groups

- 2.1 to advise member RIGS groups on the implementation of DEFRA's Local Sites Guidance, including the setting up of local sites partnerships [with local authorities, wildlife trusts and others], for the selection and management of non-statutory local sites, particularly Local Geological Sites. [In Scotland: Local Geodiversity Sites]
- 2.2 to revise the RIGS Handbook as the guiding document of the RIGS movement
- 2.3 to maintain the UKRIGS Newsletter and website as key components in the dissemination of good practice
- 2.4 provide advice, support and funding guidance to local groups to enhance their geoconservation efforts, especially those which are struggling
- 2.5 to support and drive forward Local Geodiversity Action Plans to a common standard
- 2.6 provide advice and support to member groups on the interpretation and promotion of their designated sites

Objective 3

To complete the RIGS network across the United Kingdom and promote similar networks elsewhere in the British Isles

- 3.1 encourage and facilitate the establishment of new RIGS groups in areas not covered by existing member groups, in liaison with the local sites partnerships

- 3.2 foster relationships between groups at differing stages of development and encourage partnership working
- 3.3 extend existing collaborative links with the Association of Welsh RIGS Groups (AWRG) and any future Scottish and Irish initiatives for geoconservation to reflect developments in planning policy and funding specific to their devolved national governance and funding agencies
- 3.4 develop links with the geoconservation movement in the Irish Republic, Isle of Man and Channel Islands with particular regard to their regional and local Earth science sites

Objective 4

To create a centralised national RIGS database and promote standards within RIGS groups for recording, assessing, nominating and notifying RIGS sites.

- 4.1 create a centralised and secure national RIGS database, compatible with GeoConservation⁶, the UKRIGS Site Recording System, to hold site records of member groups
- 4.2 promote the adoption and use of common geoconservation standards for recording, assessment and nomination procedures for RIGS sites locally and nationally
- 4.3 to liaise with local sites partnerships to ensure that these standards are maintained in the selection, assessment and management of Local Geological Sites

Objective 5

To develop, strengthen and sustain relationships between UKRIGS and national, regional and local government, the statutory conservation agencies, commerce and industry, landowners and managers and other organisations.

- 5.1 play a leading role in the development of a National Geodiversity Action Plan
- 5.2 influence national regional and local policy in the UK and constituent countries to take account of geodiversity in planning and other areas of policy which impinge on the natural environment
- 5.3 produce and update leaflets, media literature and briefings to promote UKRIGS and the wider RIGS movement
- 5.4 maintain and develop the UKRIGS website as a source of information, advice and good practice
- 5.5 sustain and develop the UKRIGS national conference as an important vehicle for the dissemination of best practice between member groups and with relevant external bodies
- 5.6 develop and maintain an archive/library of interpretative materials produced by and for member groups and other geoconservation bodies to recognise and promote best practice
- 5.7 consult with key representatives of government and planning authorities at national, regional and local level, to form partnerships to provide expertise and promote RIGS in line with government guidelines⁷

- 5.8 strengthen working relationships with statutory and voluntary bodies by maintaining and developing collaborative links with national statutory conservation agencies (Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales)
- 5.9 renew the Memorandum of Understanding with the British Geological Survey
- 5.10 consult with key representatives of commerce and industry, landowners and managers, across the UK, to promote RIGS
- 5.11 maintain existing and develop new initiatives with other geoconservation bodies (Geoconservation Commission of the Geological Society, Geologists' Association, Geology Trusts, Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, National Trust *etc.*) with a recognised commitment to conservation, to share in and strengthen the links between geodiversity and biodiversity at the regional and local scale
- 5.12 promote examples of good practice in UK geodiversity conservation at the international level

Objective 6

To raise awareness, appreciation and promotion of RIGS and other geoconservation sites for education at all levels, public benefit and the development of geotourism

- 6.1 increase the use of geoconservation sites for education at all levels
- 6.2 promote and raise awareness of geodiversity heritage for education and community enrichment
- 6.3 seek funding to sustain the UKRIGS Education Project [Earth Science On-Site], promoting the use of geoconservation sites by school groups in Science and Geography at Key Stages 2, 3 & 4
- 6.4 maintain collaborative links with the Earth Science Teachers' Association and other educational bodies
- 6.5 work with the developing European geopark networks to foster geoconservation within the development of the geotourism resource.

GLOSSARY and REFERENCES

¹ **Geodiversity:**

“the variety of rocks, fossils and minerals and natural processes”,
Prosser, C., 2002, in Terms of endearment, *Earth Heritage* (17) 12-13

“is also the link between people, landscapes and their culture through the interaction of biodiversity with soils, minerals, rocks, fossils, active processes and the built environment”,
Stanley, M. 2000, in Geodiversity, *Earth Heritage* (14) 15-18

² **Geoconservation:**

“Geological and geomorphological conservation”,
Prosser, C., 2002, in Terms of endearment, *Earth Heritage* (17) 12-13

³ **Nature Conservancy Council, 1990**, *Earth Science conservation in Great Britain – A strategy*

⁴ In 2006 **English Nature** merged with parts of the Countryside Agency and Rural Development Service to become **Natural England**.

⁵ **Geotourism:**

“The provision of interpretive facilities and services to promote the value and societal benefit of geologic and geomorphologic sites and their materials, and ensure their conservation, for the use of students, tourists and other recreationists.”

Hose, T.A., 2000, in European Geotourism – Geological Interpretation and Geoconservation Promotion for Tourists in Barretino, D., Wimbledon, W.P. & Gallego, E. (Eds.) *Geological Heritage: Its Conservation and Management*. Madrid: Instituto Tecnológico Geominero de España. pp.127-146.

⁶ **GeoConservation** is the UKRIGS Geological/geomorphological Site Recording System, developed in Microsoft Access, freely available to all RIGS groups.

⁷ **Government guidelines include:**

In England:

Planning Policy Statement 9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.
Local Sites, Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management.
Geological conservation: a guide to good practice.

In Scotland:

Guidance on Establishing and Managing Local Nature Conservation Site Systems in Scotland.

In Wales:

The guidelines are due to be published shortly.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF UKRIGS OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2005-06

Full Curriculum Vitae can be viewed on www.ukrigs.org.uk

<u>Chairman</u>	Mike Browne BSc, C Geol., FGS
<u>Acting Secretary</u>	Dr Cheryl Jones BSc, PGDip, MSc, PhD
<u>Treasurer</u>	Alan Cutler BSc., M.CAM., Dip.M., M.CIM
<u>Committee</u> (elected)	Dr Kenneth Addison MA, DPhil, FGS, FRMetS, FRGS Professor Cynthia V. Burek BSc, MSc, PhD, FGS, MILT Dr Thomas A. Hose BSc, MA, PhD, PGCE, MILAM, FGS Peter Jones BA, MSc, PGCE, FGS John R Reynolds BA
<u>Committee</u> (co-opted)	Craig Slawson BSc Keith Ambrose BSc

APPENDIX B
LIST OF UKRIGS MEMBER GROUPS & ASSOCIATE MEMBERS 2005-2006

Member RIGS groups:	Total 43
<p style="text-align: center;">ENGLAND [33]</p> <p>Avon Bedfordshire Berkshire Black Country Geological Society Buckinghamshire Cheshire Cornwall Cumbria Derbyshire Devon Dorset East Yorkshire Greater Manchester Kent Lancashire Leicestershire and Rutland Lincolnshire Norfolk Northamptonshire NW London [Harrow & Hillingdon GS] Nottinghamshire North Yorkshire Geodiversity Partnership Shropshire Somerset South London Staffordshire Suffolk Surrey Sussex [Brighton & Hove GS] Tees Valley Warwickshire GCG West Yorkshire Wiltshire</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">WALES [4]</p> <p>Central Wales Dyfed NEWRIGS (North East Wales) Gwynedd & Mon</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SCOTLAND [6]</p> <p>Fife Highland Lothian & Borders Stirling Strathclyde Tayside</p>
Associate Members:	Total 2
<p>Earth Science Teachers' Association University of Derby</p>	