

**Graham Worton abstract – Geol Soc WMRG meeting 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 2018, The Birmingham & Midland Institute.9 Margaret St,B3 3BS, 18:00 for 18:30 start**

Applied and academic aspects of Earth science were driving forces that made the midlands rise as perhaps the major centre of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The discoveries of that incredible time in our history went on to transform our understanding of our planet and defined the direction of our interactions with it for the last 300 years.

Applied Earth science is arguably now needed more than ever before to address many environmental and resource driven issues in our time. We have seen geologists become involved with to cleaning up our land and waters, geohazards prediction and mitigation, Land stabilisation sustainable energy and resources.

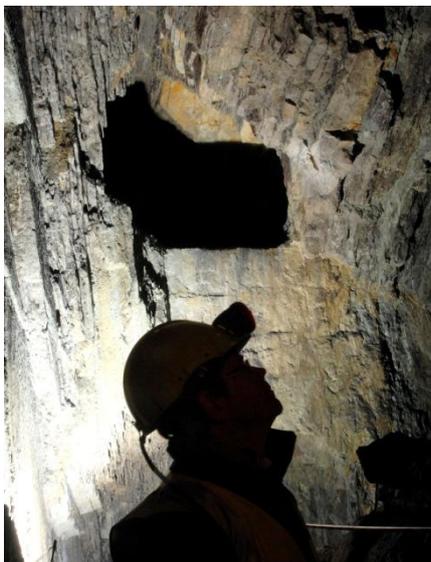
Inspirational geological places are needed to train our future earth scientists and that are sufficiently engaging to raise general awareness about the importance of the geosphere with public and politicians.

The midlands is one such globally exceptional geological territory with a globally significant and amazing story to tell to the world. Geology and geologists have a key role to play in the sustainable future of this area. In doing this we continue to contribute to and influence global geoscience agendas. One such agenda that we are engaging with at the moment is the Global Geoparks programme of the United Nations. The Black Country has submitted an application to become a UNESCO Global Geopark. A decision on this application is expected in early 2020 and if successful will give global profile to the work of geologists and the exceptional geological and related heritage of this place.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are defined as large territories with geological sites and landscapes of international geological significance. Their unique heritage is managed with a holistic concept of protection, a philosophy of environmental education for all and an aim of truly sustainable forward development. Geoparks are places that support local identity, enhance pride and engagement of local people with their heritage and are ideal territories for raising awareness about the planet, its processes and resources and key environmental issues facing society today. The mantra of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network is '*Celebrating Earth Heritage, Sustaining Local Communities*'

This talk will explain the application details and look at the links and opportunities for geosciences that will be created by this project.

**Graham Worton Keeper of Geology, Dudley Museum at The Archives and Black country UNESCO Global Geopark Project coordinator**



Graham is a passionate advocate of all aspects of Geology and Earth Sciences. From 1979 onwards, whilst working towards a geology degree, he was a volunteer working on conservation of geological heritage sites and geological collections across the Black Country with the Black Country Geological Society. After gaining an Honours Degree in Geological Sciences Graham became an applied environmental geologist with ECOTEC Research & Consulting Ltd where he worked on mineral planning, contaminated land, waste management and pollution control projects. During this period he joined the committees of the Regional group of the Geological Society, and the committee of the Black Country Geological Society On

graduation became Fellow of the Geological Society of London, and subsequently a chartered geologist in 1996.

In 1988 he took up the senior geologist role with mining & engineering geological consultants Johnson Poole and Bloomer where he ran specialist geotechnical site investigation and contaminated and unstable land remediation projects. He became Vice Chairman of the Black Country Geological Society in 1995. In February 2000 he took up the position as Keeper of Geology for Dudley MBC and was elected Chairman of the Black Country Geological Society in the same year. In 2004 site management of Dudley Museum and Art Gallery was added to his role at Dudley MBC. In this role he has been involved in developing the geological and educational aspects of the museums service, provides geological advice across the Black Country Sub-region, and is the coordinator of the Black Country Geodiversity Action Plan. He has developed a volunteer team of young graduates to assist with the geological heritage projects and collections and also active scientific research work of the museum. He mentors these young Earth Scientists and helps develop their skills forward into the profession. Additionally he has served as a national adviser to Natural England's ASLF Panel (large projects fund) for assessment and selection of projects to receive Aggregates Levy funding and is a regular contributor to Natural England on geodiversity and geological conservation issues. As a speaker and field excursion leader at national and international symposia he is author and contributor to many publications on geological conservation and geotourism, Wenlock stratigraphy and microfossils and geoenvironmental engineering.

In 2008 he won gold awards in the local, regional and national tourism schemes in the best customer care category and went on to become a judge in this category for West Midlands Tourism. He was awarded the Les Nichol ward from the Midlands Geotechnical Society in 2012, the Halstead medal from the Geologists Association in 2013 and the Brighton Medal from the Geological Curators Group of the Geological Society of London for service to geology in museums in 2017. He is currently managing the newly re-opened Dudley Museum and leading on the Black Country UNESCO global geopark project for the four Black Country local authorities and their partners. He also continues to be the geological specialist for the authority supplying specialist advice and site support to development control and planning, regeneration and heritage projects and maintains the geological Records centre for the West Midlands County.