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Western Regional Group

We're going deeper underground: discovering public perceptions of the geological subsurface through Geothermal Power

Dr Hazel Gibson, University of Plymouth

17th July 2018. The Hub, Aztec West, Bristol.

Refreshments at 6pm for 6:30pm Start

The Western Regional Group is pleased to invite **Dr Hazel Gibson**, a researcher of the public perception and communication of geothermal power at the University of Plymouth. She is currently examining public perceptions of geology in the South West of England. Covering science communication, psychology, geology and geography, this research has led to a whole new understanding of how expert and non-expert geoscientists conceptualise the geological subsurface and how that understanding can be used to improve the effectiveness of our communications.

'Geology; that's just rocks isn't it?' Undoubtedly this is a phrase any geoscientist has heard many times in their life. But, as we know, geology is more than just rocks. In fact, from reducing our carbon budget using Carbon Capture and Storage, to the deep geological disposal of radioactive waste, geologists are attempting to solve several of our biggest environmental issues in many innovative ways. However, for the public, new technological solutions are often viewed with uncertainty, even fear and when questions held by the public are not addressed, the result can be catastrophic. Nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than with fracking, a technology whose public image is now so bad that it is hard to envision a space where communication is about engagement and not crisis management.



Enter Deep Geothermal Power. A relative newcomer to the deep geological technologies mix in the UK, it benefits from being fairly unknown and thus avoiding major negative connotations, but also being a renewable energy resource and therefore generally perceived to be popular. Managing deep geothermal's debut into society is something that must be carefully handled, and it is essential that the public is partner in this introduction. The United Downs Deep Geothermal Power project just outside Redruth in Cornwall is providing the perfect opportunity to explore public perceptions of geothermal power and how those perceptions influence effective communication.

Forthcoming Talks - The WRG is constantly on the lookout for fascinating talks. If you would like to present, know someone who is willing please contact the WRG committee (details below) and we will try our very best to accommodate your requests.

Contact: For all enquiries regarding the Western Regional Group and events please contact us using the details below.

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