

**JUNE
NEWSLETTER
2004**

What's On?



Sunday, July 18th 2004

A talk by Jenny Bevan:

**The Geology and Natural History of the
Grand Canyon (and some other places)**

when? The lecture starts at 12.30pm : if you want to turn up half an hour earlier and bring a picnic lunch, please do.

where? The First Year Geology Laboratory, enter from Car Park 19, UWA. Park by the door, it is free on Sundays.

how? Go in Entrance 1 off Fairway, road bends back on itself, go across a zebra crossing then right into a square car park with trees (Car Park 20) carry on into Car Park 19.

Did **you** notice? Have another look at the front page.

THE MUSEUM HAS CHANGED ITS NAME!

We are now the E.de C. Clarke **Earth Science** Museum

Since the UWA restructuring, when the Department of Geology ceased to exist and we became part of the larger School of Earth & Geographical Sciences by combining with the Department of Geography and with Soil Science (from the Faculty of Agriculture), it has been clear that the Museum should better reflect the character of its parent body. To that end I sought to have the name changed so that it was more inclusive, and it was ratified at the last School Meeting.

I am now able to add exhibits to the Museum to broaden its scope, and hope to have a Soil Science exhibit finished before UWA Expo (our Open Day) at the end of August. "Friend" George Horsham has very kindly made us two new display stands to match the existing displays (you're a hero, George!) and I am currently discussing with the Soil Science experts what we should include in the new exhibit. I think people will find it very interesting, as I often get queries about soils especially in Perth.

George has also helped with two new ('recycled') display cases for the foyer, and if I am able to get everything finished in time, we should have a Friends gathering to view them and celebrate the additions and the name change. It will not affect what the Friends do, as we are already pretty broad-based in our activities.

If you have not yet visited the **new Museum website**, do have a look. I have attached downloadable factsheets about things like the Gingin Chalk, as well as the useful information on the pages themselves. You can also access pdf copies of the **newsletters**, in case you have lost yours and can't remember when things are on. I hope to add a more extensive biography of E de C Clarke soon.

<http://www.earthmuseum.segs.uwa.edu.au>



Friends Excursion on May 14th: The Gravity Information Centre, near Gingin

The Centre is not hard to find and to travel to, thanks to a good new road and ample signage. Parking is free and close to the buildings, and you can use the cafe without paying to go in to the exhibits. This is useful to know, since the Centre is situated in some delightful bushland, which I imagine would be stunning in spring when the wildflowers arrive: it is attractive enough in



winter. There are also some exhibits and walking trails outside and beyond the carpark to enjoy. We started with a cup of coffee in the Stargazers cafe, to allow for latecomers to join the party. Eleven of us enjoyed the day.

Entrance was only \$3 which was nice: the same price as the coffee! The experience starts with a film in a small theatre which covers all kinds of background information you will need to know. Around the area are also a large number of informative posters which address the topics as well, so that you can go over bits again if you wish. Then you are free to wander around the gallery and see the various things.

They fall into two categories. The first is the artworks. Many of these were done during the original promotion of the Gravity Centre and were on display at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery at UWA. They are inspired by the ideas and are nice to look at but are not scientific. There is an enormous mural done by local schoolchildren on the theme of the Universe and various astronomical aspects.





The second is the scientific exhibits, some of which are interactive. For example, you can shout into a very long coiled tube and hear your shout come out of the other end a fraction of a second later. You can also see how magnetic effects interfere with normal gravity movement, by rolling a little cart with magnets down a ramp across different metals. Some of the more complicated

equipment was out of order, which was disappointing, and the other problem was that there was nobody on site who could deal with scientific questions.

Outside is a big pendulum tower which was dramatic but because the pendulum movement was driven electrically I was not sure if it was behaving naturally: still fun to watch though. They have been bothered by vandalism so have lost at least one of the large steel pendulum balls. Because of safety concerns, you will need to ask the cafe people to let you into the pendulum enclosure.



We had brought picnic lunches or bought our lunches in the cafe, and sat outside in the sunshine to enjoy a social lunch. There are good barbecues there: if you are organised, a barbecue lunch would be delightful.

The aboriginal walk is available but not signposted as yet: another highlight to look forward to on a future visit would be the "Leaning Tower of Gingin" from which we are assured you will be able to drop stuff to show how things fall under gravity (I'm just glad I'm not having to take a group of Year 9 schoolboys for that one!). There is a path which acts as a trail through the Solar System:

a ring of bricks represents the Sun's diameter and models of the planets are set up at appropriate intervals along a track, rather like the one at Perth Observatory.



Nearby are solar ovens as used in some remote areas for cooking, but the sun had decided to go in at this stage which was just as well.



Although the word Gingin is used a lot, it is actually about 25 kilometres from Gingin, so we had a bit of a drive to get there and meet in the main street. Then we were off to the roadside exposure of the Gingin Chalk. Despite the recent rains, not much more in terms of fossils had been exposed since our last visit, but brachiopods and so on were in evidence and Allan found a very nice shark's tooth (his first, so he was delighted).

Altogether a good (and economical!) day, and one that 'Friends' might like to do on their own, although it is always more fun in a group. The displays themselves may be upgraded in the future, and when they build the Tower there will be more to see and do.

Take a look at the ball pendulum to the right. You may see our tiny figures reflected in it! Photos used in this article are by Allan Hart and Jenny Bevan, and you can go to the Gravity Centre website to find out more details:

www.gdc.asn.au



“Popular Gemmology” Courses

The Gemmological Association of Australia (WA Divn.) Inc have a course on “Popular Gemmology”, covering topics such as: *Introduction to Gems and Gemmology; Pearls; Diamond and Simulants; Organic Gems; Ornamentals; Cutting Styles and Faceting Demonstration; Metal Chains and Hallmarks.*

Now the bad news, you have just missed out on their last course which was run on the weekend of 26th and 27th June. It would have cost \$100 which included morning tea and coffee, and was held at their rooms on the Claremont side of Cottesloe.

If you are interested in future possible courses, why not contact the organisers via: telephone 9385 5498, fax 9286 4986 or email wa@gem.org.au or check out their website <http://www.gem.org.au>



NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK

The Museum’s presentation/s for National Science Week (mid August):

A free illustrated talk for the general public: “Geological Journeys: from Artifacts to Zircon” which will be a sample of half-a dozen or so of the most exciting topics from John’s book, eg Captain Starlight in the WA Geological Survey; Pollen, Prehistory and Forensics; Aboriginal Artifacts on the Swan Coastal Plain; Emeralds, from Ancient Egypt to Western Australia; Lightning Stones of Western Australia; and The World’s oldest crystals.

Venue: Geography Lecture Theatre 1 UWA(if I can book it)

Date: Sunday 15th August

Time: 12.30-1.30pm

Speaker: Jenny Bevan (John is avoiding strenuous activity!)

I will be following it by a separate session:

“Consult the Rock Doctors - bring in your specimens for a free diagnosis” (donations to the Museum welcome).

Venue: E de C Clarke Earth Science Museum UWA

Date: Sunday 15th August

Time: 2.00-4.30pm

"Rock Doctor": Jenny Bevan - I will wear a lab coat etc and look the part!

*****PLEASE HELP: I WOULD LIKE TO BORROW A STETHOSCOPE IF ANYONE HAS ONE!**

Spring Field Trip to the Goldfields (for end September or early October.)

We are still hoping to get a field trip to the Goldfields this Spring, to include a chance to fossick as well as to see some historical mining sites. Nick Winnall kindly gave me some ideas to go on, and we will try and include what we can. It might be worth checking out the lovely new "Prospector" to get there, then hiring something to get around in.

Can you let me or Mignonne (on 9341 6746) know if you are interested?



UWA EXPO 2004 Sunday, August 29th ALL DAY: 9am- 4pm

FREE!! And Campus-Wide!!

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND FUN FOR EVERYONE

This exciting event combines informative course information sessions with hands-on displays, music, community events and campus tours.

Visitors will have opportunity to chat to UWA staff and students, view exhibits and demonstrations, attend talks on courses, enjoy concerts, grab a bite to eat, stroll through the beautiful UWA grounds or see them by free tram or from a helicopter (charges apply).

There will be over 40 talks on areas of interest to prospective students, spread over six convenient time-slots (with repeat sessions for popular courses) - from 'What I wish I'd known in Year 12' to 'Career Planning', and covering courses from Agriculture to Philosophy - and more! Faculty and Admissions staff will be on hand to answer any questions students may have about the application and admissions process.

Here in the School of Earth & Geographical Sciences you can enjoy:

- **hands-on experiments in our laboratories**
- **finding out about life in the Solar System**
- **learning how to identify minerals**
- **putting our beaches under the microscope**
- **looking into rocks with polarised light**
- **watching micro-beasts in soil**
- **seeing plants and animals and their place in our environment**
- **using computers to understand the Earth**
- **talking to Earth Scientists about studying Earth Science at UWA and job prospects**

More information will be available as the date draws closer, but it's not too early to put it in your diary - or to let others know about it! Look out for your free programme in The West Australian on the weekend before EXPO, or pick up one on the day.

*****PLEASE HELP: CONTACT ME IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP ON THE DAY!**

MUSEUM ROSTER:

Contact **Allan Hart 9360 5157 (business hours)** or you can email him on: allan.hart@abs.gov.au to let him know which date(s) you would like.

Sunday roster for mid 2004

June 6	Allan Hart	Aug 1	Pauline Matthews
June 13	Bill Fitzgerald	Aug 8	Nell Matthews
June 20	Stella Hutchinson	Aug 15	Roger Staley
June 27	Stan Irwin	Aug 22	Luke Heath
July 4	Stella Hutchinson	Aug 29	Pat & Tony Miller
July 11	Aiden Couzens	Sept 5	Joanna Carrington
July 18	Leo Goldflam	Sept 12	Sue Birney
July 25	Adrienne Cavaney	Sept 19	Mignonne Clarke
		Sept 26	Ted & Joyce de Jong

New members who haven't done a roster yet: it is EASY and PLEASANT! I will guide you through what needs to be done, either beforehand or on the day if I am free. The book will be open at the **instructions page** so just READ THAT if you have forgotten anything, and the Security guys are there to help too. If all else fails, **ring me on my home number (button marked "HOME" on the phone)** or on my mobile: 0423 948 393.

NB I have put a small CD player next to the desk and a couple of CDs: if you are keen to play some nice music during your stint you can bring your own CDs: probably a good idea to have it not too loud and preferably not "heavy metal"!



Thanks so much, all of you, who have helped by being on the roster! Even if you don't get many visitors, it is important to be open when we promise we will be open, and who knows, your visitor may spread the word to others (and even be the reason why a student does Earth Science at U.W.A.!). Thanks also to those who organised their own "swaps".

NB.If you are unable to be a "Friend" by doing a roster, please don't forget that the alternative is to give a donation towards newsletter expenses etc.: \$15 is suggested. Thanks very much to those who have donated so far in 2004!! Please make cheques payable to: "School of Earth & Geographical Sciences" and I can then direct it into the Museum's donation fund.