

GEOLOGY

The geology group's summer programme restarted in May, and this year it is a real team effort with various different members leading and contributing their knowledge on our outings.

Eleven attended a trip to Hodge Close and Cathedral Cave. We learnt from Andrew the history of mining in the Little Langdale Valley and explored the extensive excavations. The slate had been formed from ash spewed from volcanoes settling in a shallow sea during the Ordovician period. We lit a candle within the cave to experience how early miners would have worked before the advent of electricity.

In June, fifteen members followed Paul & Pat on an itinerary through Smardale. We found corals and crinoids in the limestone, saw the transition in stone walls as we moved into the area of red sandstone, and found examples of current bedding in the quarry. Andrew talked about the origin of Smardale Hall, the packhorse bridge and local drove roads, and mentioning the legend of the Last Boar of Wild Boar Fell. Malcolm spoke about the railway viaduct and its link with the 'pink palace', bringing Durham miners to convalesce in Grange. We came across a huge limekiln and Paul explained its history and purpose.

Both days started drizzly but evolved into fine sunny outings.

Future activities will be shorter afternoon explorations of the geology of Humphrey Head, Lindale geological trail, the 'fossilised forest' on Grange shoreline, and Whitbarrow Scar. Further details from Susan Jones.

Andrew Musgrave