



GWL Cluster Meeting
Thursday 17th November 2016; 18:00 for 18:30
The Built Environment as a Geological Resource: Science and Heritage

This presentation will take place in the Royal Cambrian Academy,
Crown Lane, Conwy at 1830. Refreshments from 1800

Dr. Ruth Siddall - Biography

Ruth has a degree in Geology from the University of Birmingham and a PhD in Geochronology and Tectonics from University College London (UCL). She lectured in the Department of Earth Sciences at UCL from 1996 - 2015. Her research has been focused on the use of geological materials in archaeology and art history, primarily in the analysis and provenance of artists' pigments and building materials. She has worked on a number of archaeological sites and projects in Greece via the American School of Classical Studies and the British School at Athens, as well as Pompeii, Westminster Abbey and with several museum collections. Ruth's work on building stones as an outreach activity follows a strong tradition of urban geology in UCL Earth Sciences, continuing the legacy of Eric Robinson and Wendy Kirk.

Abstract

The study of building stones is often dismissed by academic 'orthogeologists' as no more than a mildly interesting outreach activity and the geology of the built environment is generally considered unworthy of further study. Admittedly, there is little scope for academic Earth Sciences research in this field, but the built environment provides a huge resource for teaching and learning at all levels from primary school to life-long learning activities. Although many geological field trips visit quarries, the purpose of the quarry is rarely discussed, let alone the destination of the stone it supplied. Thus the subject of construction and decorative stones is under-taught in most university geology departments and careers in the building stone industry are not well promoted. There are opportunities to change this. Beyond the Earth sciences, a knowledge of building stones can contribute a huge amount of information to the understanding of cultural heritage and the social histories of the built environment and here there are real opportunities for academic research. The study, understanding and appropriateness of the use of stone contributes much to the fields of art and architectural history, as well as creating a sense of place. Such essential information also provides much-needed knowledge to further the conservation and restoration of historic buildings and works of art. This talk will demonstrate the possibilities of building and decorative stone research beyond the field of geology.

Venue: All talks will be held at the The Royal Cambrian Academy, Crown Lane, Conwy, LL32 8AN (located behind Plas Mawr) and will begin at 6:30pm promptly. Refreshments will be served from 6pm.

For further information and to indicate your intention to be present, please contact GWL at:
admin@geoscience.wales