



VMSG work on the Icelandic eruptions

The UK volcanological community has demonstrated a commendable willingness to cooperate and work collaboratively in response to the eruption in Iceland. This means that very strong and focussed collaborative projects and consortia are being developed in order to address the UK's scientific and strategic needs. For example, modelling the transport and dispersion of the ash plume depends on getting accurate source parameters so this is a unique opportunity to bring volcanological, meteorological and atmospheric scientists together to work on common problems. In these times of financial restraint, effective collaboration within the UK and particularly with colleagues in Iceland is essential, if proposals for funding are to be successful.



Second fissure at Eyjafjallajökull, April 2010 (photo: Talfan Barnie).

An open meeting on the event, which was held in Oxford on April 30th, brought together over 60 scientists from a spectrum of disciplines to report preliminary observations from this event. The meeting programme and report are available on the web (<http://comet.nerc.ac.uk/news.html>).

The BGS has been providing daily advice to the UK government since April 14 when the ash plume from Eyjafjallajökull volcano began to disrupt air traffic. Alongside UK researchers, the Met Office, and others, BGS are in the SAGE (Scientific Advisory Group in Emergencies), chaired by the government's Chief Scientific Advisor. The SAGE are working with Icelandic colleagues to deal with volcanic activity and its impacts on the UK and to provide the best possible scenarios for planning and mitigation against future potentially larger volcanic eruptions.



BGS scientists on board the last flight from Iceland (16th April) followed the ash cloud (to the right of the engine) home.

Our colleagues at the Iceland Met Office and the Institute of Earth Sciences have been working together very effectively and providing very high quality information and data close to real time which has enabled everyone in the UK to keep up to speed as the situation evolves. This open and collaborative approach in both the UK and Iceland and between the two countries bodes well for some excellent science outcomes. UK scientists have been visiting the eruption sites for research on eruption dynamics, health implications and environmental impacts. Tephra collection and analysis, which is critical to ash plume modelling, has been conducted by Thor Thordarson and Icelandic colleagues and is being augmented by efforts to collect distal ash samples from locations across the UK.



Fieldwork led by Thor Thordarson to collect recent tephra samples (photo: Rhian Meara).

by Sue Loughlin and David Pyle



In the Footsteps of Giants: Irish Legends and Palaeogene Magmatism

Forthcoming Events

VMSG Field Trip

'In the Footsteps of Giants: Irish Legends and Palaeogene Magmatism'
30th August – 4th September 2010

Places on this trip have been going fast and the trip is almost full! If you would like to go on the fieldtrip please contact Carl Stevenson c.t.stevenson@bham.ac.uk as soon as possible. Please note that the deadline for payments in full is 1st July. For any queries related to payment please contact Mike Widdowson m.widdowson@open.ac.uk.

Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition

Royal Festival Hall, 25 June - 4 July 2010

Open 10am – 8:30pm. Free entrance.

<http://seefurtherfestival.org/exhibition>

This year marks the 350th anniversary of the Royal Society. The Summer Science Exhibition is running an extended science programme based in the South Bank Centre. If you are in London during this time do pop in to see the exhibits. There are two exhibition stands related to volcanology at the Royal Society Summer Exhibition this year. Selection for display at the exhibition is highly competitive and congratulations are extended to both these consortia.

'Fast and furious: witnessing the birth of Africa's new ocean'

Afar Rift Consortium - University of Leeds; University of Bristol; University of Oxford; University of Edinburgh; University of Cambridge; British Geological Survey; Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

The display will demonstrate current research in the 60-kilometre-long rift segment within the Afar depression, Ethiopia. Visitors will be able to see a 3D interactive guided tour of the Afar region, examining how the surface geology changes during continental rifting. Samples of freshly-erupted basalt and obsidian lavas will be available

for comparison with samples dredged up from the modern Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Visitors will see the extent and variety of research methods employed in the field in this hostile land, reputed to be the hottest place on Earth.

'Looking deep into model volcanoes'

University of Nottingham; University of Bristol; University of Geneva, Switzerland; Tomoflow Ltd.

Visitors to the exhibit will be able to set off syrup eruptions and see how the shapes of bubbles and the sounds generated from volcanoes vary with the style of the eruption. There is also an opportunity to look at bubbles in volcanic rocks, learn how engineers "see" bubbles inside pipes, and listen to recordings of real volcanic eruptions.

Deadlines

Student travel grants

Applications for VMSG support enabling travel funding from UK-based postgraduate researchers are due before **15th June**. For further information and an application form please see the website funding page <http://www.vmsg.org.uk/>

Editorial

It has recently been a busy time for many members of the VMSG community. On behalf of the committee I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all those that have been involved in the communication of volcanology and the conditions in Iceland to the media and the public. The impact of the Icelandic eruption on the UK has provided us with an opportunity to demonstrate the significance of volcanological research and expertise. On an island without any active volcanoes of its own, the VMSG community have resolutely demonstrated the importance of UK-based research and knowledge.

Deadline for next newsletter: 15th August '10.

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VMSG Committee Member, Editor and List Manager