

IHBC East Midlands Branch – CPD event

September 2012 - Visit to the British Geological Survey, Nottinghamshire

The IHBC East Midlands 2012 AGM took a slightly different form from past visits as this time the venue was not an old building or indeed a place of great historic interest. Instead, the group convened at the campus of the British Geological Society at Keyworth in Nottinghamshire where we were met by Dr Graham Lott and his colleague from the Building Stones Team. To begin with we were treated to a presentation about the work of the BGS and in particular the services provided by the [Building Stones Team](#). This includes the research and survey work that has been carried out to put together the Strategic Stone Study – a database of the most significant building stones used in the past, which shows where they came from as well as potential alternative sources if the original is no longer available.



We then split into two groups to explore the extensive facilities available on the site. The tours started with a walk through geological time. This is a new landscaping feature, opened in 2012, which encapsulates three billion years of the Earth's history into a [130m long stone concourse](#). The path showcases a wide variety of often very beautiful stones with every step bringing the participant about 25 million years closer to the present day. IHBC members were greatly impressed by this intriguing educational tool and enjoyed testing their knowledge of stone sources by trying to guess the quarry names (with mixed success!).





We then entered one of the massive warehouses on the site and were slightly staggered to discover that they held towering racks of core samples taken from potential sites for North Sea coal and gas exploration. This is a major element of the work carried out by the BGS – petrochemical companies must by law deposit samples from their drilling work with the organisation. However, of more immediate and practical interest to IHBC members was the building stone library. There was something rather charming about the set of beautiful purpose-made wooden cabinets carefully located high up on one of the many levels of the huge storage facility. The names on the identical cubes of stone were those we are all familiar with – Ancaster, Mansfield and Clipsham etc. – so it was excellent to learn a little about this fascinating and incredibly useful reference resource.



As always, the AGM visit ended with a bountiful and very welcome buffet tea with plenty of time to ask questions as well as to share knowledge and news amongst the assembled members.

Sara Crofts