

**INTERNATIONAL GEOSCIENCE EDUCATION ORGANIZATION (IGEO)
NEWSLETTER 03-01
May 2003**

FROM THE EDITORS:

GeoSciEd IV is coming soon! We look forward to seeing many of you in Calgary; a quick review of the program (www.geoscied.org) indicates that it will be an exciting and dynamic meeting.

It is with some regret that we have announced that we will be stepping down as newsletter editors. The global correspondence has been fun and it is exciting to hear what people around the world are doing to promote and enhance education in the Geosciences. Unfortunately the time has come for both of us to move on to other tasks. We hope that someone will be willing and able to step up and take over the task of keeping this newsletter going. Until such time as a new editor is found you can continue to send information to Mary Dowse (dowsem@silver.wnmu.edu) and she will hoard it for the new editor.

Thank you, it has been our pleasure to serve the international Geoscience Education Community in this role as newsletter editors.

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Report from Chairman, Chris King, April 2003

Conference Call

This is a big year for the International Geoscience Education Organisation – the year of GeoSciEd IV, our conference that promises to be the biggest ever. We hear from the organisers that more than 160 abstracts have been received, which leaves them with a big sorting job to do but leaves us with the prospect of excellent contributions in the conference week. Do check the website (www.geoscied.org) for registration details. Whilst we hope that the different facets of the conference will give us updates, ideas and inspiration, one of the best parts, as ever, will be the chance to meet and discuss the challenges and opportunities of our work for geoscience education in our own countries and regions. We do hope to see you there for one of the highlights of the decade for IGEO.

IGEO Survey of geoscience education

Mary Dowse has collated the initial results of the IGEO Survey of geoscience education across the world. Many thanks to all those members of IGEO Council who submitted completed questionnaires and to Mary for her work on putting them together. Mary will happily send you a copy of this initial compilation - if you would like a copy, please email her at dowsem@silver.wnmu.edu. For those who have not yet submitted results for their country, Mary can still send you a copy of the blank e-questionnaire.

Not surprisingly, the results reveal a wide diversity of geoscience provision in education across the world, from those countries in which the provision, at school level, can be described as 'none' to those who have provision that is a good deal more comprehensive, through the geography route, the science route, an option route or a combination of these

The results will form an important basis for future IGEO Council discussions on the global situation and suitable ways of improving the situation across the world.

UPDATE ON THE AUGUST 10 - 14, 2003 GEOSCIED IV MEETING IN CALGARY

Godfrey Nowlan and the Calgary Local Organising Committee continue to do a superlative job in organising the August IGEO conference. Please make sure that you keep visiting the web site (www.geoscied.org) as last minute updates are added fairly frequently.

As of April 30, 153 people (107 Full, 22 Accompanying. "Others" 24) had registered from twenty-five countries. Enrollment on field trip ranges from 28 to 4, (Note: Field Trip 6 and 13 have been canceled).

Despite concerns about international terrorism and SARS the Local Committee is anticipating a great meeting. Incidentally, about SARS in Canada. The World Health Organisation has totally lifted the ban on Toronto. This was a major storm in a teacup since the only cases were contained entirely within two hospitals. I have a son who lives just a few miles from the hospitals and he (and we) were not concerned. Toronto has had a lot of bad press on this one and besides, Calgary is over 2,000 miles away from Toronto! Even if you are routed through the airport at Toronto do not be concerned, there never was any real health risk once the suspect cases were isolated. So, pass the word along to any interested educators and accompanying guests. We are sure that this will be a meeting with a fantastic programme, superb social events and field trips that are geologically unsurpassed. (The dinosaurs are waiting)!

We look forward to seeing you in Calgary in a few months time!
Alan Morgan and the Calgary LOC.

In Memoriam - Professor P. G. Cooray

It is with profound grief that I learnt that Prof P G Cooray breathed his last on January 4th early morning.

Prof Cooray not only contributed to Sri Lanka but to several others where he worked and established Departments of Geology. His “Science Writing and Editing Workshops were popular in the Third World countries. Several were held in India and it was in one of those that I first met him. He was deeply concerned about Geology Education. He wrote several articles on this aspect, and conducted workshops for school children and schoolteachers. He was the Chairman (two terms), IUGS commission on Geoscience Education and Training (IUGS-COGEOD).

Even at the ripe age of 85-86 (?), he used to lecture at the University of Peradeniya every Monday, had finalized the manuscript of a book titled “PIONEERS OF GEOLOGY” which did not come in print when he was alive. He was responsible for several things in Sri Lanka, but as a marine scientist, I want to say this: It was Professor Cooray’s initiative that saw the starting of a Master’s program in Marine Sciences in the island country.

I was associated with him during the past 12 years or so. He was a kind, efficient, dedicated man. Always smiling, bubbling with enthusiasm and ideas and with a neat hand.

Sincerely yours

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The launch of the JESEI website

One of the big problems facing the teaching of geoscience in England and Wales is that most of the science teachers who teach geoscience through the science national curriculum have had little or no training in geoscience or geoscience teaching. Most of them are biology, chemistry or physics specialists who don’t find Earth science teaching very enjoyable or inspirational. The Joint Earth Science Education Initiative was designed to help them with their teaching. Click on the JESEI website (www.jesei.org) to see the 40+ practical activities ‘written by chemistry teachers for chemistry teachers, by physicists for physicists and by biologists for biologists’. The launch, at the Association for Science Education Annual Conference earlier this year was very successful, as shown by the edited highlights from a recent article about the website launch below.

- “You can see the plume,” exclaimed one excited teacher. “It’s better than potassium permanganate,” cried another, as they saw the convection current rise slowly through the ‘mantle’ of syrup to carry the ‘plates’ of cookies apart.
- “Your breath is powerful enough to attack limestone – and this proves it,” announced the presenter as the powdered limestone changed the bright orange indicator back to green.
- These eavesdroppings come from the recent ‘Grand Launch’ of the JESEI website, a mine full of activities to help everyone bring more pizzazz to their Earth science teaching.

- ‘I’m a chemistry teacher and the Earth science I teach is dry and boring’ – then seek out the RSC/JESEI activities written by chemistry teachers for chemistry teachers.
- ‘The carbon cycle is abstract and my biology pupils find it very hard’ – download the activities written by the IoB to help you with the Earth science in your biology teaching.
- ‘My plate tectonics teaching has been a handout to copy out for homework so far – so, how can we investigate the physics of plate tectonics in the lab? – by simulating Earth processes using syrup and cookies, or DIY ‘potty putty’ or through probing anomalous balls. All these IoP-prepared activities are waiting for the click of your mouse on the JESEI website.
- ‘Our children need to know about the biology, chemistry and physics of the Earth so that they can be part of the environmental debates of the future’ – the JESEI website is a good place to start from to build this understanding in our pupils. If they can appreciate the scientific processes involved and all the variables impinging on them, they will begin to see how scientists can safeguard the future of our planet – or not!

Chris King

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The growth of the Earth Science Education Unit

The Earth Science Education Unit has grown recently. The unit now has 28 trained facilitators strategically placed across England and Wales taking ESEU interactive workshops into their local secondary schools. The ESEU initiative, funded by the oil industry (the UK Offshore Operators Association – UKOOA), is in its second year of national ‘rollout’ and is reaching more and more schools, science teachers and science teachers in training as the weeks go by. We launch into Wales in the next few weeks and the pilot in Scotland begins soon too. With the newly appointed ESEU researcher evaluating the project and its impact, we hope to be able to show how much of a difference we are making to geoscience teaching in this country over the months and years ahead. For more details, consult the ESEU website, www.earthscienceeducation.com.

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Astronomy Education News Electronic Newsletter

Tim Slater at the University of Arizona announced the start up of an electronic email newsletter for astronomy and space science education news. Moderated by the US National Science Teachers

Association Affiliate - Association of Astronomy Educators (AAE), the news items on astronomy teaching curriculum materials and workshop opportunities are emailed several times each month. If you'd like to sign up, please send a blank email to:

astroed_news-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Tim at the University of Arizona, tslater@as.arizona.edu

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Geoscience Learning & Teaching Articles Wanted

The 10th edition of our publication PLANET is due out in June this year and we currently have a small amount of space for international contributions. Do you have a short paper on learning and teaching (curriculum development / good practice or learning research) that you would like to contribute? We are looking for articles of around 1000 words on any aspect of undergraduate or postgraduate learning and teaching in geography, earth or environmental sciences. We are particularly interested in articles that look at issues of student diversity (something that is becoming increasingly prominent in the UK with the government's push to get 50% of young people into higher education).

The deadline is very close (5th May) but if you do happen to have a paper ready then we'd love to hear from you. Alternatively, if you can recommend any paper that we might reproduce from other publications (e.g. JGE) that tackle the issue of student diversity then please let me know.

Further information about PLANET can be found at <http://www.gees.ac.uk/>

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Editor's note: The deadline for submissions (May 5) has passed, but we wanted to bring this publication and web site to your attention. Both contain much helpful information.

### **Journal of Baltic Science Education (JBSE)**

***Journal of Baltic Science Education*** (JBSE) publishes original scientific research articles in the field of Science Education and related areas for all educational levels in the Baltic countries. It is possible to publish special (thematic) issues of JBSE. The papers should be submitted and will be published in English. JBSE will promote to establish contacts between researchers and practical educators both in the Baltic countries and countries around.

A scientific journal JBSE issued by the SMC *Scientia Educologica*, Lithuania, emphasizes theoretical, experimental and methodical studies in the field of science education. JBSE is an international academic journal.

Please visit our website at <http://vingis.ktu.lt/~jbse>

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