

## How ProGEO was formed

25 years since ProGEO was founded

by:

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This year it is 25 years since ProGEO was founded. Even if 25 years is not very much compared to some of the venerable geological institutions like many of our surveys, it is certainly worthy of being noted and celebrated. ProGEO NEWS will celebrate this with a small series of articles linked to ProGEO history. The records from the very early times of ProGEO are not very rich, but we still have fragments of this history documented in our website. One source is the old versions of ProGEO NEWS available back to 1991. One interesting article is in no 3 from 2000. Here Gerard Gonggrijp has a contribution called "The early years of ProGEO".

This history has a backdrop in the Netherlands where Gerard was central in forming a Dutch working group of geoconservation (GEA) in 1969. One of the experiences from this group was that international contacts and cooperation was needed and starting with discussions on a meeting in Trondheim in 1986 plans for such an international cooperation started. Gerard hosted a meeting in Leersum in 1988 were the predecessor of ProGEO was formed. This group was called the European Working Group on Earth-Science Conservation, and if we include this working group directly into our history we could rightfully say that we also have a 30-year anniversary this year.



Field trip, the Netherlands 1988. Visit to a nature reserve – boulder clay and erratics



From the field trip of the first international symposium in Digne. A Dinosaur locality

It is interesting to note that some of the major questions that were raised then are still central in our discussions and strategies. I quote from Gerards article: *"The programme included various subjects: legislation, conservation policy, classification, listing and selection of sites, site management and education, the motor of sustainable conservation. During the meeting, it became clear that in the participating countries, Earth-science conservation (as it was called at that time) has been treated more or less as step-child in comparison to biological conservation, although often there were legal provisions which in principle made Earth-science conservation possible. There was general confidence that this situation could be improved if an active working group was set up to stimulate activities on national and international level. Great importance was attached to inform national Earth science organisations, and international bodies such as the Council of Europe, EEC, IUCN, and UNESCO and of course, the international scientific organisations, about the need for Earth-science conservation. Recognition was also given to the need to enlighten the general public on the role Earth science plays in so many human activities and to make them more Earth science minded."*

When the working group started George Black, from the UK, was elected president and Gerard Gonggrijp executive secretary. The meeting was followed up with a new meeting in Bregenz, Austria in 1989. The perspectives presented on the meeting were published the year after (Andersen et al. 1990). Already here idea that has followed ProGEO over the years appeared, as Gerard writes: "It was decided to publish a manual on the practice of Earth-science conservation across Europe". It would still be more than 20 years before this idea gave a concrete result in the form of the book which is available on our website to purchase (Wimbledon & Smith-Meyer 2012) and most rightfully dedicated to Gerard and George who also are among them that have passed away and are dearly missed in ProGEO ever since.

The problems of finishing and performing projects such as the book in ProGEO are linked to one very important issue that is still with us today. As geoconservation is not given priority in the different countries and EU, our members have not time, nor resources for a dedicated and coordinated intense effort like this. The work we do externally towards IUCN, IUGS and EU is dedicated to solving this problem, but the very problem itself hampers the effectiveness in this effort. Still, 20 years after the idea was forwarded our members in 37 European countries were able to finish the work, resulting in the present book. Let us take that as a sign of firm determination to achieve our goals!



Visit to the ammonite wall, Digne

After the Bregenz meeting the working group met again in Lom, Norway in 1990. At this time a feeling of unrest started to be present due to the lack of progress. Therefore the idea to transfer the working group into a more permanent and powerful organisation was discussed and decided. This decision was later referred to as the "Lom convention" and was the starting point of the transition of the European working group of Earth Science Conservation into the open association "The Association for the Conservation of the Geological Heritage", or ProGEO, as we see today. To contribute to a better impact, it was also discussed another format of our meetings and Guy Martini from France offered to organize a proper symposium.

This first international Symposium was arranged the year after, in 1991. 120 participants from over 30 countries were present. It was at this event the Digne declaration was agreed and that has been an important foundation both for ProGEO and the geopark-movement. The papers were published in the *Mémoires de la Société Géologique de France*. The discussion on how to transform the working group into a formal organisation was continued in a meeting in Swansee in 1992 and in the meeting the following year in Cologne, Germany finally ProGEO was established as an open and independent association as we know it today.

#### References

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The 9th international ProGEO symposium was arranged in Poland this year. Its main theme was Geoheritage and Conservation: Modern Approaches and Applications – Towards the 2030 Agenda.

The symposium was organized by the Faculty of Nature conservation, University of Warsaw Institute of nature conservation, Polish Academy of Science, Kielce Geopark, Polish Geological Institute – National Research Institute. Under the auspices of ProGEO – The European Association for the Conservation of the Geological Heritage, IUGS International Commission on GeoHeritage IUCN WCPA Geoheritage Specialist Group, Marshal of the Holy Cross Province, Mayor of the Chęciny Town and Municipality, Rector of the University of Warsaw, and Co-financed by Faculty of Geology, University of Warsaw, ProGEO – The European Association for the Conservation of the Geological Heritage, Rector of the University of Warsaw, University of Warsaw Foundation, Partners: European Center of Geological Education of the University of Warsaw, Bochnia Salt Mine, Museum of the Kielce Village, Ojców National Park and the Journal GEOHERITAGE.



The theme of the symposium points clearly forward to the developing of a broad involvement in geoheritage globally and mainstreaming geoconservation as a part of nature conservation. This work has at least two main dimensions: One is the development of global strategies the other the work that is going on and must go on in each and every country to develop actual geoconservation work on the ground. Therefore, it was two keynote lectures that started the symposium. One presenting experiences from Spain by Juana Vegas. She took up the second perspective and discussed fifty years of experiences with geoconservation from the public administrations point of view in general and the Spanish Geological Survey (IGME) in particular. The other key-note was by Kyung Sik Woo who is the Chair of IUCN WCPA Geoheritage Specialist Group. Together with co-authors Ju Seong Ok and José Brilha he presented an idea of Key Geoheritage Areas as a potential new programme in IUCN for geoheritage conservation. This is of particular interest for ProGEO as it touches directly into the aim and activities of ProGEO in its Geosite project. After the presentation it was a short discussion about this reality and the importance to co-ordinate all activities in this field to obtain maximum positive effect of the work.



The symposium had several sessions with the following themes:

Geoconservation and landscape management (9 oral presentations and 4 posters), Geoheritage and cultural heritage: mines, quarries, science and communities (13 oral presentations and 13 posters), Moveable geoheritage and science (1 oral presentations and 2 posters), Geoconservation in protected areas and nature conservation strategies (9 oral presentations and 4 posters) and Geoconservation for science, education, and tourism (16 oral presentations and 20 posters). It is difficult in a short presentation to highlight special presentations and posters, but the totality showed an impressive diversity and engagement for geoconservation in different and important settings. All abstracts were available in a program and abstract book edited by Ewa Główniak, Agnieszka Wasiłowska and Paulina Leonowicz. Perhaps it was noteworthy that the session on movable geoheritage had few contributions. This may be because this field has been in focus shorter than the other session themes, but as this was the theme in the last ProGEO suggestion for a motion in the IUCN world congress that was accepted, more activity within this field is possibly to be expected in the future.

It was noted on several occasions that this year it is 25 years since ProGEO was founded, and it certainly remarkable to sum up the achievements done in this relative short history in respect to the 9 international symposia that has been held, the regional meetings added to this and all the practical and scientific contributions to the field of geoconservation that has been made. We certainly have a lot of issues that is not settled, but we also have results to be proud of. One of these is our Journal GEOHERITAGE, issued by Springer, that was started 10 years ago. It has now achieved an impact factor of 2.333, have issued 10 volumes, 33 issues and 317 articles. Springer



presented the symposium with a large, tasty and impressing cake to celebrate the achievement. As this was taking place in Poland it is fitting to remember that one of the first articles ever published in GEOHERITAGE was in Volume 1, Issue 1, "Geological Values of Selected Polish Properties of the UNESCO World Heritage List by Zofia Alexandrowicz, Jan Urban and Krzysztof Miśkiewicz.

Within the program it was also room for a visit to the Kielce Geopark with a special focus on conservation, promotion and sustainable use of geological heritage on the urban areas, convened by Michał Poros, a Guided Tour in Chęciny, convened by Bartosz Piwowarski and a special workshop on junior researchers perspectives on geoheritage and geoconservation convened by Paulo Pereira. In connection to the symposium dinner it was also a guided tour in the Ethnographic Park in Tokarnia

On behalf of the participants and ProGEO we can thank Ewa Głowniak and her team for a fantastic symposium and a series of good memories from Poland in June.

## Geosites from Krakow region

Pre-symposium field trip

by:

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The pre-symposium field trip aimed the top geosites in Krakow region (within the boundary zone of different geological units: Krakow Upland, the Carpathian Foredeep and the Miocene Paratethys Basin). On the first day, the field trip was dedicated to the geosites in the vicinity of Krakow and the second day ended to the Conference venue in Chęciny (Holy Cross Mountains).

The main attraction of the first day was Bochnia Salt Mine, one of the oldest salt mines in the world and the oldest one in Poland. The history of salt extraction in the Bochnia region dates back to 3 500 years B.C. Salt was acquired by evaporating water from brine. The beginning of the Bochnia mine as an excavating plant dates back to 1248. In 1981, the mine was listed as a historical monument and included to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2013. The deepest shafts reached the depth of 468 meters.

The extraction continued until 1990 and in the middle 90s, the mine was open to tourist visits. There are many attractions for the tourists: the Saint Kinga's Chapel - the largest and the best-preserved chapel (in the mine) - located at a depth of 212 m.



The underground tour in Bochnia Salt Mine started by train ride



The Hercules' Club, a tall limestone club, in Ojcow National Park

From the geological point of view one of the most interesting and unique phenomenon in the mine is the occurrence of fluorescent halite crystals. The crystals emit orange or pink-red light when radiated with UV light. This phenomenon is extremely rare and it is caused by the occurrence of small amount of manganese and lead in the crystal structure.

The field trip also considered the visit to the Krakus mound, an artificial prehistoric mound, which is one of the best viewpoint on a landscape of the Krakow area. The mound is considered to be a grave of the legendary King Krakus, a founder of the city of Krakow. From the hill it can be clearly seen how the morphology is controlled by geological structures.

The first day ended at Wawel Hill and Dragon's Den Cave (Smocza Jama) in the Old City of Krakow. The Royal Castle is situated on the Wawel Hill, which typical tectonic horst. The hill with steep slopes and flat summit situated by the river is a perfect place for a castle. The Royal Castle and the Wawel Hill are good examples of casual relationships between geology and human history and culture. The Dragon's Den, the most famous cave in Poland, is 276 meters long karstic cave under the Wawel Hill. According to the popular legend the cave was a dwelling place of the evil dragon that threatened the people on Wawel Hill.

So the Dragon's Den has a cultural and a geological importance. Although there is no geological information about the origin of the cave, and the available information is only focused on the cultural aspect of the cave.

On the second day the highlight was the Ojcow National Park and its' geological features: Krakow Gate, Ciemna Cave and Hercule's Club. The Jurassic limestone built the unique landscape of the Ojcow valleys with steep canyons and various erosional rock formations.

Probably, the most famous geosite is the Krakow Gate Rock, a gigantic gate shaped erosional rock form. The name derives from the fact that once the trade route from Krakow to Silesia went through the rock gate. In front of the Gate, on the other side of the valley there is a rock massif of Koronna Mountain with Ciemna Cave, one of the most famous caves in the National Park. This karstic cave is 209 meters long and it is famous for the large cupolas in the ceiling. The temperature inside the cave stays at 7,5 °C throughout the year. Near the cave entrance there is an important archaeological site with traces of human settlement from Paleolithic period, some 115 000-120 000 years ago. In the Ojcow National Park there are about 630 caves.

Another famous erosional rock formation in the Park is the spectacular Hercules Club, a tall (30 m) limestone club shaped crag. The Club is formed by several erosional stages (Pradnik Valley) during the Pliocene and Pleistocene. The Hercules Club is situated near the picturesque Pieskowa Skala Castle, which was originally founded in the 14th century and is now gracefully renovated.

Near the church in Chotel Czerwony there are unique giant gypsum crystals visible. Those gypsum intergrowths are built of crystals from a few decimeters to over 1,5 meter in length - the longest crystals are 2,7 meters long. The biggest natural gypsum crystals in Poland reaches the length of 3,5 meters.



The Krakow Gate

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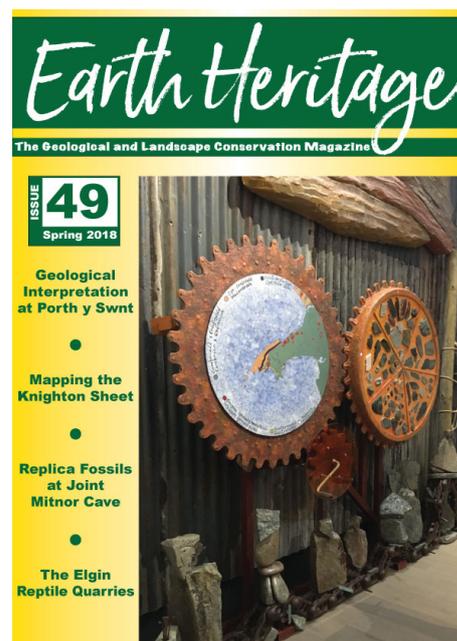
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## Declaration of Chęciny

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### DECLARATION OF CHĘCINY



The participants of the 9th International Symposium of ProGEO, held at Chęciny (Poland), 25-28 June 2018, under the main theme 'Geoheritage and Conservation: Modern Approaches and Applications Towards the 2030 Agenda', recognizing that geodiversity and geoheritage and their proper management are fundamental elements for the accomplishment of many of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals proclaimed by the United Nations:

Reaffirm that

- Both in situ and ex situ geoheritage is at risk due to human and natural factors, which justifies a need for geoconservation;
- Geoconservation policies should be established as part of nature conservation policies and implemented at all levels of public administration, from international to local. All these levels of action have their own merit, but can only be fully successful when integrated into a common strategy;
- The implementation of geoconservation actions requires a specialized knowledge and expertise. Management planning at all levels should consider the incorporation of advice and participation from geoconservationists, in particular recent graduates from universities and other institutes;
- New tools are being developed and should be used to monitor geosites and to promote an effective interpretation of geoheritage, thus contributing to increasing the awareness of society about the role of geodiversity in ecosystem services;
- Public administrations play a crucial role in guaranteeing the necessary statutory framework for geoconservation and to apply efficient conservation measures;
- Local communities play an important role in the maintenance of geoheritage, as geoparks of all levels are showing in so many countries.

New president and executive committee elected on the General Assembly 2018:

- **President:**  
Lars Erikstad
- **General Secretary:**  
Enrique Díaz Martínez
- **Executive Committee:**  
Sven Lundqvist  
Ewa Glowniak  
João Rocha  
Alessandra Magagna  
Kevin Page  
Tapio Kananaja



## Deadline next issue of ProGEO NEWS

October 15th, 2018

Please send contributions to ProGEO NEWS. Members are interested in things that happen all over the world, your experiences, activities, science, geosites, geoconservation and geotourism efforts!

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Please send your contributions (unformatted word file). 500 – 2000 words with photographs, maps and figures clearly marked as ProGEO NEWS.

If longer texts are needed, please contact the editor.

ProGEO: European Association for the Conservation of the Geological Heritage.

President: Lars Erikstad ● Executive Secretary: Enrique Díaz Martínez ● Treasurer: Sven Lundqvist.

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