



*Erosion in glacial deposits following forestry activity. Vorarlberg Austria.  
From the ProGEO excursion 1989. Photo: Lars Erikstad*



### THE EARLY YEARS OF ProGEO

In 1969 a Dutch working group on geoconservation Gea was established, with the target to execute an inventory of all the earth-science sites that were important for science and education. After three years I was appointed as a secretary and the inventory started. The project, called the Gea-project continued slowly. Lack of interest and active participation by colleagues, nature-conservation organisations, politicians and officials were the main reasons. Inventories, policy, realisation of sites, management consults, educational aspects was all done by the secretary.

Obviously the time was not ripe. Over the years contacts

with colleagues from abroad learned that the Dutch problem was not limited to our borders and co-operation could be helpful.

#### **Leersum Meeting 1988**

During an international symposium in 1986 in Trondheim on Geological Mapping in the Service of Environmental Plans were developed to organise an international workshop on geoconservation. An international inquiry in 1987 showed that there was a common need for co-operation in this field.

Earth scientists from various European countries and interested in geoconservation were invited to a meeting in The Netherlands in 1988. Finally twelve colleagues from seven countries Austria, Denmark, Finland, Great Britain, Ireland, Norway and The Netherlands showed up. Two days of discussion and an excursion day followed. 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.

The first meeting led to the establishment of the European Working Group on Earth-Science Conservation with the following aims:

- to facilitate the exchange of information
- to provide mutual support in the conservation of threatened sites
- to promote Earth-science conservation
- to identify and execute common projects.

A newsletter -that appeared for the first time in 1989- was

meant to be one of the main communication channels. George Black became the first president, Gerard Gonggrijp executive secretary and Bill Wimbledon secretary. At that time the members were selected primary on their active involvement in geoconservation.

### **Bregenz Meeting 1989**

At the succeeding meeting, held in 1989 in Bregenz in Austria the group welcomed Switzerland as a new member. It was decided to publish a manual on the practice of Earth-science conservation across Europe, however unfortunately this project never has been finished because of incomplete information and lack of financial support.

Successful was the publication of the Bregenz papers in the series of the Austrian Geological Survey in 1990. Another common project that was started, was the preparation of a publication in *Naturopa*, the nature-conservation journal of the Council of Europe.

### **Lom Meeting 1990**

In 1990 the Lom meeting in Norway was a new step forward: two new members (Belgium and France) joined the group and a first concept of aims and articles were worked out. The working group increased slowly and the call for more influence grew. Besides modest optimism there were also some critical voices: the work did not show enough progress. And indeed things did not devel-



*Protected  
geotope,  
coversands,  
Netherlands.  
From the  
excursion  
1988.  
Photo: Lars  
Erikstad*



*A glass-house protecting an important paleontological geotope from an out-door museum, in-situ display. From the excursion following the Digne symposium in 1991. Photo: Lars Erikstad*

opments very fast. We were facing the same problems on international scale as we did on the national one: very little (political) support from our earth-science colleagues, no real support from the nature-conservation organisations and politicians and ignorance by the public.

To change this situation is a long-term question. Looking back, we have to admit that probably the time was not ripe to transfer the working group into a more powerful organisation. Contacts with the international organisations failed, because of disinterest in the conservation item. There were just a few professional geoconservationists, which mostly worked on a voluntary base in geoconservation and often with few or even no physical and material support.

To accelerate the process Guy Martini from France did the offer to organise a symposium in France in 1991 in order to spread the message on geoconservation all over Europe.

The Norsk Institutt for Naturforskning published the various presentations, during the meeting in 1993 in a special report, Earth-Science Conservation in Europe.

### **Digne Meeting and Symposium 1991**

The symposium in Digne in 1991 was a great success. It was the first international symposium on geoconservation and had an enormous impact on the involvement of earth scientists all over Europe. 120 participants from over 30 countries exchanged information on the subject and at the end they agreed on the International Declaration of the Rights of the Memory of the Earth.

The papers were published in 1993 in the Mémoires de la Société Géologique de France. An important spin-off of this symposium was, among others, the start of national discussions and the formation of active national working groups.

### **Swansea Meeting 1992**

The next meeting of the working group in England in 1992 renewed the discussion on the membership of the organisation. Should the group be restricted to selected, active members as it had been before or should it be open for everybody interested in geoconservation. The interest in the group was increasing and it was clear that



now it was the time to change the policy. It was decided that the articles should be rewritten and at the next meeting in Germany the working group should continue as an open association.

### **Cologne Meeting 1993**

In 1993 in Cologne the European Association for the Conservation of the Geological Heritage, shortly ProGEO was born. From now on everyone could be a member of the association.

Under the flag of ProGEO the following meetings and symposia have been held: *Hungary 1994, Sweden/Finland 1995, Italy 1996 (2nd symposium), Estonia 1997, Bulgaria 1998, Spain 1999 (3rd symposium) Czechia 2000*. ProGEO has also contributed to the arrangement of the international conference on geological and landscape conservation in Malvern in 1993. All these meetings contributed highly to the improvement of the national and international geoconservation situation: national groups flourished and internationally the co-operations with other international organisations like IUGS and UNESCO were started. Projects like the GEOSITE and GEOPARK project were initiated. Regional working groups were formed to work more efficient in the regions. All together there is room for a lot of optimism for geoconservation, although many of us would like to accelerate the developments.

*Gerard Gonggrijp*

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### **FLYSCH-LIKE BEDS OF SLOVENIA**

In southern Slovenia near the border with Italy Cretaceous and Paleogene flysch-like rocks are abundantly exposed, partly as turbiditic flysch beds and partly as extensive olistostromes that are exploited by the Anhovo cement works. At Trnovo near Ilirska Bistrica south of Postojna, close to the Slovenian-Croatian border, in 1979 in Eocene flysch sandstone a pebble of a few centimetres was found along with the trace of its sliding over the sediment of the sea bottom (fig. 1; R. Pavlovec, 1979). The cast of the sliding trace in ground appears in negative, and at its end also the pebble that caused the trace is preserved.

An even more outstanding feature occurs at the road Ilirska Bistrica – Knežak. This one was remarked more than twenty years ago (Š. Goričan et al., 1984; R. Pavlovec, 1981). In sandy-marly deposits of Eocene flysch appear pebbles having a rim of sediment which is similar to that in which the pebbles are embedded. The rim covers only part of the pebble, sometimes half of it and rarely more (fig. 2). Pebbles measure up to several centimetres across.

Two explanations are possible. The pebbles might have fallen into soft bottom mud and at that displaced some sediment that hardened on them into the mentioned rim. In such a case the pebbles did not fall on bottom



**Fig. 1** Trace of sliding of pebble on sea bottom in Eocene flysch beds at Trnovo near Ilirska Bistrica. Photo: Rajko Pavlovec



vertically, but at an angle, otherwise the rim would surround them evenly all around. Besides, most of them must have fallen on bottom from the same direction, since the rim appears prevailingly on the same side of pebbles. Only on rare pebbles it appears elsewhere.

According to the other explanation the pebbles were embedded in the bottom mud, and water currents incised thin cuts into the mud along them. These cuts were later filled by sediment. Consequently, the rim around a pebble is the negative cast of such a cut. Currents had various directions, so all rims do not appear on the same side of pebbles.

Sedimentologists favour the second explanation. Unfortunately, it cannot be proved with certainty. The beds are namely in vertical position. Therefore it is not clear whether the rims are negative casts of cuts, or positives.

The outcrop locality of these pebbles near Ilirska Bistrica was proposed for an object of geological heritage, but the procedure is not accomplished yet. Destruction of the outcrop is protected by a roof covering the rocks. There is also a tablet with illustration and text that describes the phenomenon. Officially the geotop was presented to the public beginning of July 2000 at a sympathetic ceremony in which numerous local inhabitants and representatives of

*Fig. 2 Preserved locality of pebbles in Eocene flysch along road Ilirska Bistrica – Knežak. On pebbles appear rims that were formed either during their fall on the sea bottom, or by filling the cuts made by currents around pebbles. Photo: Rajko Pavlovec*

geologic and other organizations took part. The main initiators for preserving the geotop were the Institute for preservation of natural and cultural heritage in Nova Gorica and Society for local history and culture in Ilirska Bistrica. The event is an indication that also non-geologists in Slovenia are getting aware of the importance of preserving the geologic heritage.

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*Rajko Pavlovec*



Prague was a busy and productive meeting . Below I record the major items of discussion by council. Our President Prof. Todor Todorov was in the chair, and opened the meeting with greetings to the council and our Czech hosts. Twenty members of council attended and apologies and greetings were given by nine others. Greetings to council had been conveyed also by Prof Raniero Gisolli-Novelli who was in the Galapagos islands. Although job, but someone has got to do it, as i told him.

The Executive secretary welcomed invited guests : Dr Michail Komarovsky, Mgr Petr Budil , Dr Maurizio Burlando and Dr John Morris for specific items.

We had an election in Prague of the executive committee, 27 members of council voting, as follows: D. Baretino 23, G.P. Gonggrijp 25, A. Grube 18, L. O. Karis 26, E.R. Look 18, D. Mijovic 19, R. Raudsep 24, L. Erikstad 27, I. Drandaki 25, F. Zarlenga 20, J. Urban 20, G. Brancucci 17, and W.A.P. Wimbledon 25, and all candidates were therefore elected. Sadly the secretary had to announce the resignation of Alf Grube as treasurer: I was pleased to say how grateful the association was for his work in this post - new career responsibilities beckon and it was a pleasure to wish Alf well in these.

Under Article 16 of our constitution, the Council took the decision to fill the vacancy that had arisen: Lars Karis and the President had nominated Gunnel Ransed, who was willing to take on the role, and the the executive committee supported her nomination. Gunnel Ransed, who has just become the representative for Sweden was enthusiastically elected by the Council.

A number of important agenda items were discussed:

#### Registration

The first was the registration of the Association, the articles had been modified in Madrid in preparation for registration in Germany. The history of the association demanded by the German system was two thirds written. However, with the change of treasurer the circumstances were altered. Lars Karis, as chairman of finance committee had looked into a simpler and speedier registration with the tax authorities in Sweden. This initiative was approved by the council. Registration of the association brings all sorts of benefits, in terms of attracting funding, in particular.

#### Membership, fees , elections

The executive secretary then "banged the drum", but asked for forgiveness for what would certainly seem like

a lecture on election rules. He reminded all of the need for adherence to the procedures for elections. The articles are flexible, but elections due in 2002 meant certain essentials must be observed: all members of council needed to be paid-up members of the association, and national groups should certainly make sure they had organised and elected a representative for a seat on council

#### Validation of members

We had a lively discussion on criteria for selection of members , after concerns had been raised about standards, abilities and commitment to work for geoconservation through the association. The suggestion that ProGEO, as in other societies, vet members and examine their bona fides. There was general agreement that a completely open structure for ProGEO was essential to the well being of the association.

Fees in the countries were also considered :in the early history of the Association were no fees for those from the former soviet block. Flexibility is still needed and council decided that countries should set what they thought a reasonable fee was for themselves, discussing it with the Treasurer, secretary and president.

Scientific committee Radoslav Nakov suggestion that there should be a ProGEO scientific committee though our articles talk of scientific projects, brought some diametrically opposed opinions but. Dan Grigorescu and Jiri Kriz in particular thought the idea a good one, for those more orientated to science and the technical questions. It was suggested it was the means to promote projects like involvement in the Croatia 2003 meeting, which Ljerka would mention later: the suggestion that Radoslav Nakov should prepare a discussion paper for council was agreed.

#### Izmir

We were reminded of the Izmir meeting being organised by Hulya Inaner in September.

#### Financial control

Financial control were the next topic: the secretary introduced the matter by saying the election of a new treasurer and legal framework brought the start of a new financial regime, with three obvious benefits: transparent financial control, regular automatic invoicing, and chasing of non-payers. Lars Karis informed us that the necessity under the Swedish system for two persons to oversee and check finances: Veli Suominen and Carl Erik Johansson were nominated for this role, and elected unanimously. And it was agreed that the period over which this system should operate would be two yearly.

#### Proceedings

There was a short information item on the Roma proceedings( and the Sigtuna publication was mentioned in passing): the secretary had assurances from the Geological Service of Italy at the Genoa meeting that the



printing of the Roma proceedings was imminent

The chairman of the organising committee of the Madrid symposium, Daniel Baretino, explained that the publication of the second volume of the Madrid proceedings was imminent, requiring only the editing of the conclusions of the final session. The papers were complete in English and Spanish, and publication expected by September. There was general approval of this news.

### 2002 meeting

The executive secretary informed the council that following the Madrid meeting he had on behalf of the executive committee asked Steen Andersen in Copenhagen to deliberate on the possibilities for holding the next general assembly (2002) in Denmark. The thinking being that this takes the meeting north again and is a possibility to bring in involvement from colleagues not only in Scandinavia but also Germany and the low countries.

There were strategic reasons for a meeting in Denmark. Steen's response had been enthusiastic but realistic over the present state of resources. He was investigating further and had initiated talks with his own agency, the Geological Survey of Denmark and regional government. He had undertaken to pursue this.

However, there was a complication. The secretary introduced John Morris from the Geological Survey of Ireland who had come with an invitation to ProGEO to participate in a meeting in 2002 in Dublin. This eventuality was not known to the committee when it decided to investigate Denmark as the 2002 venue, and had only come to its attention in recent days, it was a new idea from Ireland.

John Morris explained the Irish suggestion for a conference under auspices of the Royal Irish Academy, in a time slot mid-2002 to 2003, a broad meeting covering landscape and geosites.

The executive committee meeting was supportive of the Irish initiative subject to its contact with Danish colleagues, and its commitment to Denmark. The president proposed an e-mail vote by council on the final venue for the meeting when more was known.

### Conferences

Ljerka Marjanacs announced a sedimentology conference in Croatia and geoconservation element in 2003, a complication. A karst conference was being organised by Radoslav Nako in Bulgaria and he invited all to participate and advertise the event.

### Website

Lars Karis reminded all of the usefulness of the website: the plethora of meetings necessitated people putting data on conferences on the website, as soon as concrete plans were made, then all could avoid conflict and participate constructively. There was general assent in the council for this conclusion.

Lars Karis spoke on the contribution of regional working groups to the ProGEO Homepage. Chairmen needed to make inputs to utilise this valuable tool. Action point for all!

### Association logo

Ljerka Marjanac spoke on the association's logo, its form, and colour. Opinions were diverse on the use of colour and its form. A lively discussion followed. Lars Karis thought it better to stick to one colour for central functions.

The logo would be part of the registration of the association also. It was agreed that the combination of consistency, with some flexibility should certainly be allowed locally for local needs: but that quality of reproduction mattered. Jiri Kriz thought registration of original and possibilities for flexibility in the countries was best.

Radoslav Nakov favoured the original black version. Lars Karis stated that a vector image will be provided on the ProGEO Homepage. Ljerka will liaise with Lars Karis on use and helpful suggestions. Decision: there was general agreement that this was the best course of action. Democracy in action. Advice from Lars on the best way forward.

### News

I was pleased to announce that Daniel Baretino had taken up a new post as Director for Mineral Resources and Environment in the Spanish Geological Survey (ITGE). This was applauded by council and Daniel congratulated. Hearty congratulations were also proposed to Gerardo Brancucci, Daniel Barretino and Jan Urban on their election to council.

### International Geological Congress

The secretary explained there were two possibilities for the IGC in 2004: Vienna or Florence. (ProGEO had already been invited to the IGC by Thomas Hoffman during the lecture sessions). Maurizio Burlando explained that Italian colleagues saw a chance to hold a workshop on geoconservation at the IGC in Florence, and the matter was discussed briefly at the recent Genoa meeting. He said that work would progress on this idea and there would be liaison with ProGEO colleagues. M. Burlando thanked the association for support of the work of ProGEO Italia, like the Genoa meeting, including visits.

This is my chance finally to thank Jiri Kriz and all colleagues in Prague for being such good hosts. And all attending members for their contributions, including a few who attended for the first time, and we shall remember with pleasure our first contacts with Olga Komarovskaya, Emir Z. Gareev and Volodymir Gritsenko.

*W.A.P. Wimbledon  
Executive Secretary*



Report from the meeting Prague 2000.

Now, the Central European Working Group consists of: Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Belarus. The ProGEO members from the Czech Republic propose to form a new Working Group together with Austria and southernmost Germany in the near future.

At the meeting of Central European Group in Prague on June 3rd 2000 the following people from the above mentioned countries participated: Zofia Alexandrowicz (Poland), Stefan W. Alexandrowicz (Poland), Natalia Gerasimienko (Ukraine), Volodymir Gritsenko (Ukraine), Olga Komarovskaya (Belarus) and Mikhail Komarovskiy (Belarus).

A considerable progress in geoconservation can be noted since the workshop in Kraków'97. All together 105 very important geosites were characterized from these countries in the Polish Geological Institute Special Papers 2 (1999) and additionally from Lithuania (20 geosites) and the Czech Republic (8 geosites from the Sudetes). Incorporation of Central Europe countries to the membership and co-operation in the IUGS programme GEOSITES for the first time was also a significant achievement of the workshop held in Kraków'97.

Experiences of the last 3 years led to discussion on the following questions during the meeting of the Central Europe Working Group in Prague:

- if the Kraków list of geosites needs supplements and what is the mechanism for progressing the Belogradchik list?
- how will cross-border rationalisation occur?
- what is the relation between the selected sites and regional geodiversity?

#### Conclusions:

**Poland.** The geosite network is relatively rich but should be supplemented with new ones up to about 15% especially in the Sudetes region, the Lublin Upland and the Roztocze Hills as well as in the Polish Lowland. Projects of grading/justification and selection of important geosites in boundary zones are necessary. Lists of these geosites should be elaborated during the regional workshops.

Geodiversity of the Polish territory is relatively well presented by geosites which are already protected or proposed for conservation. The Polish Carpathians' geodiversity network has the features of the model for the whole of the Carpathian mountain chain, very widespread Euro-region.

**Ukraine.** Geosites proposed will be supplemented up to about 30% with special attention to: (1) the Palaeozoic of Podole, (2) flysch formations of the Carpathians, (3) Cretaceous and Miocene deposits in Roztocze, (4) Quaternary sediments, (5) geological formations of the Dnieper-Donietsk region. Points 1-3 will be compared with Polish geosites, point 2 - with the Polish and Slovakian Carpathians, point 4 - with outcrops in Belarus.

Geosites already identified and planned in the future will cover the geodiversity of the country to a satisfying degree.

**Belarus.** Geosites already presented need supplementation up to about 25%. The main problems of the geo-network are: (1) Quaternary sediments in the northern part of the country, (2) forms of Lakeland relief. Both should be partly compared with the related Polish geosites with respect to the scientific documentation and categories of protection.

Geoconservation in particular countries is advanced on different levels. It depends on the general state of nature conservation and the activity of geologists and geomorphologists in this field. Supported projects are the best mechanism for progressing the valuation and selection of geosites but scientific grants supporting the geoconservation development are very restricted. The inequality of progress between the geosite inventORIZATION and its legal regulation is significant. National geological surveys should be stimulated and national authorities should accelerate the regulation of designated sites under nature protection statutes.

The geodiversity framework based on experiences of the Polish programme of geodiversity conservation should be used:

- to select geosites and their classification according to their scientific, didactic and tourist values
- to prepare documentation for the concept of UNESCO Geoparks
- to enrich geological and geomorphological data to find relations between the animate and inanimate components of the environment, useful for management and conservation plans of areas
- to promote and introduce geoconservation principles of different international programmes related to the landscape and ecology.

Three other problems were discussed:

1. Introduction of UNESCO Geoparks in the areas with numerous geosites of different rank and functions.
2. Supplementary documentation of geological and geomorphological features in nature reserves and other categories established according to biological values.
3. Progress in publication of results including just edited, in print, prepared and planned in the future.

*Zofia Alexandrowicz  
co-ordinator of Working Group 2 of ProGEO*



## Northern European Working Group

*Short highlights from the minutes by Gunnel Ransed, secretary WG3*

Jonas Satkunas chaired the meeting. Progress in the GEOSITE project was discussed. Britain is developing frameworks for a geosite list. The second list is published in Belogradchic papers, recirculated to British members. In Sweden the number of sites on the national list have increased from 600 to 700, and a selection will be done to the geosite list. In Norway no-one is working with the GEOSITE project, and no progress can be reported. In Finland works on a GEOSITE list progresses with funding from university. The Irish authorities are starting to take geoconservation into account. The whole concept of geotourism is formulated in published maps and guides, for educational groups. In Russia a national working group of ten specialists will start a program in co-operation between St Petersburg institute and university. In Lithuania there are now 350 geosites. There are no problems to present a national geosite list. From the neighbouring countries Jonas reports that the situation in Estonia is good, and that Latvia now has organised a national ProGEO-group with support from the Geological Survey. For the moment they are working with a database. In Denmark there exists good basic information for geosites.

There was a general consensus that the regional working group should function as informal as possible, and welcome everyone that would like to make contributions. It was decided that the WG3 sub homepage should list national representatives, official and active contact persons.

Possible future project was also discussed, especially



*Members of the working group 3 outside the conference centre in Prague. Photo: Vladimir Makarikhin*

linked to geodiversity. Geodiversity is more linked to all levels in opposite to geosites and will therefore work as a good supplement to the geosite project. The working group supported plans for a 2001 workshop to be arranged in England with an invitation to the members of the ProGEO to attend and contribute. The workshop will focus on geology as an underpinning resource and its practical application in understanding and managing a wider natural environment. The WG3 sub homepage will be located on the same server as central ProGEO. During the meeting there are several expressed wishes for organised open discussion groups (chat) to facilitate co-operation and quicker exchange of ideas, both between participants within the working group as well as external contacts. Plans for the next WG3-meeting in 2001 in Latvia are developed.



## BOOK ON MOUNT SNEŽNIK

One of the most expressive hills in southern Slovenia is the 1796 m high Snežnik that got its name after frequent snows on its peak («sneg» meaning «snow» in Slovenian). Mixed forest passes upwards into dwarf-trees, and in wide hollows in the terrain typical thermal inversion takes place. Flora is rich. Bears can be often encountered, more seldom the shy heath-cock, and usually other wildlife can be seen. The Snežnik mountain is one of the first areas not only in Slovenia but also in Europe where forests were planwise grown and protected.

Owing to these feature the Snežnik national park of about 1000 sq. kilometres is now in the process of founding. Although most of the area is only sparsely inhabited, the park shall comprise about 120 settlements with 12,000 inhabitants. As to geology, geomorphology, biology and environment protection the park promises to be one of the most interesting protected areas of Slovenia.

The Mountaineering society from Ilirska Bistrica recently edited a book in large format that describes on 226 pages the central part of the future national park, the narrow Snežnik area. The texts accompanied by nearly 300 illustrations were written by four dozens of authors. There book contains also numerous historic data, among others also on remains of ancient protective walls of the Roman limes. All these data will be precious for the future national park.

In the geologic part appears a longer description on forming of the Snežnik area that belonged during Mesozoic to the Dinaric carbonate platform. Listed and accompanied by photographs are several characteristic fossils. Most frequent in the area are rudists shells. The territory is characterised also by numerous surface and underground karstic phenomena.

*Rajko Pavlovec*

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