



EARTH SCIENCES HISTORY GROUP

(A Specialist Group of the Geological Society of Australia Inc.)

Email Bulletin No. 55

21 June 2019

Vale John Blockley

We have been saddened by the death of John Blockley on 10 March. John was a stalwart of ESHG, particularly when the committee was based in Western Australia, and continued to keep the Queensland-based Committee up to date with various news items. An obituary prepared by his West Australian colleagues was published in the most recent edition of *The Australian Geologist*.

Tom Vallance Medal 2018

The Tom Vallance Medal was introduced in 2011 to recognise people who have made a significant contribution to researching, recording, investigating, documenting and/or publishing about people or places or events of historical importance to the geological sciences in Australia or Australasia. It is awarded biennially and presented at the biennial Convention of the Geological Society of Australia (or similar event).



Dr Susan Turner was awarded the Tom Vallance Medal at the Australian Geoscience Council Convention in Adelaide in October 2018. The award recognised her significant contributions in researching and documenting the role of women in Australian geology, particularly in the field of palaeontology. She is a Fellow of the Geological Society and the Linnean Society and a Member of the Geological Society of Australia, the International History of Geosciences Commission and the Earth Sciences History Group of the GSA. She is also an editor for the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences.

A selection of her papers on this topic is given below.

- Turner, S., 1994. "Women in Palaeontology in Australia." In *Useful and Curious Geological Enquiries beyond the World: Pacific- Asia Historical Themes*, edited by David F. Branagan and G.H. McNally. Sydney: 19th Int. INHIGEO Symposium, Sydney, 4–8 July: 248–250, 1994. First recognition of women paleontologists in Australia.
- Turner, S., 1998. "Women in Paleontology in Australia." In *Sciences of the Earth. An Encyclopedia of Events, People, and Phenomena*, edited by Gregory A. Good. New York: Garland.
- Turner, S. & Vickers-Rich, P., 2004. Reg Sprigg, Martin F. Glaessner, Mary Wade and the Ediacaran fauna. Abstract for IGCP 493 conference, Prato Workshop, Monash University Centre. Aug. 30-31, 2004, 1p. With poster.
- Turner, S., 2005. Dr Elizabeth Arnold Ripper 1909–2004: early 20th century Victorian palaeontologist. In Memoriam. *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* 117(2): xlix–liv. ISSN 0035-9211
- Turner, S. 2006. Rocky Road to success. A new history of the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP). pp. 297-314. In Petitjean, P., Zharov, V., Glaser, G., Richardson, J., de Paridac, B. & Archibald, G. eds *Sixty Years of Science at UNESCO 1945-2005*. UNESCO, Paris.

- Turner S., 2007. Country Review. Oil on Troubled waters. *GeoExpro* magazine December, 16-18, 20-21; www.GeoExpro.com, 5pp. online 5.01.08.
- Turner, S. & Vickers-Rich, P. 2007. Sprigg, Glaessner and Wade and the discovery and international recognition of the Ediacaran fauna. In: Vickers-Rich, P. & Komarower, P. (eds) IGCP 493: The Rise and Fall of the Ediacaran biota. Prato conference Proceedings. Geological Society, London Special Publication 286, 443-445. pdf available on request.
- Turner, S., 2007. Dorothy Hill in *New Dictionary of Scientific Biography*: Charles Scribners & Sons.
- Turner, S., 2007. Invincible but mostly invisible: Australian women's contribution to geology and palaeontology. In Burek, C. & Higgs, B. eds *The role of women geologists contributions*. Geological Society, London Special Publication 281, 165-201.
- Turner, S. & Beattie, J., 2008. Joan Crockford-Beattie D.Sc., 421-425. In Wyse Jackson, P.N. and Spencer Jones, M.E. (eds) *Annals of Bryozoology 2: aspects of the history of research on bryozoans*. International Bryozoology Association: Dublin.
- Turner, S. & Oldroyd, D., 2009. Reg Sprigg and the Discovery of the Ediacara Fauna in South Australia: Its Approach to the High Table. 254-278. In Seposki, D. & Ruse, M. eds *The Paleobiological Revolution. Essays on the Growth of Modern Paleontology*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London. April
- Turner, S. & Malakhova, I. 2010. IUGS-50: how the women fared. In: INHIGEO-2010 Abstracts, July 5-10, Madrid and Almaden, (submitted April 30).
- Turner, S., 2010. INHIGEO 2009 in Calgary Canada and IUGS 50th. Tag, No. 154 (March), p.13.
- Turner, S., 2010. with help from A. Riccardi, O. Gerel, I. Malakhova. IUGS-50: 1961-2011 ~ What is the IUGS? The early years. INHIGEO-2010 Abstracts, July 5-10, Madrid and Almaden,
- Turner, S., 2011. Beautiful One day; Perfect the Next! 19th–early 20th century geological collectors and collecting in the Great State of Queensland. HOGG Geological Collectors & Collecting, Poster Abstracts, April 4–5, Natural History Museum, London, p. 17.
- * Note that the Encyclopedia of Australian Science lists other publications, conference papers etc. in her other scientific pursuits, chiefly vertebrate paleontology.

Acceptance Speech for The Tom Vallance Medal 2018

Sue was not able to attend the AGCC, and the medal was presented to her by Ian Withnall and John Jell over coffee in March. This was prior to her representing Australia in London in May at the celebration conference for the 100th anniversary of female Fellowship of the Geological Society of London, where she spoke about Dorothy Hill and other trail blazing Australian women geoscientists. It is hoped that a public reprise of the presentation can be made at a GSA Queensland Division meeting later in the year at which Sue has promised to give a talk.

The following are some remarks that Sue provided on receiving the award.

It was both surprise and delight I felt when I heard from Ian [Withnall] of the Earth Sciences History Group of the Geological Society of Australia that I had been awarded the Tom Vallance medal for 2018. And pause for thought because it is 90 years since Tom was born.

I am thrilled and most grateful to receive to be the next recipient of the Tom Vallance Medal. In receiving this honour, I would like to acknowledge some of the people who have helped me on the way, not least my husband Tony Thulborn, who has to put up a lot from a globe-trotting partner.

I am indebted to my early training in museum studies and particularly to Charles Waterston of the (former) Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, my museum studies tutor, Tony Tynan my boss at the Hancock Museum Newcastle upon Tyne; and British historians of science, Hugh Torrens and Martin Rudwick, who first led me down the paths of history especially when the Geological Curators' Group got

going in 1974. Before I first came to Australia in 1979, I met with Jack Mahoney then seeking Australian animals in British museums and that led to the discovery of the first wombat — the story of which became one of my first forays into history of science.

On emigrating to Australia in 1980 I met Tom himself and his colleague, another source of inspiration and my predecessor for this medal, David Branagan, both of whom helped set me on the path of understanding Australian geoscience history and the role of women in it. Tom's paper on the founders in Australian palaeontology was a springboard because there were no women in it!! David helped especially when he invited me to talk about women at the 1994 INHIGEO conference in Sydney and I met for the first time many of the world's geoscience historians.

In later times, my mentor was the late and much missed David Oldroyd, the last medal recipient, whose breadth of knowledge, humour and great works were further impetus and one of my lasting joys was working with him on a paper about Reg Sprigg. Through David I became a member of INHIGEO (IUGS Commission for history of Geology) in 2004. Unfortunately, I didn't meet Reg himself but did correspond with him and it was good to work with our current INHIGEO President Barry Cooper in bringing more of Reg's story to light.

I must also acknowledge the help I've received from INHIGEO and the Australian IGCP Committee, who have provided financial assistance when I was working on history of Australian involvement in the IUGS:UNESCO IGCP International Geoscience Programme. This brought me to know and cherish the wisdom and humour of Larry Harrington who was one of my greatest supporters over a tumultuous decade when geological research funding collapsed in this country; luckily I was able to bring his story and the role he played in creating IGCP to the table.

But perhaps the most unexpected of inspirers was Dorothy Hill, who of course had been held up as a role model to us English geological students in the 1960s by Roland Goldring, my one palaeontological teacher at Reading University. I was most fortunate later to meet Dotty and have the opportunity to talk with her and gain her insights on many occasions — her historical works also set me thinking and her own life story was one of the first of the great strong Australian women I came to know and helped to disseminate.

Finally, the Bicenentennial planning meeting in Canberra in 1982 was the beginning of the idea for a database of Australian (and later other) women geoscientists that I have maintained ever since and, like Tom before me, I am happy to share with anyone who is interested in the role of women in Australian geology.

To be chosen to receive the Tom Valance medal, which has already been awarded to the brightest names in world of Australian history of geoscience, is an honour for which I feel both humility and a sense of responsibility that goes with it. I can only say that in the years left for active work, this high honour will be a constant incentive to do all that lies in my power to further the objects for which the medal was instituted and hopefully do Tom and the Society proud.

INHIGEO News

The next INHIGEO Annual Conference will take place in Varese and Como (Italy) 2-12 September 2019.

The conference will take place at the University of Insubria, with scientific sessions being held in Varese and Como and a final session in memory of Nicoletta Morello at the Visconti di San Vito medieval castle in Somma Lombardo. This area of North-Western Lombardy is also known as the Italian 'lake district', located within the mountains and the attractive scenery of the Prealps bordering Switzerland.

Participants will be based in Varese and transport for the sessions in Como and Somma Lombardo will be provided. The morning scientific session in Como will be followed by a half-day visit of the city. There will be a special program for accompanying persons.

Conference themes:

- History of the Earth sciences in mountain environments
- History of communication in the geological sciences
- General contributions on the history of geology

The mid-meeting one-day field trip will follow the path of the geo-paleontological excursion on the Prealps north of Varese, undertaken by the participants of the 7th meeting of the Italian Society of Natural Sciences in September 1878.

A post-meeting five-day field trip (8-12 September) will include the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Monte San Giorgio (one of the most important fossil localities in the world for the Middle Triassic, which has been studied since the mid-19th century), the mining park in Cortabbio, the quarries of Valceresio and Ornavasso, Turin city, Valsusa, Oulx and Monginevro in the western Alps. For more information and preliminary program, you can find now attached the **First Circular of the Annual Conference 2019**. You can visit the symposium website at the address <https://inhigeo2019.jimdofree.com/>.

INHIGEO SYMPOSIA 2020-2021

INHIGEO Annual Conferences for this period are scheduled as follows.

- **2020** – 45th INHIGEO Symposium New Delhi, India (in association with the 36th International Geological Congress). The Congress is scheduled for 2-8 March 2020.

It will be part of the section (1) 'Geosciences for Society' with the following topics:

1. Historical achievements in geology on the Indian subcontinent
2. Historical textbooks and handbooks: their function in earth sciences
3. Moving knowledge in earth sciences: historical communication and circulation
4. General contributions on the history of geology

Abstract submission opens January 2019 and closes August 2019

Early registration opens February 2019 and closes October 2019!

Go to <https://www.36igc.org/>

- **2021** – 46th INHIGEO Symposium, Krakow, Poland

Saving Lyell's Notebooks



Secretary-General of INHIGEO, Professor Marianne Klemun has recently advised us of the potential loss to the scientific community of Charles Lyell's notebooks.

Charles Lyell (1797-1875) is well known as a key figure in history of science, particularly for his part in the Darwinian evolutionary debates and in convincing readers of the significance of 'deep time'. During the past decade, Lyell's geographical theory of climate and his subdivision of recent geological strata have gained renewed attention in connection with discussions of climate change and the Anthropocene.

The Lyell archive is almost certainly the most important manuscript collection relating to nineteenth century science still in private hands. At its core are 294 notebooks, which provide a daily record of Lyell's private thoughts, travels, field observations and conversations.

For the family to meet inheritance tax, the Lyell notebooks were sold to an unknown foreign buyer towards the end of 2018. Fortunately, the UK government has imposed a temporary export ban to enable fundraising to purchase these remarkable documents, conserve them, and make them available on-line. The University of Edinburgh Library, which already has the largest collection of Lyell material from a 1920s bequest, is organising the campaign. If successful, the library will be the new home of the notebooks and they will eventually become available as a free-to-view digital resource that everyone can access. The sum required is £1,444,000; major donors have already pledged more than a third of the total needed. Now it is up to the middle and small donors to 'crowd-fund' the balance.

The temporary export ban has an initial deadline of 15 July, so time is extremely short. If significant progress is made, then it may be extended until 15 October. Therefore, all who are interested are asked to pledge a donation, which will only be collected when the required amount is achieved. For more information about the notebooks and to make a pledge, click on <https://www.ed.ac.uk/giving/save-lyell-notebooks/pledge-to-save/>

Even a donating \$10–\$20 dollars would make a big difference, not least in showing larger donors that there is substantial public interest and concern.

Dorothy Hill Women in Earth Sciences Symposium

The Dorothy Hill Women in Earth Sciences Symposium was created to honour UQ geologist and palaeontologist Professor Dorothy Hill (1907-1997). Professor Hill has the distinction of having been the first female Professor in Australia, as well as the first female President of the Australian Academy of Science. Being held on a biannual basis, the Symposium's goal is to celebrate and promote the contribution, relevance and impact of Women in Earth Sciences. The inspiring *Meet Women in Earth Sciences* video made at the 2017 Symposium can be viewed via this [link](#). A legacy of the 2017 Symposium was the formation of a new network of Women in Earth and Environmental Sciences in Australasia – WOMEESA (<https://www.womeesa.net/>).

For the 2019 Symposium, [The School of Earth and Environmental Sciences](#) will once again invite brilliant, successful female Earth Scientists (both national and international) from industry, government and academia to join us and inspire our community.

The Symposium's program will be a mix of keynote presentations mingled with panel discussions on the advancement of women's careers in the earth and environmental sciences, mentoring sessions (run by WOMEESA), as well as social interaction and many opportunities for networking. There will also be a poster session and the poster session prizes will be awarded by the UQ Dorothy Hill Chair, Professor Gregg Webb. The organisers encourage a diversity of speakers and attendees to widen networks and celebrate the many achievements of those attending

There are various levels of sponsorship targeted to a range of goals and budgets. For further information on the Symposium, please visit www.dorothyhillsymposium.com.au

Contributions for the ESHG Newsletter

Articles for future editions are welcome and can be submitted to the Newsletter Editor, Mr John Draper at jdraper@hn.ozemail.com.au.

ESHG Committee:

Chair — Ian Withnall

Secretary — John Jell

Treasurer — Paul Blake

Newsletter Editor — John Draper

Assistant Editor — Cec Murray

NSW representative — David Branagan

Victorian representative — Roger Pierson

Tasmanian representative — Carol Bacon

SA representative — Jim Jago