

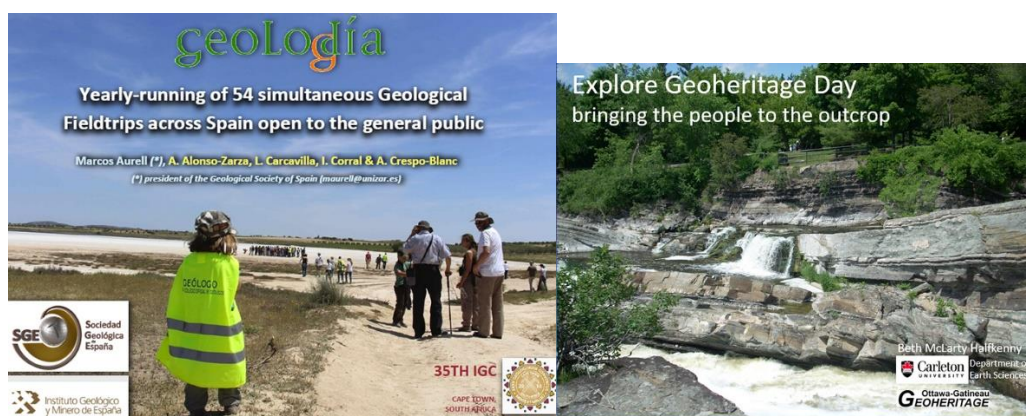
The History of Geoweek since 2018

GeoWeek ran for the first time across the UK in May 2018, when more than 30 different events took place around the UK. In 2019, 76 events ran across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland; a 137.5% increase compared with 2018. In 2020, due to Covid-19, GeoWeek ran as an online-only event. A list of some of the 2019 events can be found at ScottishGeology.com

Background

Some 4000 people graduate with geoscience-related degrees across the UK every year, so this means that there must be 150,000 or more geoscientists across the whole country. If even a fraction of this number of people could become involved in geoscience outreach in their own areas, we could bring geoscience awareness to more people across the UK than ever before.

This is not an impossible task as has been shown by our colleagues in Spain, where some 150 geoscientists across the country take nearly 10,000 members of the public on field trips every May (Figure 1), and on a single day in May in Ottawa, Canada, each year, 19 geosites across the city are hosted by geoscientists, students and pupils, whilst members of the public are given a 'passport' encouraging them to visit as many of the sites as possible and discover some of the fascinating facts behind Ottawa's geoheritage (Figure 2).



UK geoscience groups

Given this background, the Earth Science Education Forum (ESEF) approached as many geoscience organisations across the country as possible to encourage them to become involved in an initiative. They were invited to choose the best name and the best dates for a nine-day 'week' in 2018.

The organisations approached included the Geological Society; the Geologists' Association; University Geoscience UK; the Earth Science Teachers' Association; the physical geography group of the Geographical Association; Geoconservation UK; the English and Scottish Geodiversity Forums; the Open University Geological Society; the British Geological Survey, and many more.

Although tying the initiative in with either Earth Science Week in October or Science Week in March were discussed, we were advised, particularly by academics and school teachers, that October is one

of the worst times of the year from their perspectives for such an initiative and that March is not much better — the better weather of the summer was preferred by most people.

Market Research

All interested people were asked to 'vote' by completing a brief online questionnaire. We are glad to report that 137 people voted and more than a third of the votes were for the name 'GeoWeek' — far ahead of any other suggestions, so GeoWeek it is.

Meanwhile, two of the nine-day 'week' choices were far ahead of the others and were neck and neck with each other, so we went for the one that did not coincide with the school holidays: Saturday 5 to Sunday 13 May 2018.

Later the strapline of 'Active geoscience week' was added, allowing the British Geological Survey to kindly design our logo for us. So now the votes have been cast, it is time for action.

Given that the initiative plans to involve as many geoscientists as possible doing as many activities as possible to engage as many members of the public as possible, we hope that all geoscience-orientated groups around the country will be willing to become involved.