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Summary Write Up of the DGAG Talk Tuesday 18 Mar 2025 The Art of Sand from the Isle of Wight to Iowa: Part 2: Iowa Speaker: Phil James

The talk was, as anticipated, a wonderful mix of geology and the history of a special type of art and was thoroughly enjoyed by 14 attendees. Although we cannot reproduce entirely the talk, the speaker has been very generous and has supplied two articles he wrote for GeoHistories, the magazine of the History of Geology Group (Link to website: <a href="https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/science-and-policy/specialist-groups/history-of-geology-group/-:~:text=HOGG">https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/science-and-policy/specialist-groups/history-of-geology-group/-:~:text=HOGG</a>) represents and promotes the, of geology's heritage and archives). All this material is on the DGAG website as PDF documents to assist in education and future reference.

Below are a few random short notes on aspects I found particularly interesting (there was much more of interest). It is suggested that readers refer to the speaker if anything more in-depth is required.

Phil first gave us a useful recap of Part 1 presented earlier in 21<sup>st</sup> January that featured "The Isle of Wight" and looked at the fascinating 19<sup>th</sup> century history of the most artistic William Carpenter using 45 million year old (Eocene age) coloured sands of Alum Bay to produce coloured sand pictures in glass bells - just with dry sand, nothing else!

Part 2 featured the life and astounding work of Andrew Clemens (in the late 1800's) who produced the most amazing coloured sand creations. Even more impressive when you consider that he was challenged physically and mentally no doubt by the ravages of an early childhood disease that rendered him deaf and without speech. The quality and quantity of art he produced from about the age of 17 till he regretfully died at age 37, are absolutely staggering and have to be seen to be believed. The coloured sands he used are from a much older geological formation, the Ordovician, 460 million years ago! The sands being mainly from the Pikes Peak weathered outcrops near the town of McGregor in Iowa where Andrew Clemens lived. The primary layers and their weathering gives a range of 33-42 colours used in the sand art bottles.

The meeting concluded after the scheduled finish as discussions continued.

Next DGAG talk is scheduled for 22 April 2025 at the same venue, Title: The Variscan Orogeny; it's Causes and Consequences, speaker Alan Driscole

More speakers are required for other talk slots later in 2025 and early 2026, any topic loosely connected to the Earth and science will be considered, we like variety! Please check all your networks for a speaker and let me know contact details.

Chris Webb

DGAG Events – Editor

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## **Additional Links:**

- 1. Introduction to background on Andrew Clemens sand art <a href="https://americanart.si.edu/blog/andrew-clemens-sand-art">https://americanart.si.edu/blog/andrew-clemens-sand-art</a>
- 2. Iowa courtesy of Smithsonian Institution https://americanart.si.edu/blog/andrew-clemens-sand-art
- 3. The Geological Guidebook 70 of Geological Society of Iowa https://publications.iowa.gov/25719/1/GSI-070.pdf

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