Summary Write Up of the DGAG Talk Tuesday 17 Nov 2026

Title: The Whispers of Rock – Stories from the Earth

Speaker: Dr Anjana Khatwa is an award-winning earth scientist, presenter and writer who has worked for several universities, the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and the National Trust. She has been given the Geographical Award for public engagement by the Royal Geographical Society, the RH Worth Award by the Geological Society of London and the Halstead Medal from the Geologists' Association.

Talk Summary Highlights This was indeed a privilege to savour. What a wonderful, inspiring talk that was enjoyed by an audience of 38 lucky people. Unfortunately, we cannot reproduce exactly the talk without the author to expand on the slides and their context. Anjana enthusiastically treated the audience to an engaging and enlightening review of just a few of the many stories of rock she has uncovered in her geological journey and what is essentially an ongoing "love story on rocks". This note is my (Editor) talk highlights from some rapid scribbling. Hopefully, all this will help stimulate readers further into a "fantastic dive into the universe of rocks merging science, art and human existence".

- The marvellous colourful rocks of Petra (Jordan) were explained not only geologically (weathered cross-bedded fluvial quartzose sandstones) but also the stories from the Nabataeans people that entwined their lives with these formations.
- Half Dome a huge broken half mountain of spalling granite in Yosemite Valley (USA) and the Ahwahneechee people who lived in the area for thousands of years and gave Half Dome its original name, Tis-sa-ack based on an oral story told over thousands of years.
- The Hawaiian Islands were geologically summarised alongside glowing videos of spectacular lava fountain videos. The islands creation sequence was outlined on the conveyor belt of the Pacific plate passing over a deep mantle "hot-spot" plume. However, there was a new perspective revealed based on one of the oral stories of the first human settlers of the islands. These stories were used to remember navigation from Tahiti to Hawaii. There was a colourful oral story involving two sisters and one called Pele (short for Pelehonuamea) with a memory story that mirrored the "fire and brimstone" geological history of this chain of islands.
- Ophiolites from a crustal collision are found as precious and sacred rocks by the Māori in New Zealand (Aotearoa) and Te Wai Pounamu (South Island). Thus, the famed Pounamu (greenstone/jade) was reframed in a perspective that allowed people to find these special rocks.
- Black hills of Dakota and their formation from intra-continental granite batholith and erosion. There was a refreshing and poignant perspective outlined. It was based on an oral creation story from the Lakota tribe that have lived in the area for thousands of years. Fittingly perhaps, to finish the review on as the Lakota have these hills as "The heart of everything that is".
- Watch this space as there is talk of a Namibia story amongst many other next year - maybe!

- Next DGAG talk is scheduled for Tuesday 8th December - speaker Geoff Rowland on Deep Time, Somerset Geology and Ham Hill – details in the events section of DGAG website.

A speaker is required for the talk slot 20 Apr 2026, any topic loosely connected to the Earth (even Solar System!) and science will be considered, we like variety! In addition, speakers are required for the late 2027 slots from October 25, 2027, to April 2028 I know it is a long way away in space and time! Please check all your contacts and networks for a speaker and let me know contact details.

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