



Bedfordshire & Luton Geology Group

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2007/08

B&LGG's first geoconservation project finished!

Potton Scout Hut Project, an excavation and clearing exercise on an exposure of the Lower Greensand was completed in January. A huge thank you goes out to all those who helped, especially John and Audrey Buxton, Brian Plunkett, Martin Whiteley, Jack Kirby, Phil Storey, Ray and Val Piercy and Anne Williams. Others involved, without whom the project would not have gone so smoothly include Pete Cutmore - the digger driver and Susan Conway of the Open University who helped with the interpretation board. Find out more about this fascinating project on Page 4.....



**Members Eve Quiz answers
on page 2**

**Annual Members Evening 2007
a success!**

**Good news on Membership
See page 3.**

**New Projects!
Find out more and how
you can help on
Page 4**

The Members Evening held at Flitwick on 12th December was a wonderful night with wine and a buffet. The evening began with a presentation given by our Secretary and Events Organiser, Bev Fowlston. Dr Martin Whiteley gave an insight into the new project being run by English Heritage. You can read more about that in the Spring issue.

The evening included some fun things to do such as some hands on geology provided by Chris Andrew, a raffle that raised some funds for our coffers, a funny caption competition and a quiz.



Also inside this issue:

Reports on our Winter Talks evenings.

Reports on other events.

Regional news.

Updates on projects.

Dates for your diary.

Edited by Bev Fowlston.

If you have any comment or wish to include an article in the next issue of this newsletter then please contact me on 01525 375353 or by email bev.fowlston@gmail.com Deadline for next issue is 24th May 2008.

I hope you enjoy reading on.....

This was the final talks evening of the Autumn/Winter programme. Dr Dave Martill, from University of Portsmouth, gave a fascinating talk entitled "Your House is made of Shrimp Shit".

Winter Evenings

On Thursday 28th February, we held a promotional evening to inform the general public, local geological companies, quarry managers, landowners, council planners and, of course, members of the B&LGG about Geodiversity and Geoconservation.

Dr Martill started his career at the University of Leicester, where he achieved first a BSc then a PhD. He spent some time in America before taking up a lectureship at the Open University. Following this he returned to Leicester for a couple of years before moving on to the University of Portsmouth. He now holds the position of Reader in Palaeobiology where his interests include the diversity of Pterosaurs and the preservation of fossil vertebrae, amongst others.

We were very privileged to have such an eminent speaker at this talk on a cold January evening. Dr Martill brought alive the myriad of creatures that can be found fossilised within the Oxford Clay that covers almost a third of Bedfordshire. He told us of the warm, shallow seas that covered Bedfordshire during the time of the dinosaurs and described the unique qualities of the clay that preserves the bones of these fascinating animals.

Some of the images Dr Martill showed were of the excavations at Quest Pit that revealed part of a huge marine reptile. Of course, this will no longer be a sight seen as Quest Pit sadly closes at the end of February.

We invited a very eminent speaker, Professor Cynthia Burek along. She is the UK's First Chair of Geoconservation and is based at University of Chester.

A good turnout was achieved with some hard work by Henrietta Flynn and Bev Fowlston on the publicity front. Did anyone hear Bev on BBC Three Counties Radio? (See report on Page 3).

The evening was held at Delta House in Leighton Buzzard and began with a welcoming glass of wine and light refreshments. The evening's talks began with Dr Martin Whiteley, our RIGS Manager, giving a short talk on the Group and its activities. Professor Burek then gave her presentation on "Geodiversity and Geoconservation Explained".

A very positive night for the B&LGG as many members were there, along with a lot of interested people. Hopefully, this event will encourage both new and present members to join in with the Group's many and varied events in 2008. See page 4 for more information.

Quest Pit during our site visit in Summer 2007.



For those of you who took part in the quiz here are the answers you've been waiting for:

Geology - Introduction

1. The earth
2. Crust
3. 15-40 miles thick (24-64km)
4. Tectonic plates
5. Gravity
6. Mountain ranges, earthquakes
7. Volcanoes
8. Sand grains

Common rocks

1. Obsidian
2. Pumice
3. Granite
4. Sandstone
5. Limestone
6. Conglomerate
7. Coal
8. Gneiss
9. Slate
10. Marble

Dinosaurs

1. True
2. False - most dinosaurs were plant-eaters
3. True - scientist believe several of the plant-eating dinosaurs (duck-billed dinosaurs for example) likely lived in packs because there was safety in numbers.
4. c
5. c
6. c
7. b - scientist believe the crest was a resonating chamber that was used to amplify vocalizations.
8. b - some of its teeth are over six inches long!
9. c - the dinosaur Argentinosaurus is believed to have weighed 100 ton.
10. d

Geology

1. Igneous
2. Magma, lava
3. Sedimentary
4. Metamorphic
5. Chemical elements
6. Metallic, non-metallic
7. Colour, lustre, texture, hardness, crystalline structure, Specific gravity, streak
8. Talc, diamond
9. 2.5,3,5.5,6.5
10. Colour

Gemstones & Fossils

1. Corals
2. Trilobites
3. Cephalopods
4. Crinoids
5. Amethyst
6. Garnet
7. Diamond
8. Jade
9. Agate
10. Beryl

Geology

1. Amber (fossilised tree sap), coral (fossilised sea creatures) and pearl (formed in oysters)
2. Igneous, metamorphic
3. Jewels, gems
4. Animals, plants
5. Teeth, bones, wood
6. Images
7. Sedimentary
8. Maps
9. Road cuts, quarries, mines, caves, construction sites
10. Geology hammer, hand lens

Common Minerals

1. Copper
2. Pyrite
3. Hematite
4. Sulphur
5. Quartz
6. Mica
7. Talc
8. Halite
9. Graphite
10. Dolomite

GeoEast News

At the end of 2007, the GeoEast partnership with our neighbouring Regional Groups made a joint response to various regional development framework consultation papers.

To read more about this please see the GeoEast Newsletter. If you have not received a copy via email and would like one then please contact Bev Fowlston in the usual way.

News and Events

Good and sad news for membership.

At the Group's committee meeting held in January, it was agreed that the cost of membership should remain the same as 2007. **Great news for all members!**

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to Henrietta Flynn who has served us well as Membership Secretary. She is moving on to a new job and the committee wish her all the best. Hopefully, we will all still see Henrietta at future events.

Individual membership is £7.50 per annum.

Group membership is £25.00 per annum

(Available to organisations that have 4 or more employees or members wishing to join B&LGG)

To continue to receive this newsletter by email or post then you must renew your membership. This newsletter is not the only benefit of remaining a member of the B&LGG; all our events for members are **free of charge**, non-members must pay £2.00 to attend.

Bev Fowlston, our secretary, will shortly be sending reminders to all members, but you can renew now by either:

1. Sending a cheque made payable to B&LGG
2. Requesting and completing a Standing Order form

Both available through contacting:

Bev Fowlston
B&LGG Secretary
38 Jupiter Drive
Leighton Buzzard
Beds LU7 3XA

*Remember without you - the members -
this Group does not exist.
We need you!*

Don't
forget your membership
is due on 1 April

Did you hear Bev on the radio?

On Saturday 16th February 2008 at 8.45am, if you had turned your radio dial to BBC Three Counties Radio you would have heard our very own Bev Fowlston extolling the virtues of Bedfordshire's geology. Her account of this experience is quoted below:

" I was very nervous leading up to my radio 'appearance', my niece, Stacy Plunkett accompanied me and helped to keep the nerves down. We arrived at the radio station, a very insignificant building in the middle of Luton, at 8.30am. After waiting in the foyer for a few minutes, we were shown into a very scruffy room with lots of computers and monitors in it by a very nice young man called Paul. Whilst sitting in this room fascinated by Paul's adeptness at answering the phone and using a computer at the same time (very difficult for men I understand to do more than one thing at a time!), we watched the presenter, Toby Friedner through a huge window.

After another nerve-racking couple of minutes, Toby came into the room and asked me if I had brought any fossils with me. I reluctantly admitted I knew very little about fossils and thought it better not to bring something I knew nothing about. He then asked me a little about the Group and then disappeared to talk to Jilly Cooper.

The time finally came for me to go 'On Air' – aarrghh! I was so nervous I felt rather unwell. Stacy calmed my nerves and we went into the studio. From then on it was plain sailing, Toby was a wonderful interviewer and put me right at ease.

When we left the studios I phoned my Mum and she tells me that I had on my 'posh' voice. Not too posh I hope!"

A good advert for the Group and we will endeavour to use local media to attract new membership and involvement in the Group's activities.

www.bedsrigs.org.uk welcomes our new Webmaster, Martin Sims.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Martin Sims as our new webmaster. Unfortunately, due to work pressures, Frances Maynard stood down as webmaster and handed the reins over to Martin in February.

If you have any ideas on how we can improve the site then please let Bev Fowlston know via email and your comments will be passed on to Martin.

The committee would like to thank Frances for her work over the past 18 months and thank Martin for taking on this challenge.

Remember to look at the website
www.bedsrigs.org.uk

Project and Event News

Potton Scout Hut Quarry

The latest news is the first school trip will be using the site on Saturday 1st March. A group of GCSE students from Queensbury School in Dunstable are travelling over to spend the morning learning how to field sketch and draw a graphic log.

The site clearance days in December and January went very well and almost two-thirds of the face is now clear. We need one more day to complete the project. Saturday 15th March has been scheduled and by that date, we should have an interpretation board ready to put in place and the last part of the face to clean. If you can help in anyway then please let Bev Fowlston know in the usual way.



From this..... at 9am
on 9th December

To this..... at lunchtime
on 15th December



Kensworth Quarry

The site at Kensworth has now been cleared ready for a JCB to enter and do its thing! Thanks go to those who helped in February, Malcolm and Margaret Oliver, Bev and Steve Fowlston, Anne Williams and Peter Lally. The interpretation board is in production and we should be able to achieve the goal of completing this phase of the restoration of the Nature Reserve at Kensworth by the end of March.



Don't miss the next
event

Sun 9th March - Harrold-
Odell Country Park

Dates for your diary

Sunday 9th March

10.30am – Harrold-Odell site investigation day at Harrold-Odell Country Park

Saturday 15th March

10am - Potton site clearance day

Sunday 30th March

A Guided Tour of Charnwood Forest

Saturday 12th April

Hands on Rocks Workshop incorporating half day at Olney

Sunday 27th April

11am – Fullers' Earth Walk and Talk

Saturday 17th May

10am - 12 noon fundraising coffee morning in partnership with WI at 38 Jupiter Drive, Leighton Buzzard

Sunday 25th May

10.30am - walk from Sundon hills to Sharpenhoe Clappers

Sunday 8th June

10.30 am - Greensand Ridge Walk

Saturday 21st June

Fossil Fun Day at Dunstable Downs

Saturday 26th July

Leighton-Linslade Canal Festival

Saturday 23rd August

11am - Munday's Hill Quarry visit

Sunday 14th September

2pm – AGM

If there is an event you would like to see then please let the committee know and we will aim to organise it.

For more information on any of the events, then please contact Bev Fowlston at the details below.

Committee Members 2007 - 08

Chairperson
Secretary & Events Organiser
Treasurer
Membership Secretary
RIGS Manager
Education and Schools Liaison
National Trust & Chalk Downs rep
Bedford Museum rep
Beds CC & Biodiversity Forum rep
Committee Member

"Awaiting a nominee"
Bev Fowlston
Richard Cox
Henrietta Flynn
Dr Martin Whiteley
Richard Dowsett
Janet Munro
Chris Andrew
John Comont
Jack Kirby

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**Don't forget to check out the
website
www.bedsrigs.org.uk**