



Bedfordshire & Luton Geology Group

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2008/09

Local residents embrace Potton's geology

Written by Corinne Calligan

On Saturday, 24th January, on a chilly but sunny day, a group of volunteers met at Potton Scout Hut to spend the morning cleaning the rock face. The site consists of an extensive, low cliff of sandstone. This is an excellent exposure of the Woburn Sands Formation, a Lower Cretaceous rock formation that forms the prominent Greensand Ridge, which stretches SW-NE across Bedfordshire. It was formerly part of a working quarry.

Over the winter, vegetation had grown over parts of the face, and also on the path along the front of the rock face. The vegetation, and also loose sand, were cleared off the face, to make the features easier to see.



In the afternoon, residents of Potton had been invited to attend a fossil fun day. This gave members of the public the opportunity to come and find out about their local geology, and for children to take part in fun activities. The afternoon was very well attended and was an enjoyable day. Indoors, children had fun making rock pets, fossil casting and colouring, whilst outdoors, Martin Whiteley explained how the exposure had formed.

A local film news crew also came along to film the event and to find out more about the site and B&LGG. Their report can be viewed at www.local-news.tv/environment/v417-new_rock_face_revealed_in_potton/

We received a £200 grant from Potton Consolidated Charities to pay for the site improvement and the public education event.



**Message from the Chair
See page 2**

**Regional and
RIGS News
on page 3**

**Dates for your
Diary
on Page 4**

**Also inside this issue:
Details of the new photography
competition.**

Report on Rodney Sims talk.

**Introduction to Sequence
Stratigraphy.**

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 29th May 2009.

I hope you enjoy reading on.....

Message from the Chair

Our overall objectives are to educate Geology to all in Bedfordshire, operate as a club, whilst maintaining and finding new RIGS. We are continually seeking funding and grants to finance our voluntary group, whose only direct income is from Membership fees.

When I became Chair, my short-term objectives were to ensure that our money pot didn't run out, and to seek finance to achieve our long-term objectives. The assumption being, that Membership fees would cover the Group's administration.

5 Months in the seat, so what has happened?

Our Money Pot is stable, around the same amount as September last year.

Two Committee Meetings have been held, October and January, and the scene is set for achieving our objectives. Action and monitoring was reported with the conclusion that outside financial help on a large scale is minimal. A number of contacts have been made for potential funding and we expect better news to develop later in 2009, depending upon the economy.

An events meeting was held and dates were filled for the 12 month period. Four have taken place; Sundon Hills, Husborne Crawley pre-Christmas gathering, Potton Scout Hut Conservation Day, which was locally financed with great fundraising work by Bev Fowlston and a super talk at Husborne Crawley by Rodney Sims, a B&LGG Member.

Our RIGS sites are currently being surveyed and condition findings updated by Martin Whiteley, funded by an outside source.

GeoEast, of which Bedfordshire is one of the 6 Counties, has created a common to all counties project theme for chalk, Chalk East, funding in some form may be provided to us.

Various activity events are planned or being planned for the next 7 months; Sandy geology walk, trips to Hunstanton and Somerset. Representations of B&LGG at local places are planned from May/June through to August. These include Stockwood Discovery Centre in Luton, Leighton Buzzard Canal Festival, Bedfordshire Show, and Harrold-Odell Country Park.

Where to go from here?

We must continue to hold a tight reign on spending by only committing expenditure that will provide continuity of operation, and using money wisely to provide more money, hence the reason we wish to promote B&LGG at Events.

Members need to determine what other sites can be converted to RIGS, so that we have contingency plans for when the economic upturn arrives and we can react quickly. Grants tend to take a long time arriving, but when they do, they have to be spent within a very tight deadline. We also need to maintain our contacts with potential sources of funding, so that when restraints diminish we can move forward, positively.

Our weakness is in human resources, from carrying out the simplest tasks at events through to identifying

potential RIGS sites. Like most voluntary organisations, these tasks fall upon a handful of people.

How can you help?

You can feedback your ideas, and thoughts to me, or any of the Committee Members.

You can assist in any of the events, from making the tea, giving an hour or so of your time to allow others a break, through to a full duration. Events are a great opportunity to meet other B&LGG Members, learn more about other peoples needs in Geology, and you don't require full knowledge on the subject, there will be someone around to assist.

If you wish to help in any way at our future events, please contact Lindsay Hiles, our Membership Secretary.

I am going to the next Event at Sandy, 8th March to enjoy the trip organised by Martin Whiteley, so please take the opportunity to tell me your thoughts.

Kind Regards, Peter Lally

B&LGG News

Mainstay Steps Down

It was with great shock and surprise that Bev Fowlston announced in January that she had decided to resign her position on the Committee.

Bev had been taken ill just before Christmas, and had been advised to take things easy, and consequently to remove external pressures, relinquished numerous activities, including B&LGG's.

Fortunately this doesn't mean that Bev is losing contact with the Group, she will still be attending events, producing the Quarterly Newsletter, to ensure the important communication keeps flowing, and ensuring we all keep the Ship afloat, in the way we know, with gentle reminders.

Her dedication to the Group, and positive drive has been an inspiration to us all.

We are certain that you will join the Committee Members in wishing her well.



Great interest shown in Bedford Central Library display

The display materials were erected at Bedford Central Library during February and one member Margaret Goose commented *"I managed to pop into the library when I was in Bedford. I thought the display looked very good, attractive and interesting, with varying levels of information. I was very encouraged when the young lady serving at the café counter said that she had seen people looking at it for some time. Well done!"*

It is great to hear this kind of feedback from members, please keep it coming!

To give feedback please email any of the committee.

Leighton Buzzard's Inner Wheel warmly welcomes B&LGG speaker

Bev Fowlston was asked to give a talk on Bedfordshire's Geology and the work of the B&LGG to the ladies of the Leighton Buzzard Inner Wheel.

The talk was given after the ladies business section and included handing around samples of Bedfordshire's fascinating geology. The talk was warmly received and many of the ladies asked lots of interesting questions about the geology and the B&LGG in particular.

If you know of a group that would like to hear Bev's presentation then contact Bev on 01525 375353 or email bev.fowlston@gmail.com

RIGS Update

RIGS Conditioning well under way.

Martin Whiteley, B&LGG's RIGS Manager, is currently ploughing on with the huge task of checking all of our RIGS (Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites). He is looking at their condition and will report back to the committee in due course. Watch this space for updates in the future.

Meet Martin at the Geological Walk around Sandy on March 8th.

Regional News

Geo-East has go ahead for new website and Chalk East Project

Geo-East, the regional geology group of which B&LGG belongs, has funding to provide a website promoting geology in the eastern counties, as well as funding for a leaflet to encourage members of the public to make the most of their public access to the wonderful Chalk landscapes around the eastern region. In Bedfordshire these include Dunstable Downs, Whipsnade, Sundon Hills, Barton Hills and Houghton Regis quarry to name just some of the public access sites. If you want to know more then please contact Jan Munro our Chalk Area Rep.

Introduction to Sequence Stratigraphy

A relatively new concept in sedimentology is the study of sequence stratigraphy.

It is a method of dividing up the stratigraphic record into sequences on the basis of unconformities or sequence boundaries.

A sequence is divided into systems tracts that are deposited during a specific part of a cycle of relative sea-level change, i.e. Lowstand Systems Tract (LST) and Highstand Systems Tract (HST).

To find out more about sequence stratigraphy then check out the following websites:

<http://strata.geol.sc.edu/>

<http://www.glossary.oilfield.slb.com/Display.cfm?Term=sequence%20stratigraphy>

Event news

Social Evening a great success.

The 5th of December saw the B&LGG's annual Social Evening at Husborne Crawley Reading Rooms, get off to a festive start with members enjoying a glass of wine. There were presentations on the bright future ahead for the group, including an uplifting message from Peter Lally. Martin Whiteley and Bev Fowlston gave presentations on ideas for future events and trips. (See page 4 or check out the website for details.)

Wine flowed as did the warm chatter amongst those who attended. New members joined the usual suspects and a great time was had.



A huge thanks goes out to the organisers and the providers of food and drink. Everyone commented on the excellent food. There was also a raffle where members won various prizes from wine and chocolates to a huge cuddly toy.

18th February, Rodney Sims talk at Husborne Crawley

By Lindsay Hiles and Peter Lally

Rodney, our own home grown talent, produced a superb evening's talk called "Glimpses of the Pleistocene", supplemented with his own collection of interesting photographs and finds from the site.

Rodney told of how he became involved in the excavations of Quarry 2 of the Pitstone complex (now College Lake) during 1980-4. He gave us an insight as to what it was like to be involved on such a project becoming quite adept in dodging mechanical diggers within the working quarry and digging within waterlogged sections during the winter months. The reward was recovery of many fossil fragments including mammoth tusks, some of which are now on display at the Bucks County Museum. Together with other evidence, a paper produced by Julian Murton et al. (in which Rodney is acknowledged), interprets these deposits as river-channel and alluvial deposits that record a time of a temperate-periglacial-temperate sequence during the late Middle Pleistocene. These are of particular significance because they contain evidence thought to indicate a previously unrecorded interglacial.

A very entertaining and informative evening was enjoyed by all. Thank you Rodney.

Events and Contacts

Don't miss the next event

Geological Walk around Sandy on 8th March

Dates for your diary

Sun 8th Mar - 9.45 am

Geological Walk around Sandy, meet at car park opposite St Swithun's Church

Sun in April/May - 9.45am

(date to be confirmed)

Drive along the route detailed in our leaflet "Time Travel"

<http://www.bedsrigs.org.uk/leaflets/BLGGDrive.pdf>

Sat 4th July - all day

Field trip to Hunstanton's red chalk cliffs, for more details contact Lindsay Hiles.

Weekend 2nd-4th Oct

Field trip to the Mendips, contact Martin Whiteley for more details.

Dates of displays/Fossil Fun Days

Bedfordshire County Show 11/12th July

Leighton Linlade Canal Festival 25th July

Harrod-Odell 16th August

If you can help out on any of the above please let the committee know a.s.a.p.

If there is an event you would like to see then please let John Wong know and he will aim to organise it.

For more information on any of the events, please contact John Wong at the details below.

For more detailed reports on recently held events, go to the Events page on the website at

<http://www.bedsrigs.org.uk/reports.html>

You can see written reports and images of all our recent events.

Photograph competition

B&LGG's 1st Annual Best Photograph Competition is launched. This is an opportunity to have your photograph and name on not only our Website, but also on Geo-East's. Unfortunately, there is no prize money.

Geo-East have requested the best 5 favourite photographs from our County, which will then be judged against photographs from the other five counties who represent Geo-East.

Requirements:

Photographs must represent the following:

- Geodiversity (landscape and landforms)
- Geology or fossils
- Link with wildlife, economic and culture

Each photograph must have a title, brief description (approx. 20-30 words), grid reference, and who should be credited with the photograph.

A group headed by Peter Lally will be the judges. Please send your photographs (not more than 3 per person) to Peter Lally at plally65@gmail.com

Cut-off date is Monday 16th March 2009.

Membership information

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.

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:
Lindsay Hiles B&LGG Secretary, 4 Phoenix Close
Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 3YW

Remember without you - the members - this Group does not exist.

We need you!

Don't forget your membership is due 30th March!

Committee Members 2008 - 09

Chairperson

Secretary

Treasurer

Membership Secretary

RIGS Manager & BNHS representative

Education and Schools Liaison

Chalk Downs representative

Beds CC & Biodiversity Forum rep

Field Events Organiser

PR/Promotions/Fundraising Officer

Peter Lally

Corinne Calligan

Richard Cox

Lindsay Hiles

Dr Martin Whiteley

Richard Dowsett

Janet Munro

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