

Bedfordshire & Luton Geology Group

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2010

Bedford Museum needs you!

B&LGG were invited along to Bedford Museum to hold an “Ask an Expert” day. Many members came along with their own rocks and fossils to display. Bedford Museum allowed us to rummage through their collection to find some wonderful specimens to include. The event was held in the life gallery and was a huge success. We estimated that approximately 100 people came through the gallery and many people stopped and chatted to our experts, who included, Glynda Easterbrook, Jan Munro, Anne Williams, Tony Brittain, to name just a few of those who came along to discuss the rocks and fossils that members of the public brought in.



This is just the beginning of a collaboration that we hope to continue with Bedford Museum. The Head of Collections, Tom Perrett, is looking for help with packing and sorting the geology collection ready for storage whilst the museum

is renovated. This work will begin in the late spring and needs to be completed by March 2011.

B&LGG members and the members of the public enjoying the fossil display at Bedford Museum.

**LGS Update
See page 2**

**B&LGG News
on page 2**

**Event reviews
Pages
3 & 4**

**Regional News
Page 4**

**Members' Page
on page 5.**

**Dates for your
Diary
Page 6**

When the museum is finally reopened to the public following its extensive refurbishment, Tom will be asking the Group to assist in displays throughout the new Life Gallery relating to geology, local industry and history. If you are interested in helping then please contact the committee who will be organising working parties and training sessions.

Check out the new addition to this newsletter on Page 5. This Members' Page is just for you. Please send in any interesting images, comments or ideas to the editor and help us make your newsletter even better. For more details go to page 5.

New for you! Members' Page on page 5.

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 28th May 2010.

I hope you enjoy reading on.....

B&LGG News

Grassroots Funding By Bev Fowlston

At the end of last year, we applied for funding for £6300 from Grassroots Grants, part of Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation, to help fund the change in nomenclature by Defra of our RIGS to Local Geological Sites (LGS).

We have been successful in obtaining partial funding (£2000) to cover the costs of renaming the RIGS to LGS. The initial bid was to try and obtain enough funding to change the B&LGG to just Bedfordshire Geology Group as well as updating the promotional material to include LGS.

A meeting of the committee was held in February to re-assess a realistic budget, in view of the reduced funding we actually received. A decision is still to be made whether to retain the name and logo or not. At present we will concentrate on the change to LGS and updating certain leaflets and posters, as well as update the publications page on the website.

The funding was also to introduce the new nomenclature to members and the public via a display either at Bedford Museum or Bedford Central library, this decision will depend on the state of Bedford Museum in September when we re-launch the LGS concept to Bedfordshire.

If you can help with any of this work then please contact the Project Coordinator, Bev Fowlston at bev.fowlston@gmail.com

U3A presentation By Bev Fowlston

I was very pleased to be asked to give a presentation on "Bedfordshire's Geology" to Luton's U3A geology group. Mike Rainbow, who runs the group, is a member of the B&LGG and very kindly asked me along to give a presentation to his members. The event was held at Christchurch Bushmead and went down very well. There were a lot of intelligent and interesting questions which I hope I answered satisfactorily. Mike very kindly donated some money to the Group - thank you.

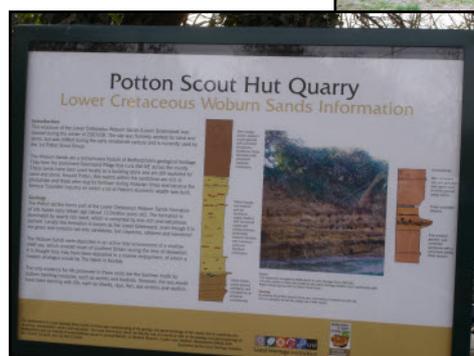
If you want me to give a presentation to your group, then please contact me at bev.fowlston@gmail.com

LGS Update

Potton Scout Hut Quarry to become an LGS By Bev Fowlston

Our normal protection of Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) is to be phased out and a new nomenclature of Local Geological Sites (LGS) is to be taken up. To help fund this change over please read the article "Grassroots Funding".

Potton Scout Hut Quarry, our flagship educational site, is to become our first official Local Geological Site (LGS). This means it will be protected from development without us first being informed. The process is going through the system as this newsletter goes to print. Many thanks go to Anne Williams who has completed the paperwork for this protection to be initiated. There are still a number of steps for the process to be completed. If you want to know more about Potton Scout Hut Quarry or the LGS process then please ask Anne or our LGS Manager, Dr Martin Whiteley, via email.



Potton Scout Hut Quarry

B&LGG's flagship educational LGS.

Event reviews

Annual Social Evening

There was definitely a Christmas feel to this year's social evening. The event was very well attended and everyone had a great time. Peter Lally gave a wonderful slide show of the Autumn Mendips trip which was very interesting for those who could not make it. John Buxton brought along his diving gear and showed some of us how to use the breathing apparatus. Tony Brittain and Richard Cox brought along some fascinating rocks and fossils for us to try and identify. The food as usual was delicious and provided for by members of the Group.

Peter also asked "Do you know our Bedfordshire?". He sent out six pictures via email prior to the social evening and here are the answers. The pictures will also be on the website.

Picture 1 - Pill box at Amptill

Picture 2 - Market Stump at Elstow

Picture 3 - Brick & stone bridge at Great Barford

Picture 4 - Cross at Stevington

Picture 5 - Packhorse Bridge at Sutton

Picture 6 - Church at Wymington



Members enjoying a glass of wine and the festivities at the annual social evening.

For those of you who had a go at the quiz and the Caption Competition the answers and winners, respectively, will be available to view on the website reports page at: <http://www.bedsrigs.org.uk/reports.html>

Sundon Hills Geology Walk

By Jan Munro

On Saturday February 27th, I led a 2 hour walk around Sundon Hills Country Park. Situated along the NE tip of the Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its chalk grassland flora and fauna, particularly orchids and butterflies.



Walkers looking at the spectacular view from Sundon Hills.

The walk was organised by Groundworks UK which aims to reconnect people with their local environment and how this can lead to learning opportunities and health benefits.

The theme was Geology, Biodiversity, History and Management and we had a dozen walkers, including 2 members of B&LGG, despite very heavy rain all the previous night. Fortunately, the sun came out for most of the trip but the excessive rain had rendered the furthest part of the site which housed a large badger sett too dangerous to navigate due to heavy sticky mud, steep slopes and numerous holes very close to the path.

We examined the numerous coombes and dry valleys to be seen across the site and discussed the role of the Ice Age in their construction. We also examined the division of the two grazing compartments where glacial till is exposed on the banks. The fine particles in this deposit showed that we must have been a considerable distance from the ice sheet during the last glacial phase that ended about 10,000 years ago. The small quarry about half a mile from the car park was developed to extract Totternhoe Stone but is now a fantastic

place to see rare plants and butterflies in the spring and summer.

Sheep graze there for 8 months of the year and are a key management tool for maintaining open grassland for the benefit of wildlife. The role of woodlands within the Chilterns in supplying the 18th century furniture industry was discussed and we looked at an area of hazel where I was able to point out the catkins (male) compared to the tiny, almost invisible, red flower (female). The importance of ant's nests to the ecology, their role in the life cycle of the Blue Butterfly family raised quite a few questions. As did the site's role as a testing ground for ordnance during WWII. Indeed unexploded shells still turn up occasionally.

We had a really good look around and when we returned to the start point, I was able to offer interested parties a selection of our leaflets to take away. It would be nice to be able to do more joint ventures with other organisations and alert people to the presence of our group.



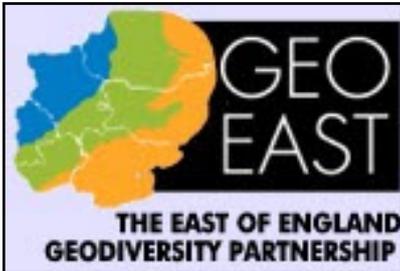
Jan Munro discussing the Sundon Hill's geology, biodiversity, history and management to walkers.

BGS Keyworth visit.

For details of this event please check the website in the next few days, where there will be a report from John Wong.

Regional News

Geo East



In our last Newsletter, we mentioned that B&LGG had been awarded £1,500 from a Natural England fund. This figure was increased by a further £450, which we have used to match fund against the very useful work a number of you did in the Kensworth Site clearance, and we thank those of you who were involved. A well worthwhile job, and a fine reward for doing so.

The rest of the £1,950 fund is being used to produce a leaflet for a walk in the Jurassic Limestone regions of Bromham, Oakley and Stevington, we expect this to be available for you to see around the end of March. If you feel fit, and wish to walk

all, or part of the walk, here are some photographic examples of what you can see.

My stint as Chair of GeoEast expires in April, and the handover to Cambridge, the next sequential County (each county will Chair for a one year term), will take place at the AGM in Cambridge (date to be agreed). Before this handover takes place, my task will be to orchestrate a new financial group structure, consisting of Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer, so that Natural England, and any other party willing to fund GeoEast in the future, will have one body in place that can carry out the administration requirements, rather than the historical multi-members of the present GeoEast. This will not remove the administration task from us, just create an interface between GeoEast and Natural England.

The 2010/11 vision of funding expectations from Natural England for GeoEast, and consequently B&LGG, is a figure below the £25,000 granted this last year, but the two primary prerequisites of projects connected with chalk, and exercise for all, still apply. You will have no doubt seen the TV adverts of encouraging people to exercise, and this is



Selected images from the new leaflet walk available soon.

Stevington Windmill (above) and River Great Ouse (left)

where we need to concentrate our funding projects, with possibly more walk leaflets, using Chalk themes.

Should you require more details about, or wish to get involved with Geo-East, please let Peter Lally know.

**Check out the website at
www.geoeast.org.uk**

Some interesting facts about the Chilean Earthquake.

Reported in National Geographic News on the internet were the following excerpts:

"Saturday's Chile earthquake was so powerful that it likely shifted an Earth axis and shortened the length of a day, NASA announced Monday (1st March 2010). By speeding up Earth's rotation, the magnitude 8.8 earthquake—the fifth strongest ever recorded, according to the USGS—should have shortened an Earth day by 1.26 millionths of a second, according to new computer-model calculations by geophysicist Richard Gross of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California.

How Chile Earthquake Shortened Day. Just how did the Chile earthquake give Earth a bit of a turbo boost?

To explain, Sverdrup, who wasn't involved in the NASA calculation, turned again to the image of a spinning figure skater. "As she pulls her arms in, she starts rotating faster." Likewise, as a portion of Earth's mass drew in ever so slightly and quickly during the Chile earthquake, the planet began spinning a bit quicker.

The Chilean quake was a so-called thrust earthquake, which occurs when a large section of the Earth's surface—in this case, the Nasca tectonic plate—dives beneath an adjacent plate. This process, called subduction, can cause earthquakes and volcanic eruptions."

To find out more go to:

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/03/100302-chile-earthquake-earth-axis-shortened-day/>

Members' Page



Dear Editor,

We came along to your recent event at Bedford Museum and really enjoyed it. So much so that we joined the group on the day!

I thought you might like to see the attached pictures of an ammonite that my son found during a fossil-hunting break during half-term at Charmouth. It is approx 1inch across. He also found lots of belemnites and even some crinoids and came back with lots of fossils for his collection.



(I am sure that I haven't spelt these correctly!).

Many thanks

The Frost Family

If you have any interesting images or just want to voice your opinion on a geological issue, events or how the group is run then this is your page. Just send your images, in jpeg format, or any letters or comments as a Word .doc document via email to the editor at bev.fowlston@gmail.com

The editor thought you might like this quotation:

Let's face it- geologists are kind of weird, they are the people who go camping in the desert (and the jungle etc.) just to look at the way mountains were formed and get excited enough to whack at rocks with their hammers. They also have sizeable rock collections - and are known to haul huge rocks uphill in their backpacks in the name of science. Anyway – here are ten ways to figure out if you're a geologist too.

10. You have ever had to respond "yes" to the question, "What have you got in here, rocks?"
9. You have ever taken a 12-passenger minibus over "roads" that were really intended only for cattle.
8. You have ever found yourself trying to explain to airport security that a rock hammer isn't really a weapon.
7. Your rock garden is located inside your house.
6. You have ever hung a picture using a Brunton compass as a level and your rock hammer as a hammer.
5. Your collection of beer cans and/or bottles rivals the size of your rock collection.
4. You consider a "recent event" to be anything that has happened in the last hundred thousand years.
3. Your photos include people only for scale and you have more pictures of your rock hammer and lens cap than of your family.
2. You have ever been on a field trip that included scheduled stops at a gravel pit and/or an off licence.

And the No 1 sign you might be a geologist:

1. You have ever uttered the phrase "have you tried licking it" with no sexual connotations involved.

- Source : unknown -

Forthcoming Events and Contacts

**Don't miss the
next event**

**Sun 21st March
Totterhoe visit**

Dates for your diary

Mar 21st - 11am

Visit to Totterhoe Knolls and Stone Pit

Apr 10th - 10.30am

Visit to Stockwood Discovery Centre and
Kidney Wood

May t.b.c.

Visit to a quarry still to be confirmed.

**A 12-month rolling programme of events is
being organised - check the website for
further details. Further events will be
confirmed via email and in the next
newsletter. Watch this space!**

If there is an event you would like to see then please let
Bev Fowlston know and she will aim to organise it.

**For more information on any of the events, please
contact Bev Fowlston 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 past events.

Membership Fees Notice

Following the January committee meeting, it was agreed,
due to the economic climate, to keep the membership
fees at their current rate and review them again next
year.

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!

Committee Members 2009 - 10

Chairperson

Secretary

Treasurer/Membership Secretary

RIGS Manager & BNHS representative

Events Coordinator

Chalk Downs rep/Events Organiser

Beds CC & Biodiversity Forum rep

Events Organiser

The Greensand Trust representative

PR/Promotions/Fundraising Officer

Committee member

Peter Lally

Vacant

Lindsay Hiles

Dr Martin Whiteley

Bev Fowlston

Janet Munro

John Comont

John Wong

Malcolm Oliver

Vacant

Anne Williams

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