

# Bedfordshire & Luton Geology Group

## NEWSLETTER

Summer 2008

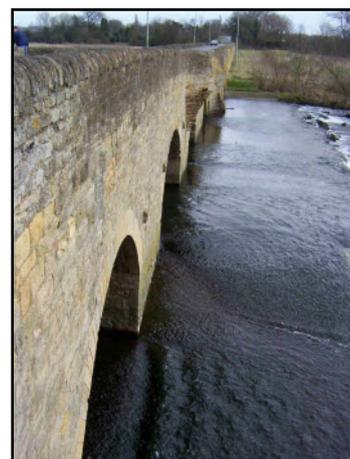
### Emphasis on RIGS

Following the EGM held in July, B&LGG is concentrating its efforts in promoting RIGS (Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites) in Bedfordshire. This will be through obtaining new funding to continue the



Churchways Quarry (RIGS) - is this site ideal for site recording?

excellent work carried out over the first four years of the B&LGG. The Group has designated 21 sites as RIGS and will focus on using these sites for education and learning as well as geoconservation and site recording where appropriate. There is always scope for new sites, such as the Scout Hut Quarry at Potton.



Bromham Bridge (RIGS) - does this site need an interpretative leaflet?

### B&LGG shine at Leighton-Linslade Canal Festival for third year running



A glorious day met the 3000 people who attended the Leighton-Linslade Canal Festival on Saturday 26th July. Bev Fowlston and Lindsay Hiles were helped immensely by fellow B&LGG member, Peter Lally, and Bev's trusty niece, Stacy Plunkett; who helped for the second year running.

There was a lot of interest and numerous membership forms were taken away along with many of our leaflets. Although not much money was taken at this fundraising opportunity, awareness of the Group is growing.

**RIGS Updates**  
including the hunt for the  
Shenley Limestone  
on page 2

**Regional funding secured**  
See page 3

**Dates for your Diary**  
on Page 4

**Also inside this issue:**  
Site recording - it's not as  
scary as you think!  
&  
Introduction to Shenley  
Limestone

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](mailto:bev.fowlston@gmail.com) Deadline for next issue is 25th November 2008.

I hope you enjoy reading on.....

# RIGS and other site updates

## News from The Pinnacle

Following the report from the last newsletter, a site investigation was carried out by Dr Martin Whiteley, Richard Dowsett and Bev Fowlston on 17th June 2008.

The Pinnacle Recreation Ground rests on top of an outcrop of the Woburn Sands Formation in Sandy.

The exposure was thought to be Clay-with-Fossils which was recorded in the 1960's and 70's but has not been seen since. The torrential rains in May 2008 exposed a clay horizon and Richard Lawrence, who first detected this new exposure, found a fossil *Gryphaea*. The question is; was this layer the previously recorded Clay-with-Fossils or just clay?

The area for investigation was approximately 2.5 metres from the top of the Pinnacle, facing south. It was in a shallow gully that runs from the top of the Pinnacle westwards down towards the railway line at the foot of the main outcrop. On first glance, the clay seen by Richard Lawrence was not visible. The outcrop had degraded and loose sands once again hid the exposure. The area was dug back and a lenticular horizon of grey-green clay was revealed. This horizon was about 40cm wide by 3cm high and 50cm beneath the present level of the grass. Small fragments of iron-rich goethite(?) and derived phosphate-rich fossil fragments were found above and below the clay.



Martin pointing out the clay horizon exposed.

The clay itself was photographed *in situ*, dug out and taken away for possible testing. The clay is completely perforated with modern root systems. As the clay was extracted the shape seemed to change as it went further back into the hillside. This could have been due to plastic deformation as the clay moulded to movement of the overlying sands.

**The main question still to be answered is;**

**Is the clay Cretaceous in age or a more recent Quaternary deposit?**

## Kensworth Interpretation Board erected

With the help of B&LGG members Jan Munro, John and Audrey Buxton and Bev Fowlston's husband Steve, the new interpretation board for Kensworth Nature Reserve was erected.



A huge thanks goes to those people and now we are looking to continue the conservation work at Kensworth in partnership with CEMEX, Groundwork Luton & South Beds, The Greensand Trust and The Wildlife Trust.

The B&LGG Chalk Downs representative, Jan Munro, has agreed to oversee this project and we look forward to great things happening in the near future. If you can help then please contact Jan via email at [jan.munro1@ntlworld.com](mailto:jan.munro1@ntlworld.com)

## Shenley Limestone found at Munday's Hill Quarry

On Saturday 23rd August, Dr Jill Eyers led a large group of people into Munday's Hill Quarry. This event was advertised through the LB Observer's Give It a Go! free magazine. The event was 100% over subscribed with original numbers being 20 and 41 people actually turning out on this beautiful summer's day.



The group were fitted out with safety wear; hard hats and hi-vis vests, before setting off to see the oldest exposures of the Woburn Sands in the quarry.



Jill explained the geology and everyone had a great time looking at the multi-coloured face. Following this brief introduction, everyone started off to the next exposure,

## Shenley Limestone continued.....

heads down searching in the Gault Clay that is used to backfill the worked areas.

Member, Simon Leonard, found an excellent ammonite specimen (see image right), whilst others were lucky enough to find gryphaea, belemnite, large oysters and small pieces of wood.



At the next exposure, a short lunch was enjoyed and then some serious fossil hunting was undertaken. The group found large pieces of wood, some were approximately a metre long but sadly they were too embedded in the sandstone to extract. Other smaller pieces were salvaged for the B&LGG to use as hand specimens.

Now began the hunt for the Shenley Limestone. As Jill explained what we were looking for and its significance in Bedfordshire's geological history (see explanation box below), an excited member of the group approached and exclaimed he had found Shenley Limestone. Off we headed; up large sand spoil heaps and down sliding sand slopes to eventually, climb to the top of the exposures to find a very strange pile of rocks that resembled builders' rubble!

However, on closer examination, these scruffy looking bits of rock had bivalves and crinoid stems within them, as well as other shells. Unfortunately, the Shenley Limestone was not *in situ* but the B&LGG now has some excellent hand specimens for use in educational projects and displays.

### Introduction to Shenley Limestone

The Shenley Limestone is unique to the quarries around Leighton Buzzard and is named after the area around Shenley Hill.

According to the BGS memoir for the area, it is "a condensed ferruginous phosphatic deposit with a rich brachiopod fauna" and "was formed in restricted environments, possibly on mounds on the contemporary sea bed."

The Shenley Limestone occurs above the Silty Beds and where present the Red Sands of the Woburn Sands Formation prior to the deposition of the Gault Clay.

For more information refer to:  
BGS Memoir: Geology of the country around Leighton Buzzard, available to order from the BGS.

B&LGG leaflet: The Lower Greensand for geologists available to view at <http://www.bedsrigs.org.uk/leaflets/RIGSLGreen2.pdf>

## Regional News

### GeoEast secure £10,000 funding

Following an application to Natural England, the Regional group GeoEast, of whom B&LGG are a part, have secured a £10,000 grant.

The money is to be spent on an East of England Region Chalk Interpretation Project. A meeting is to be held in September to discuss how the money will be spent and how B&LGG can be involved.

## B&LGG News

### John Wong: new Field Events Organiser

The committee warmly welcomed a new member, John Wong, at the June meeting. John works for the Amateur Geological Society as their Field Events coordinator and has agreed to take on a similar role for the B&LGG.

The Group wants to take members to more of our RIGS around the county. This is one of the areas John will be concentrating on. If there is a particular site you would like to see then please let him know. Also, him know what other events you would like to see in the next year.

You can contact John at [john.wong@hertscc.gov.uk](mailto:john.wong@hertscc.gov.uk) or via his mobile on 07908545912.

### EGM has a positive outcome

An Extraordinary General Meeting was called by the committee. It was held on Monday 28th July. Although poorly attended, there was a positive feel to the meeting.

Most of those members present agreed that the B&LGG should be pro-active in moving the RIGS movement forward in Bedfordshire. To this end the Group requires external funding and Bev Fowlston has agreed to take on this role. Other members of the B&LGG are willing to take over the roles which she has filled over the last few months. This will give the Group a dynamic committee that is committed to helping the Group succeed.

Now all the Group needs is some good ideas for a funding bid. If you have any thoughts then do let Bev know in the usual way.

Here's looking forward to the AGM in September.

### Site Recording - it's not as scary as you think!

There are many ways in which an amateur geologist can help at a site recording.....

- Are you good at photography?
- Do you want to learn how to do a graphic log?
- Can you mark and bag samples or specimens?
- Can you sketch a rock face?
- Measuring beds is simple, whether it's using a ruler or a 4m pole!



All of the above skills are used during a site recording. It's all about the detail. Gathering information as you go; visually with photographs and sketches, then using measurements; firstly at a distance with a long 30m tape and then closer in at metre, centimetre and millimetre scale. You do not need to be an expert geologist to learn and have fun in the field. Come along to field events and you will soon be competent and confident in the field.

To find out more about the basics of site recording read the education pack for Potton Scout Hut Quarry at [www.bedsrigs.org.uk/education.html](http://www.bedsrigs.org.uk/education.html)

# Event News

## Dunstable Showcase

Did you see our poster display at the Dunstable Showcase?



This is a free display case available to local voluntary and charity groups within South Beds. It is situated on West Street in Dunstable.

Our display was on show from Sunday 13th June until Saturday 19th June. If you missed it, then it will be on view at Toddington Library from Tuesday 16th September for two weeks.

## 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:

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 miss the next event

.....  
Sun 14th September - AGM

## Dates for your diary

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September**

2.30pm – AGM at Wilstead Village Hall nr Bedford

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, please contact Bev Fowlston at the details below.**

**Remember to check out the website**  
**[www.bedsrigs.org.uk](http://www.bedsrigs.org.uk)**

## Recent Events

Since the last newsletter, the B&LGG have run various events.

The Greensand Ridge Walk on Sun 8th June, led by Malcolm Oliver. A gorgeous sunny day for a lovely long walk through the beautiful wooded ridge between Linlade and Heath & Reach.

A great Fossil Fun Activity Day held at Dunstable Downs and in partnership with Groundwork Luton & South Beds. Both children and adults had a wonderful time.

An excellently supported trip to Charnwood Forest on Sunday 29th June, was led by BGS' Keith Ambrose and thoroughly enjoyed by all who went - even those of us who got absolutely drenched!

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.

## Committee Members 2007 - 08

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

Bev Fowlston (Acting)

Bev Fowlston

Richard Cox

Bev Fowlston

Dr Martin Whiteley

Richard Dowsett

Janet Munro

John Comont

John Wong

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