

Spring 2018

1

# Newsletter

## *The Higgins collection*

By Bev Fowlston



**A** Higgins Museum event was held in Bedford on January 13th following the excellent work carried out by members Anne Williams and Jean Griffiths on the geological handling collection. The pair have spent considerable time and effort engaged in the intensive work of sorting, cataloguing and data logging of the rock and fossil specimens.

Now the completed collection, which is very informative and broad ranging, is available for use by schools and groups interested in geology as well as having some interesting local pieces to show off Bedfordshire's fascinating geological history.

I gave a 20-minute talk entitled "*An Introduction to Bedfordshire's Geology*", whilst Tony Baker and Jean Griffiths talked to the visitors who came along to view and handle the collection. Massive thanks go to those involved as well as to Anne for some magnificent work.

*Don't forget  
your membership  
renewal. See  
Page 8*

## **THE NEW BGG BANNER**

**T**he new promotional material in the form of a roll-up banner was displayed at the Higgins event.

*As you can see it is much more interesting and enticing than our poster boards and far easier to carry around.*

*The poster boards are still being used to complement the banner but we still need more exhibiting material to promote BGG, attract new members and encourage more activity.*



## **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

### **Page**

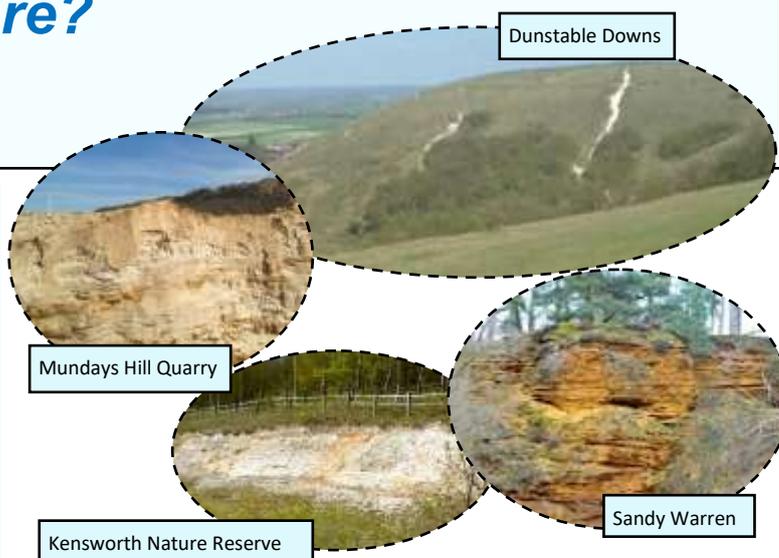
- 2 & 3 Bedfordshire's LGS (Local Geology Sites) and designated SSSI's
- 4 Improving site access. BGG join GA
- 5 GCLP update. Wall of Geology
- 6 Stockgrove Education. Northants HNS talk
- 7 2018 Events. Website revision
- 8 Membership renewal. County Quiz
- 9 Committee members. Come & join us.

# Do you know where Bedfordshire's Local Geological Sites are? (or LGS's)

By Anne Williams

You have probably visited one or two of our designated geological sites during one of our organised events or walks but perhaps there are a few you weren't aware of.

Well here they are listed, with their specific unique or special interest shown and current status and condition of the site.



Site	Character	Condition & management
<a href="#">Bromham Bridge</a>	Ancient monument, Jurassic oolite building stones.	Good. No management
<a href="#">Barton Hills</a>	Chalk geomorphology and springs	Good. No management
<a href="#">Broom Quarry</a>	Quaternary fluvio-glacial deposits	Closed, new quarry opened, contact for access.
<a href="#">Deepdale Quarry</a>	Woburn Sands disused quarry	Good/declining. Periodic clearance for educational purposes. Access difficult, new owner. Await developments
<a href="#">Dunstable &amp; Whipsnade Downs</a>	Chalk geomorphology	Good. No Management.
<a href="#">Kensworth Nature Reserve</a>	Middle and Upper Chalk, disused quarry	Good, periodic clearance for educational purposes.
<a href="#">Munday's Hill Quarry</a>	Woburn Sands and Gault Clay, had Shenley Limestone. Working sand pit.	Good/declining. Depends on quarry manager for access and face clearance. Await developments.
<a href="#">Ouzel Valley</a>	Fluvial geomorphology	Good. No management.
<a href="#">R. Ivel Biggleswade</a>	Fluvial geomorphology	Good. No management.
<a href="#">Sandy, The Pinnacle</a>	Geomorphology, sandy heathland.	Good. No management. Access difficult, landowner not cooperative.
<a href="#">Sandy Warren Lodge Quarry</a>	Woburn Sands, disused sandstone quarry.	Good. New steps for access to viewing platform. No access to face.
<a href="#">Scout Hut Quarry Potton</a>	Woburn Sands, disused sand pit.	Good. Periodic clearance for educational purposes.
<a href="#">Smithcombe, Sharpenhoe &amp; Sundon</a>	Chalk geomorphology	Good. No management.
<a href="#">Stockgrove Country Park</a>	Geomorphology and glacial deposits. Lowland heath.	Good. No management. Maintain the name, although now within Rushmere Country Park.
<a href="#">Landpark Wood</a>	Upper Chalk. Disused quarry.	Good/declining. Clearance for educational purposes as required because of rapid weathering of the face on steep slope.
<a href="#">Quest Pit</a>	Oxford Clay pit.	No longer accessible.
<a href="#">Cainhoe Quarry</a>	Woburn Sands.	Changes of use, no longer viable.
<a href="#">Chamberlain's Barn Quarry</a>	Woburn Sands and Gault Clay.	
<a href="#">Churchways Quarry</a>	Woburn Sands.	
<a href="#">Ledburn Quarry</a>	Woburn Sands.	
<a href="#">New Trees Quarry</a>	Woburn Sands and Gault Clay	

The table on page 2 shows a list of designated Local Geology Sites (formerly RIGS) and Geology SSSI's in Bedfordshire. As you can see the Jurassic limestone is represented only by a built structure, the ancient monument of Bromham Bridge, which has some obviously oolitic blocks and bivalve fossils. As most of the older buildings along the Gt. Ouse valley upstream of Bedford are built of Jurassic limestones there must have been a lot of small quarries to supply them, none of which is evident today. The only exposure existing today is behind a small waterfall on private land and not able to be designated, so we thought we might designate another built structure to represent this rock type. Stevington church is a very interesting limestone building on a river cliff overlooking the floodplain, with a line of springs at its foot, including the famous Holy Well.

It is no longer possible today to see the wonderfully fossiliferous Oxford Clay now that the brickworks and all the clay pits, including Quest Pit, have closed.

The Woburn Sands is well-represented at Potton Scout Hut and in the old quarry within the RSPB at Sandy Warren, and at Deepdale if an access and management plan can be arranged with the new owners.

Greensand geomorphology can be seen at Stockgrove/Rushmere. But as you can see, the sand quarries around Leighton Buzzard (with their associated Gault Clay) present a problem, as they always have done as working quarries, and are now the subject of a planning application for changes of use. We thought we might designate the wonderful 'Greensand' Old St. Mary's Church on the hill at Clophill as an LGS and hope that we can eventually have arrangements for access and maybe designation for Silsoe Quarry near Clophill.

There are several Chalk sites, both for geomorphology and geology. Kensworth Nature Reserve is well-managed with annual clearances. Landpark Wood is difficult to maintain but can be accessed and cleared as necessary for its fossils and wonderful flints. Totternhoe Stone is accessible in the Totternhoe Stone Pit SSSI.

Superficial drift deposits can be seen at Stockgrove (glacial sands and till) and terrace gravels in the SSSI at Biddenham Pit, which now has a local warden and joint management with the Wildlife Trust and the parish council. We hope to get access to the new Broom Quarry at some time in the future.

***Below is a table of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.  
Assessed by Natural England.***

<b>Site</b>	<b>Character</b>	<b>Management</b>
<b>Biddenham Pit</b>	Quaternary fluvio-glacial terrace deposits	Good. Periodic clearance for educational purposes
<b>Double Arches Pit</b>	Woburn Sands and Gault Clay	Future uncertain
<b>Kensworth Chalk Pit</b>	Middle and Upper Chalk	Active Chalk quarry. No management.
<b>Nine Acres Pit</b>	Woburn Sands and Gault Clay	Future uncertain.
<b>Totternhoe Stone Pit</b>	Lower Chalk with Totternhoe Stone. Calcareous grassland.	Disused Chalk quarry. No management for geology.

***Thank you Anne, our LGS Manager for giving us a resume of all the noteworthy geological sites in Bedfordshire***

## Improving access to our geological sites



Bev surveying the new stairway at Sandy Warren



New fencing and cleared footpath

In order to carry out many of our projects, site improvements and access to the sites we are constantly looking for funding. Bev has appealed for support here in her GCLP report on page 5.

We have recently been awarded £1,000 by Tesco in their 'Bags of help scheme'. This was fantastic news!

This money will go towards the building of a ramp at the Potton quarry to improve disability access at this educationally important site. However we are looking for the outstanding balance of £2,000 to complete the project and currently looking at various grants and trusts to fulfil this.

### Fundraising appeal

**Could you spare a few hours to help the committee with fundraising? We need help in sourcing funds and in filling out application forms. Please contact Derek or Bev.**

*Interested in more than Bedfordshire's geology?*

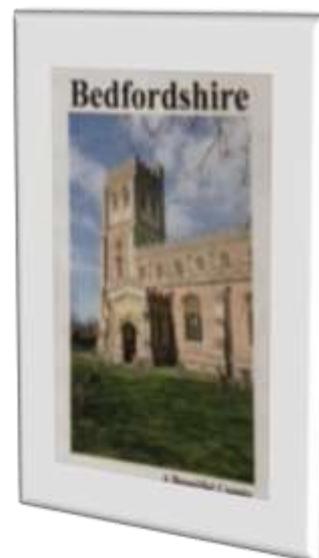
*.....then you'll enjoy this read.....*

### **'Bedfordshire—A Beautiful County'**

*This newly published book by Peter Etteridge is now available on Amazon Kindle for £2.99 and in paperback from Blurb.co.uk bookstore.*

*The book explores a selection of the most interesting villages and towns in Bedfordshire. It is full of fascinating information about our County and describes the history, heritage and architecture. It is accompanied by over a hundred excellent colour photos.*

*Peter Etteridge is an author and freelance photographer who has lived in Luton for over 60 years and contributed to many Bedfordshire publications through the years.*



## BGG Joins the Geologists' Association

We have recently become affiliated to the Geologists' Association based at Burlington House, Piccadilly, London. This national association exists for all geologists and earth scientists whether professional or amateur and acts as a forum for the exchange of information, runs field trips, lectures and festivals.

The GA produces the *GA Magazine* quarterly and will give our group the opportunity to be listed with other geological organisations with our contact details etc. We will also be able to promote and advertise our events and field trips, and be able to take a promotional stand at the annual Festival of Geology.

*For further info visit [www.geologistsassociation.org.uk](http://www.geologistsassociation.org.uk)*

## **Greensand Country Landscape Partnership (GCLP) update** *by Bev Fowlston*

Since the last newsletter, not much has happened apart from the usual quarterly update report to GCLP and completion of more match-funding applications – thanks mainly to Derek Turner. Sadly, we have been turned down for funding for the disability access at Potton by CLA Charitable Trust but good news we have received £1000 from Tesco Bags for Help towards this project. We are still awaiting news from Tarmac as to whether our application has been accepted and will go forward in their process. Again massive thanks to Derek for all his hard work on this application.

The only really big news about GCLP is the new branding is now complete. Note the new logo and name!



Other areas being worked on are two of the leaflets. The Eastern Geotrail leaflet is in its final proof-reading stage and this will be complete by the end of March – more thanks to Tony and Janet Baker for all their work on the trail and to Henrietta Flynn for being our guinea pig and walking the entire thing a couple of weeks ago.

The general leaflet is ongoing and will be in draft form by the end of March. The disability access at Potton is pending further match-funding. Next steps are to plan the central geotrail route and collect materials for the Wall of Geology as well as obtain match-funding (in progress through Tarmac) for it. Let me know of any significant geological or landscape features around Maulden including interesting buildings. I now know of Bolbec Farm quarry, thanks to Audrey Buxton.

***The 'Wall of Geology' will be built at St Mary's Old Church in Clophill near the Ecolodges between the church and the cemetery. It will represent the geology of Bedfordshire by using good examples of local building stones.***

***Here's how you can help with the wall:***

***Can you supply us with examples of :***

- ***Dressed greensand blocks***
- ***Sandstone with good structures/iron staining***
- ***Reclaimed Bedfordshire made bricks***
- ***Local limestone boulders***
- ***Chalk & flint nodules***
- ***In-situ fossils***



***Please let a committee member know so we can arrange a pick-up***

## Education feature

### Stockgrove Park Nature Club

By Jan Munro

**O**n Valentine's Day I was invited by Esther Clarke of the Greensand Trust to come and chat to the children belonging to her Nature Club about fossils. Fortunately for me, my husband is well used to playing second fiddle to fossils instead of being romanced by his wife on such an auspicious day.

I took along a broad selection of fossils from my collection for the children to handle. I got some interesting answers when I asked them what creatures they thought they once were. I laid out my big ammonite on a sheet of paper and asked them to draw what they thought the living animal might have looked like.



They generated several creatures that could have come straight out of the film Alien and we had a lot of laughs about it. However, it was also a serious scientific exercise to spark their curiosity and imagination. I drew the real creature at the end which, when you think about it looks pretty alien in its own right.

The adult assistants were just as fascinated and it proved to be a valuable evening from their point of view. A lot of questions were asked about the best places to find fossils. I deliberately included specimens that came from their local area i.e. Leighton Buzzard and Heath & Reach. I took my tree trunk from a local sand pit, the Amoebocerus ammonite from the clay etc. plus more exotic things from around the world to illustrate that fossils can turn up anywhere. My Moroccan shark's tooth and American trilobite were the favourites.



Education is an important service we can offer when invited. The National Curriculum, in my opinion, is too narrow for children now. We are becoming more divorced from the natural world which bodes ill for the future. If you don't understand it how are you going to preserve and protect it for future generations?

*Well said Jan!*

## Talk to Northamptonshire Natural History Society

By Bev Fowlston

On 16<sup>th</sup> November, I was invited to talk to Northamptonshire Natural History Society (NNHS) about Bedfordshire's Geology. Their geology group has many attendees and about 20 were there on the day. The event was held in their rooms near the Derngate Theatre. I took along some Bedfordshire rock and fossil samples and gave a PowerPoint presentation to the group. Afterwards many questions were asked and overall, I could answer them! The whole presentation lasted about 45 minutes but the questions lasted another 15 minutes! The NNHS geology collection is vast and varied, well worth a visit. If you would be interested in this being arranged, please let me know.

# 2018 Events

*Please note these events are subject to change so watch out for details by email nearer the day.  
For further information on any of these events please contact Bev Fowlston, Events Coordinator.*

*Also look at events at: [www.bedfordshiregeologygroup.org.uk](http://www.bedfordshiregeologygroup.org.uk)*

14 Mar	Clearance	<b>Biddenham site clearance:</b> This year we will be cutting back the pathway to the Ice Age gravels at Biddenham pit.	10.30am	Biddenham Pit SSSI, Fleming Close, Biddenham MK40 4QZ
22 Apr	Walk	<b>Walk along Ivel Valley:</b> The walk will be a short 2.5mile loop around Biggleswade Common. Looking at the landscape and geology of the River Ivel and the common.	10.30am	Meet at: Dan Albone Memorial car park, Shortmead Street Biggleswade SG18 0BL
May	Visit	<b>Visit to Warden Abbey vineyard:</b> We will visit this small vineyard and learn not just about the wine growing of this area but also the geophysical exploration the volunteers have had done.	2pm	Warden Abbey Vineyard
16 Jun	Visit	<b>Visit Stevington:</b> This visit will take in some of the buildings, including the church, around Stevington.	2pm	Meet at Stevington Church
Jul TBC	GCLP	<b>Install Wall of Geology:</b> As part of the BGG's commitment to the GCLP project we will be helping heritage experts to restore the church wall at Clophill's Old St Mary's Church including building a Wall of Geology interpretation.	10am	Old St Mary's Church, Old Church Path, Clophill MK45 4BP
18 Aug	Social	<b>Visit to public house:</b> We will meet at the Stone Jug in Clophill and go for a short circular walk. This social event is a chance to catch up with other members for a drink and a chat, even a spot of lunch.	10.30am	The Stone Jug, 10 Back St, Clophill, Bedford MK45 4BY
23 Sep	AGM	<b>AGM:</b> A chance to review our year's work and events and catch up with other members. We will also include a walk to Husborne Crawley Church to view the only exposure of Upper Greensand – actual green sandstone!	2pm	Husborne Crawley Reading Room, Corner of School Lane and Turnpike Road, Husborne Crawley MK43 0XB

## WEBSITE UPGRADE— can you help?

**H**ave you looked at the BGG website recently? It hasn't changed since it was first launched and is in need of some revision and upgrading. The committee is looking for someone to help review and update its content. The techy coding and wizardry will be done professionally but we need someone to help with the planning, layout and content.

If you are interested, please talk to Anne or Derek.

## ***MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL*** by *Tony Baker*

Your BGG membership is up for renewal on April 1st. Membership subscriptions for 2018/2019 have increased slightly to £10 per person for the year. To renew, please send payment to Tony Baker at the following address : ***Mr Tony Baker, BGG Membership Secretary,  
36 Chapel Close, Toddington, Beds, LU5 6AZ*** (cheques payable to BGG)

Alternatively, you can make an on-line payment to the Group's bank account. If you do decide to renew your membership this way, please email me after payment so that I can keep a look out for it ***tonybaker36.bggmembership@yahoo.co.uk***.

**Account name: Bedfordshire Geology Group    Bank & branch: HSBC, Leighton Buzzard  
Branch sort code: 40.28.12    Current account no: 21507427**

Please let me know of any changes in address, telephone no, email etc so I can update our records.

This newsletter is not the only benefit of remaining a member of the BGG; all our events for members are **free of charge**, non-members pay £2.00 to attend. Group membership is £25.00 per annum. (For organisations with 4 or more employees or members wishing to join BGG).

***Many thanks, Tony***

### ***How well do you know Bedfordshire?***

***A little quiz which includes history, geography and some other oddities as well as a touch of geology!***

- 1) Where is the highest elevation point in the county?
- 2) What is a Bedfordshire Clanger?
- 3) How many miles/km is the Greensand Ridge walk?
- 4) Where is Bedfordshire's only natural waterfall?
- 5) What national organisation has its HQ in Sandy?
- 6) Which of Henry VIII's wives had an association with Ampthill?
- 7) Name the village where the River Ivel joins the Great Ouse
- 8) Where is Bedfordshire's tree cathedral?
- 9) Can you name the two universities in Bedfordshire?
- 10) Where in the county is the oldest and longest narrow-gauge railway?
- 11) What famous poet was born in Elstow?
- 12) Where in Bedfordshire is the longest underground pipeline and where does it go to?
- 13) The largest UK collection of horse drawn vehicles is found in Bedfordshire. Where?
- 14) Name the religious order which founded Chicksands Priory.
- 15) Where would you look for deposits of igneous origin in Bedfordshire?
- 16) What demolition work is due to take place in Stewartby later this year?
- 17) What are Griffin Farm, Warden Abbey and Henry's Field?
- 18) Name the 3 European towns that Bedford is twinned with?

***Answers in the next newsletter—Summer 2018***

## **BGG Committee**

Acting Chairperson	Anne Williams	<a href="mailto:annew36@hotmail.com">annew36@hotmail.com</a>
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Fundraiser	<b><u>VACANT</u></b>	

### **Could you join the committee?**

W

e are in need of a **new treasurer**. As you can see our current crew take on several roles and we would like to bring in some new blood. Could you fit the bill? As we don't handle much money this position is not onerous or time consuming.

No geological knowledge required!

Any help with fundraising and website revision would also be most appreciated.

Please contact either Anne or Derek.



Newsletter compiled and edited by  
Henrietta Flynn

If you wish to include an article, photo  
or share your geological interest in the  
next issue, then please contact me by  
email at

[henriettaflynn@btinternet.com](mailto:henriettaflynn@btinternet.com)

*Hope you enjoy the read!*

*Please keep looking at our website and social media for  
news on events, walks and talks.*

*It's easy to download our flyers and geotrails*

***[www.bedfordshiregeologygroup.org.uk](http://www.bedfordshiregeologygroup.org.uk)***

*Also look at our Facebook page:*

*<https://www.facebook.com/bedfordshireGeologyGroup/>  
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