



# Newsletter

Spring 2012

## Martin - you will be missed!

By Malcolm Oliver, on behalf of all at BGG

Several years ago the BGG had established a real presence in Bedfordshire by setting up a membership, identifying the first set of Local Geological Sites in the area and creating a programme of local visits. We had success from grants to achieve this, but increasingly the need to work with planning staff and professionally qualified geologists in other Groups and organisations resulted in the need for someone who was a bit more than a gifted amateur on our team. This would also give us an additional degree of confidence with what we were doing as a Group. After much arm-twisting and 'other persuasion' Martin Whiteley agreed to join us.



Martin has added hugely to our capability as a group, providing the necessary professional breadth of knowledge and approach to issues with an appropriate aura of gravitas, whilst also being excited about the local geological story to be told. He has the ability to communicate his knowledge and enthusiasm to all around him regardless of their own level of expertise. He has helped us all grow and moved us forward, helping to audit existing LGS and adding to their portfolio whilst providing input to the Bedfordshire Natural History Society and other national and regional groups. His friendly support and commitment will be sorely missed as he takes up a post as Senior Lecturer in Petroleum Geology at the University of Derby. We wish him well in this new venture and do hope to see him sometimes, as the family will stay on in their home in Bedford. His shoes will be hard to fill and we are looking for people to take on parts of the role he has fulfilled for us - all contributions gratefully received!

### A Note from the Editor

I have been editing this newsletter for several years now, does anyone else want a turn? If you are interested then it easily done through Word – no special software required! Please let me know if you would like to do this interesting job at the AGM in September.

**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 25<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

I hope you enjoy reading.

## More Power to your Elbow!

By Martin Whiteley

**One of the frustrations of being a geologist in Bedfordshire** is that there is not a lot of solid rock to thump with a geological hammer! There is nothing quite as satisfying as splitting open layers of shale in order to find fossils, or revealing a fresh, glistening face of pale yellow limestone from a vegetation-festooned quarry. So, imagine my excitement when I was invited to join a group of archaeologists and fellow geologists to look at rocks in the Biddenham area, exposed not by the humble hammer, but by a massive CAT earthmover.

The route of the proposed western bypass that will loop around Bedford is currently being investigated for archaeological and geotechnical reasons. A series of shallow trenches and several deeper pits formed the basis of this programme and the pits were particularly interesting in that they penetrated a series of river



gravels laid down by the ancestral River Great Ouse. Normally concealed beneath the flat fields, the gravels provide evidence of several time periods during the last 450,000 years when the river occupied a different position from present and was much shallower and faster flowing. Beneath the gravels, at depths of about 5m below the surface, the earthmover made short work of exposing solid limestone, confirming the rock type that hitherto has never been proved beneath the floodplain.

During the course of the excavations, samples were collected and the temporary exposures were photographed and measured so that the unique data can be used in the future. Then the rather bemused digger driver was asked to fill the pits back in again and today there is little evidence that the ground has been disturbed. Within months large scale site works are scheduled to begin and in the future motorists will be driving across the area, oblivious to

the fact that they're following the course of an ancient river that carried thousands of tons of pebbles and cobbles from the Midlands towards the North Sea.

This newsletter gives me the opportunity to let you know that I've just started a new job at Derby University and will be moving from Bedford in due course. I've certainly enjoyed looking at the rocks and landscape of Bedfordshire over the last couple of decades and I'll miss the companionship provided by the Bedfordshire Geology Group. On the plus side, Derbyshire has got a whole lot more solid rock to hammer, so let me wish you all the best and hope that you continue to enjoy your geology, wherever you find it.

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](mailto:bev.fowlston@gmail.com)

## Events Review

### Quarry clearance at Kensworth.

By Anne Williams

The Kensworth scrape is clean again or at least the most interesting section. Five members of the BGG braved the drought on 21<sup>st</sup> April armed with the usual equipment to give it its annual spring clean. We only had one hailstorm and some light drizzle, otherwise the sun shone and we gradually had to strip off the extra layers, having prepared for the worst.



We have to thank Jan for the excellent state of the upper section (see photo). She added a hoe and a towrope to the usual equipment, and yes, she is tied to the fence.

**Thank you to all of you who took part.**

If you wish to see more images from our events then please visit our new Gallery page on the website.

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

## **Recent educational events.**

By Anne Williams

In April Bev met up with an MSc student looking into tidal landforms past and present, at our site at Potton Scout Hut. He took samples, photographs and measurements. He will try to get some of the samples analysed and will let us have the results in due course.

In May the Amateur Geological Society used the Potton Scout Hut site for a visit, and Martin met them and gave them a tour of this quarry and Deepdale quarry.

We have also helped a group of MSc Land Resource Management students from Cranfield University with their project plan to transform the disused quarry at Houghton Regis for community, educational and environmental use.

Upcoming events include visits with a Watch group to Totternhoe quarry, with Free Range Education students to Kensworth and Barton Springs and to Blow's Down in Luton with the Wildlife Trust. We are also planning outdoor educational resources based on Kensworth with the Groundwork Trust.

## **Volcanoes Talk with Glynda.**

By Bev Fowlston

In March, Glynda Easterbrook gave a talk at the Open University on Italian volcanoes. Sadly, this was poorly attended but still very interesting for those who did attend. Thank you to Glynda for her time and effort on putting on this talk.

## **Munday's Hill visit with Bucks Earth Heritage Group.**

By Bev Fowlston

In April, Dr Jill Evers, former B&LGG RIGS Manager, invited BGG to join with her and her members on a trip to the fabulous Munday's Hill quarry. As usual, there was a lot to see from beautiful sedimentary structures to fascinating fossils. We will be trying to run our own trip to Munday's Hill next year so watch out for details. We extend our thanks to Jill and to the manager, Tom Wise, for their guidance on this trip.

## **Little Heath trip with Herts Geological Society.**

By Bev Fowlston

In May, Prof John Catt, from HGS, led a trip through the key LGS in Hertfordshire. This was a fascinating day looking at more Recent outcrops of geology. We saw a lovely little quarry in Little Heath that showed the top of the Reading Beds and the gravels and sands exposed there. In the afternoon, we followed the bourne in Berkhamstead for a short way where John explained the debate of how they form. A very interesting day all round and a big thank you to John for his time and hospitality.

# LGS News

## Potton Scout Hut Quarry (LGS)

By Bev Fowlston

Ray and Val Piercy, keyholders for the LGS at Potton Scout Hut Quarry, have kindly cleared the weeds from the pathway along the outcrop. A huge thank you to them.

However, there is a little work required on the face to keep it pristine for visitors to this site. We will be organising a cleaning party sometime in the autumn to clear the overgrowth from the summer. Please watch for dates in the near future.

## Forthcoming events and contacts

**Don't Forget.....**

**COMING SOON**

**SATURDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> JULY**

### **RUSHMERE PARK - STOCKGROVE GEOLOGY TRAIL – PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIVE WORKS**



Stockgrove is a Local Geological Site (LGS) due to its Pleistocene heritage including dry valleys and its cappings of glacial till and gravels. One objective of the LGS designation is the improvement of public access and understanding of our heritage and the establishment of an interpreted trail is an important element towards this end. Discussions with Natural England and others considered the possibility of creating exposures as part of the interpretation of such a trail.

The next step is to do some trial exposure work at two points where trial auger bores have given good evidence of the sub-surface content to see if we have something of value to show people.

We need a maximum of 10 people to help, bringing equipment to clear bramble and light brush, dig faces and a trench (spades, the odd pick-axe). The aim will be to work between about 10pm and 5pm with a break for lunch during which we will do a walk around the LGS to see the surface features and put the work we are doing in context.

If you are interested in being part of the team, please contact Malcolm at [msoliver@talktalk.net](mailto:msoliver@talktalk.net)

## Dates for your diary

**9<sup>th</sup> Jun** - Fossil Fun Day at Harrold-Odell Country Park

**28<sup>th</sup> Jul** – Rushmere test pit day

August Field trip to Barton Springs (date to be confirmed)

**8<sup>th</sup> Sep** - Stand at Potton Show

**15<sup>th</sup> Sep** – AGM (details to follow)

*A 12-month rolling programme of events is being organised - check the website for further details.*

*Further events will be confirmed via email, on the website and in the next newsletter.*

*Watch this space!*

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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.

Don't forget, if you want to borrow a book or paper held in our library then please contact BGG Membership Secretary on [bgg.membership@btinternet.com](mailto:bgg.membership@btinternet.com)

## 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 BGG).

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 BGG; 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 BGG
2. Requesting and completing a Standing Order form

Both available through contacting:

Lindsay Hiles BGG Membership Secretary, 4 Phoenix Close, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 3YW

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

## **Committee Members 2011 - 12**

Chairperson	Peter Lally	<a href="mailto:plally65@gmail.com">plally65@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Vacant	<a href="mailto:secretary@bedfordshiregeologygroup.org.uk">secretary@bedfordshiregeologygroup.org.uk</a>
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LGS Manager & BNHS rep	Vacant	
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