



# Newsletter

## *Stevington Walk followed by AGM*

### *The Bedfordshire Geology Group*

held its 7<sup>th</sup> AGM on September 16<sup>th</sup> at Bromham Mill. The afternoon started with a geological walk through the Jurassic countryside from Stevington Church. Not a walk for those looking for good Jurassic exposures, but nonetheless a great opportunity to interpret what was under our feet from the shape of the landscape and to see some interesting ancient 'building geology'.

We started at Saint Mary's church in Stevington. This Church displays many architectural features of Anglo-Saxon age including original towers and window recesses. It was rebuilt and enlarged in the Middle Ages with locally sourced limestones, showing oolitic and 'cornbrash' characteristics. For us as geologists, our interest was also drawn to a natural spring arising from the limestone beneath the church; the so called 'holy well'.



An ancient stone archway channels the spring – *see photo above*. It is a moot point as to whether the well is considered holy but it does have a reputation for curing eye complaints!

Our walk continued over part of the disused Northampton to Bedford railway line, and up the fields to Stevington Windmill – *see photo opposite*, where we all prodded the Jurassic limestone walls, hand lenses at the ready.

OK, so no in-situ geology but nice to see local stone in use and wonderful undulating landscape with lovely views. Then back to Bromham Mill for refreshments, home-made cakes and the AGM.



Edited by Henrietta Flynn

If you have any comments or wish to include an article in the next issue, then please contact me by email at [henriettaflynn@btinternet.com](mailto:henriettaflynn@btinternet.com)

*Hope you enjoy the read!*

The BGG continues to add considerable expertise to the geology collection at Bedford Museum, which is undergoing redevelopment, under the direction of Tom Perrett, Head of Collections. All the rock, mineral and fossil collections have been relocated during the refurbishment of the galleries. This has given our small group of volunteers a great opportunity to update the museum records, photograph the specimens and identify some oddities. The museum will be completely refurbished and will open to the public in April 2013.

We have been asked to help with a permanent geological exhibition that will showcase their best specimens (chosen by our BGG volunteers). We are also providing the explanatory text panels, photography, maps etc. By linking the BGG with the museum we are showing our value in education, our knowledge base and our resourcefulness. In return we hope to have the use of its geological collection, to have our own themed exhibits at the museum, use its resources and have a permanent base for meetings and talks etc. The work is still ongoing and our help still needed.

Do you have some excellent specimens of chalk, oolitic limestone or gault clay? The museum's collection is limited in these rock types. There is also a need for good photography, particularly of good topographical views of the county or of actual fossil extractions. If you can help please contact Lindsay, Anne or Glynda. (Details on the committee page).

Prior to opening in April, the museum has kindly offered to give around 15 of our members a tour around the completed exhibitions. This will probably be in late March. Please let Lindsay know if you are interested as it's first come, first served!

## Earth Splitting Experience?

### Visit Iceland.....

By Malcolm Oliver



## Want a holiday to bore your Spouse Rigid??..... asks Malcolm

**Well then, a holiday in Iceland is just for you .....**

The picture above shows where the newly-formed (geologically) island of Iceland is splitting at a place called thing-i-me-whatsit (actually the ancient capital of Thingvellir) where the President still has his summer palace. You can see huge waterfalls (even walk behind them!), walk up still-hot volcanoes, have bubbling holes beside you, wander on glaciers, boat amongst icebergs, bathe in hot rivers in the mountains, see the ORIGINAL Geysir, walk on lava flows and glacial outwash plains, see where lava has diverted rivers and just see how farmers cope when their world just disappears under a few feet of ash (savings in fertilizer and something to sell to the tourists for years!!) - oh and to add to the experience you can feast on delicacies such as cormorant, horse, whale, puffin.....

## Why I became a member of Bedfordshire Geology Group

By Margaret Goose

- I did not study geology, nor have I worked as a geologist, so why?
- I'm not a teacher having to know about geology, so why?

The first meeting I attended was in Bedford Museum - a talk about the Bedfordshire landscape and its underlying geology. It was an informal gathering with people making their own coffee or tea as they arrived and being made to feel very welcome.

Since then I have been on more walks, as well as attending a range of talks and more social gatherings; unfortunately I have not managed to go on quarry trips or take part in clearing sites eg Potton.

Some members are professional geologists, more have studied, or are studying, geology; some are particularly interested in fossils or rock formations and others, like me, have a more general interest. I studied geography at university, with an emphasis on human and historical geography (if I was a student now I would have welcomed the terminology of environmental studies). Although my career has been in management in the public and charity sectors, I have maintained an interest in landscapes and their development, particularly as my walking friends have introduced me to hillier parts of the UK and beyond.

All are welcome at BGG and encouraged to contribute their broad knowledge and experience eg helping with educational opportunities. A group are currently helping Bedford Museum photograph and catalogue their geological specimens, before the choice is made about what items to display when the Museum reopens in spring 2013.

So I would encourage anyone with an interest related to geology to come to a meeting and judge for themselves. I look forward to meeting you sometime.



***Don't forget!***

***Xmas Social, Quiz and Talk on  
Geysers and Glaciers***

***by OU Geologist Glynda Easterbrook on  
December 13<sup>th</sup> at Husbourne Crawley  
Reading Rooms. 7.30 - 9pm.***

***Bring some buffet food or drinks!***

## Forthcoming events and contacts.....

Date	Location and subject	Contact point
<p><b>13 December</b> 7.30 to 9.00 pm</p>	<p><b>Annual Members Xmas Social and Talk.</b> Come for a quiz and a talk on Geysers and Glaciers, plus a complimentary glass of wine and buffet (bring a contribution). Husborne Crawley Reading Rooms, MK43 0XE</p>	<p>Frances Maynard <a href="mailto:fmaynard@btinternet.com">fmaynard@btinternet.com</a></p>
<p><b>February</b> Date to be confirmed</p>	<p><b>Potton Quarry Clearance at Scout Club Site.</b> Clearance of this Woburn Sands site before it gets too overgrown. Combined with a walk through the Sandy Pinnacle Grounds.</p>	<p>Frances Maynard <a href="mailto:fmaynard@btinternet.com">fmaynard@btinternet.com</a></p>
<p><b>16 March</b> Time to be confirmed</p>	<p><b>Visit to Poddington stream</b> A visit and walk around Poddington to see the local stones and the only exposure of oolitic limestone in Bedfordshire (allegedly).</p>	<p>Malcolm Oliver <a href="mailto:msoliver@talktalk.net">msoliver@talktalk.net</a></p>
<p><b>April/May</b> Dates to be confirmed</p>	<p><b>Visit to Stockwood Discovery Centre and Kidney Wood</b> Stockwood has an impressive local geology display, and Kidney Wood is a remnant of ancient semi-natural woodland on the outskirts of Luton and a county wildlife site. It is of interest to geologists because of its part in the industrial history of Luton.</p>	<p>Peter Lally <a href="mailto:plally65@googlemail.com">plally65@googlemail.com</a></p>
<p><b>11 May</b> Time to be confirmed</p>	<p><b>Clearance at Landpark and walk to Kensworth Quarry</b></p>	<p>Anne Williams and Jan Munro anne36@hotmail.com <a href="mailto:janet.munro@bedford.gov.uk">janet.munro@bedford.gov.uk</a></p>
<p><b>15 June</b> 10 am to 2 pm</p>	<p><b>Mundays Hill Quarry Visit, Leighton Buzzard</b> Spend the morning 'messing' about in the wonderful Woburn Sands, exploring the sedimentary structures. Hi-vis jackets, sturdy boots and hard hats required.</p>	<p>Frances Maynard <a href="mailto:fmaynard@btinternet.com">fmaynard@btinternet.com</a></p>
<p><b>July</b> Time to be confirmed</p>	<p><b>Bedford Museum Event</b> An open event to celebrate the reopening of the Bedford Museum, a project that the BGG has been involved in over the last two years. There will be an opportunity to admire the new displays and see some of BGG members' favourite exhibits.</p>	<p>Frances Maynard <a href="mailto:fmaynard@btinternet.com">fmaynard@btinternet.com</a></p>



*O the Grand old Duke of York he had  
ten thousand men, he marched them  
up to the top of the hill.....!!*

## Field Trip to Barton Springs

August 26<sup>th</sup>

By Anne Williams

The weather was very fine for our visit to the Barton Hills National Nature Reserve and there was an excellent turnout. This is one of our BGG sites because of its geomorphology and geology. The stream emerges dramatically from springs at the foot of the chalk scarp face where the permeable Middle Chalk overlies the much less permeable clayey Lower Chalk; both of these rocks can be seen here. It then flows north along the bottom of this short coombe, a valley in the scarp face formed in the closing stages of the Ice Age by frost weathering and melt-water flow, and by more recent spring-sapping. Above the springs in Windy Hollow, the valley is now dry. The whole coombe is enclosed by very steep rounded hills including Plum Pudden.

After our walk to the springs we climbed The Stairway onto the top of the hills with their amazing views over Bedfordshire, and followed the track by this high-level route back to the village. There is a wonderful diversity of calcareous grassland plants as well as insects to be seen on this route, and also the interest of spotting the birds flying overhead.

As we returned to our cars near Barton Church we were invited by the members of the church to sit in the sun and have tea and cakes, unexpected, generous and very welcome. After which we had a conducted tour of the inside of the church by the church warden. This is a lovely building, the outside being faced with the local white Totternhoe Stone (a hard layer within the Lower Chalk which was once quarried nearby) and flint panels, and a mixture of local odd stones around the sides, including some Lower Greensand. However, it appears though that some external restoration is being done with creamier Bath Stone rather than Totternhoe Stone. Shame on them!

So thank you to all who came for good company and their knowledge of geology, wildlife and conservation.

### 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 pay £2.00 to attend.

## ***Bugle Pit clean-up.***

**A restoration project undertaken by our neighbouring geology group - Bucks Earth Heritage Group (BEHG).**

By Tony Britton (member of both BGG and BEHG)

**Bugle Pit** is a small remnant of past quarrying operations providing building stone, and lies just to the west of Aylesbury between that town and the aptly named village of Stone. The surviving, once worked face, is approximately 6m (18ft.) high and 20m (60ft.) long and exposes the entire Purbeck sequence and a small part of the top of the Portland sequence on which it rests. The stone was much used locally, notably in nearby National Trust owned Hartwell House and in its impressive boundary wall alongside the main A418 road.

This wall, along with the car park wall of the nearby Bugle Horn public house (from which the quarry gets its name), has a number of large ammonites set into it.

Since 1984 the quarry had fallen into a sorry state; the access steps had rotted away, fences fallen down, and there were so many large trees that it resembled a wooded dell. Dr. Jill Eyers has been the driving force behind the restoration of the quarry, and with funding obtained by her contractors cleared the trees and scrub, erected fencing and installed an excellent metal access stairway.

Next on the stage, entered the BEHG volunteers who cleared two 50cm (20in.) wide sections of the face, top to bottom. The resulting debris was used to fill a row of gabions (large metal mesh box like containers) which double as seats. Samples were taken at various points on the sections for further analysis, and the exposure recorded. This is an ongoing project so we'll let you know about future developments in the next newsletter.



Before the clean-up



After the restoration

*Photographs with kind permission of Dr Jill Eyers and the Bucks Earth Heritage Group.*

***At our September Annual General Meeting, the new BGG committee for 2011-2012 was elected. We are all volunteers and bring together an assortment of skills, interests, experience and geological knowledge (or not, as the case may be!).***

***If you feel we could benefit from your skills and ideas too, we would love to hear from you. We need you!***

### BGG Committee Members 2011 - 2012

Chairperson	Peter Lally	<a href="mailto:plally65@gmail.com">plally65@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Glynda Easterbrook	<a href="mailto:g.easterbrook@open.ac.uk">g.easterbrook@open.ac.uk</a>
Treasurer/Membership Sec	Lindsay Hiles	<a href="mailto:bgg.membership@btinternet.com">bgg.membership@btinternet.com</a>
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***The Beds Geology Group would like to give a big thanks to Bev Fowlston who was the first editor of this newsletter.***

***She has been a big contributor to the BGG committee over many years, particularly in organising events and field trips. She has also helped enormously with work at Bedford Museum and continues to actively support all our activities.***

#### ***A note from Bev the outgoing Editor***

I have been editing this newsletter for several years now and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to making this newsletter an interesting read, recording BGG's successes and interests. Good luck to Henrietta who is taking over this voluntary position. I hope you will all continue to support her in supplying articles and photographs.

***All the best, Bev***