



Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group Newsletter December 2009

Membership

As agreed at the AGM held on May 2nd 2009, the Bucks Earth Heritage Group will be introducing a £5 membership fee from 1st January 2010. Family membership will be set at £8. These changes are being introduced to cover small ongoing expenditures such as the need to provide public liability insurance for the group, speaker expenses and for website hosting and domain name registration. A request for membership fees will be sent out shortly, please respond quickly as we will be updating the email distribution list to only reflect paying members and only a limited number of reminders will be sent.

Soils & Sediments Workshop. OCTOBER 18th.

The training workshop in October was attended by around 20 people and covered sediments, soils and environments. Group members were shown how to identify the main types of sediment and rocks, then to interpret what they tell us about ancient environments. We finally looked at the soils that form as a result of weathering and erosion on those rock types.

We intend to hold more free workshops to accompany the conservation days we are planning later in the new year. So we hope you will like them.

Jill Eyers



Group hard at work - Lane End Community Centre

Northmoor Hill NNR Conservation Project OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2009

Many thanks to the volunteers who have taken part in the three working sessions at Northmoor Hill near Denham. The Project has successfully replaced the log steps down to the sink hole and the chalk quarry face has been cleaned and re-exposed. All that remains are some small scale fencing work and tree work. Now that our work at Northmoor Hill is nearing completion we will turn our attention to Froghall in 2010.

More information on Northmoor Hill is available on our website and can be found at:

http://www.bucksgeology.org.uk/northmoor_hill.html

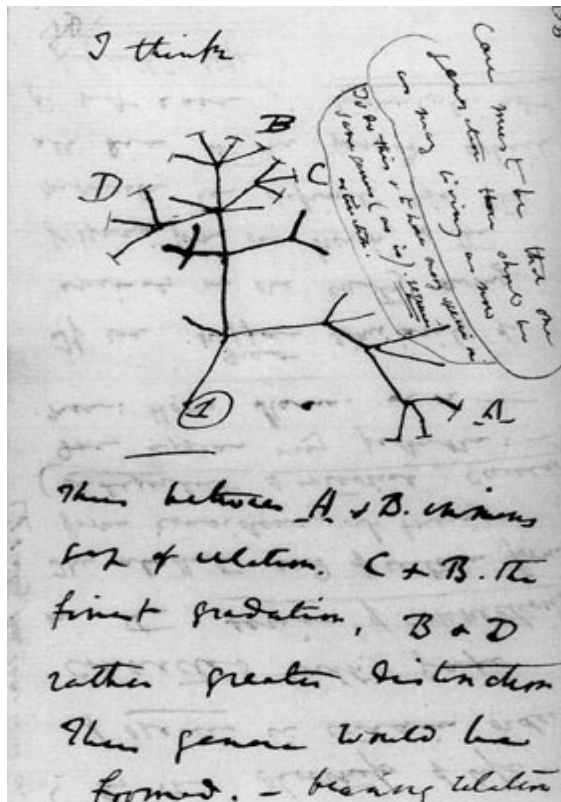


Photography by: Andy Stevens

**Charles Darwin and the tree of life
by Dr Peter Skelton (Open University)
NOVEMBER 21st.**

Peter gave his talk to a well attended, joint meeting of the BEHG and the Buckinghamshire Archaeology Society at the County Museum in Aylesbury. During 2009 we celebrate the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of 'The Origin of Species' Darwin's revolutionary work on the explanation of evolution. We learnt how many of Darwin's contemporaries were only looking for 'pattern' to explain how God had organised nature. Darwin on the other hand looked beyond the pattern for an explanation. His notes and observations during the Beagle voyage as a young man and his practical experiments of selection as a pigeon breeder were the two pieces of evidence that lead him to conclude that species evolve. Sexual reproduction brings variety, when those born with the right characteristics which suit the environment preferentially survive, over time, the characteristics of the population changes. If the species are separated for sufficient time and distance, as on the Galapagos islands, then distinctly separate species result.

Graham Hickman



Page from Darwin's note book showing a branching tree when his evolutionary thoughts began to develop in July 1837.

West Wycombe to Bradenham Circular walk - October 17th 2009

Unfortunately this event had to be cancelled – it will be offered again on the 2010 programme.

Geotrails update:

Geotrails are an initiative being introduced by Natural England to create walking routes that give an insight into the geology and industrial heritage of an area. It is a very exciting way of investigating our local geology while getting fit. In Buckinghamshire we are looking at the Ridgeway to develop as our National Geotrail.



While researching the Geotrail, I have seen parts of the Ridgeway I never knew existed, and what a beautiful pathway it is. I have three volunteers who are testing out small sections for me – information will be on its way soon guys! Then we will be leading walks to parts of it too – starting with the Whiteleaf LNR area first (see photograph above). But as the Bucks section the Ridgeway stretches from Ivinghoe down to Chinnor, we have plenty of scope for some interesting geological strolls next year and beyond! Keep an eye out for these events on the website and in the Newsletters.

Jill Eyers.

High Wycombe Library – Can you help?



The BEHG has been invited to use the display cabinets at High Wycombe Library for 3 months starting in January 2010.

There are eight cases of varying size to fill. We are currently exploring ideas for themes with current front runners including an overview of Bucks geology, focus on Wycombe's geology, Buckinghamshire sea monsters and ice age Bucks.

If you have any ideas for themes or specimens for possible inclusion please contact Mike Palmer by Tuesday 15th December on 01296 624519 or mpalmer@buckscc.gov.uk

2010 BEHG Programme

13th January – 1st April Geology at High Wycombe Library. A series of small displays dispersed throughout the library drawing on material from members of the Group and the County Museum collections. See <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/libraries/Branches/wycombe.page> for opening times.

Wednesday 20th January: 12.30 – 1.00pm. Buck's Rocks – 200 million years beneath your feet. A Wednesday lunchtime talk at Buckinghamshire County Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury. No need to book, just turn up. Contact Mike Palmer at mpalmer@buckscc.gov.uk or call 01296 624519 for further information.

Wednesday 27th January: 10.00am – 3.00pm. The final face of Northmoor (near Denham) geology revealed (but only if you help us reveal it!). A midweek gentle clean-up of the geological exposure at Northmoor Hill Nature Reserve followed by a recording of the section. Clipboard, trowel, and cameras will be very handy. Further details nearer the time.

Thursday 18th February : 11.00am-12:30. Visit to Northmoor LNR with the Open University Geological Society. Meet 11am in the car park at Northmoor. The visit should finish around 12.30 in time for a local pub lunch. No need to book, just turn up.

6th March – 11th July Human: half a million years of life in Bucks. A temporary exhibition at Bucks County Museum. Journey through time from the Ice Age to the Tudors and discover the people who lived here during the past half a million years. See the bones of mammoths and woolly rhinos and the fascinating objects unearthed across the county that reveal the stories of past lives. Visit www.buckscc.gov.uk or contact the County Museum on 01296 331441 or museum@buckscc.gov.uk for more information.

March – further details to follow. Froghall Brickworks SSSI Conservation Day. Contact Graham Hickman hickmang@bp.com or call 07763363266 for more information.

Saturday 27th March: 2.00pm Ridgeway walk across Whiteleaf LNR and the quarry. Meet 2pm at the Whiteleaf Cross car park. No need to book, just turn up. Contact Jill at j.eyers@btopenworld.com or call 01494 881325 (mornings only) for more information.

Wednesday 17th March: 12.30 – 1.00pm. Ice Age Bucks. A Wednesday lunchtime talk at Buckinghamshire County Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury. No need to book, just turn up. Contact Mike Palmer at mpalmer@buckscc.gov.uk or call 01296 624519 for more information.

2010 BEHG Programme continued...

Sunday 18th April: 1.00 - 3.00pm. Stowe geo-walk. A Sunday afternoon walk with Jill Eyers exploring the geology of Stowe's gardens, buildings and quarry. 1 to 3 pm. Further details to follow. Contact Jill at j.eyers@btopenworld.com or call 01494 881325 (mornings only) for more information.

Wednesday 21st April: 12.30 – 1.00pm. Buck's Fossils. A Wednesday lunchtime talk at Buckinghamshire County Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury. No need to book, just turn up. Contact Mike Palmer at mpalmer@buckscc.gov.uk or call 01296 624519 for more information.

Saturday 24th April AGM and talk (morning) followed by Rock & Fossil Afternoon at Bucks County Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury. Further details to follow. Contact Mike Palmer at mpalmer@buckscc.gov.uk or call 01296 624519 for more information.

Bank Holiday Monday 3rd May: 1.00pm - Walk from West Wycombe to Bradenham. Event suitable for the whole family. Meet at 1 pm at the Mausoleum. Short option: Learn about the Iron Age hill fort, chalk hills and ice age and then visit the Hell Fire Caves below (£5.00 entrance fee at time of publishing). Longer Option: As above followed by a walk along Bledlow Ridge to Bradenham to see the famous sarsens and St Botolphes church, before making our way back to West Wycombe for a well earned drink in the café at the caves. No need to book. Just turn up. Contact Jill at j.eyers@btopenworld.com or call 01494 881325 (mornings only) for more information.

Saturday 19th June: 1.00-3.00pm - Burnham Beeches walk – Springs, Streams and Sinkholes. A joint BEHG and Corporation of London event led by Graham Hickman. Numbers limited so booking required through the Burnham Beeches management team on 01753 647358. Contact Graham Hickman hickmang@bp.com or call 07763363266 for more information.

Sunday 11th July- more details to follow- Visit to Munday's Hill Quarry, Leighton Buzzard for a fossil hunt. Contact Jill at j.eyers@btopenworld.com or call 01494 881325 (mornings only) for more information.

20th November: 2.30 – 4.00pm. Messages in Stone – Buckinghamshire's geological Past. A talk by Graham Hickman, Buckinghamshire County Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury. A joint meeting of the BEHG and the BAS Natural History Section. No need to book. Just turn up.

The Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group aims to record, conserve and promote the geology of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. Membership is open to beginners and experts alike. If you would like to join please send your address, phone number and email address to:

Mike Palmer, Tel: 01296 624519 email: mpalmer@buckscc.gov.uk

Bucks County Museum Resource Centre, Tring Road, Halton, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5PN

Visit our Website at
www.bucksgeology.org.uk