



# Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group

## Newsletter No.22 May 2013

### **Blizzard conditions at Coombs – March 17<sup>th</sup> 2013**

As the group of around 20 visitors arrived at Coombs quarry on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March they were greeted by a sudden flurry of snow and falling temperatures (**photo below**). The plan had been



to start with an indoor hands-on fossil session at the 'depot' before the quarry visit, but with the possibility of snow cover and an early end to the day, the group started with the quarry instead.

In the shelter of the 'depot', Tony Britten allowed the children to examine closely some of the fossils from his own collection. The group discussed, 'What is a fossil?' and looked at how some were preserved.



The enthusiasm for finding fossils in such bleak, cold, wet conditions was admirable (photo above). Children were covered in mud, soaking wet but with big grins on their faces having discovered lots of the bivalves and brachiopods loose on the scree. Fossils such as echinoids (sea urchins) and gastropods were nowhere to be seen, believed to be in hiding from the cold.

The children requested a return visit in the summer when the gastropods were 'out of hiding' so a family event will be planned for August 11th 2013. Details to follow.

Jill Eyers

### **Bugle Pit Grand Opening - Postponed**

It was with great regret that the BEHG has had to postpone the Grand Opening of the Bugle Pit planned for April 25<sup>th</sup> 2013. This occurred due to the unfortunate death of the landowner, who had given permission to access the site.

The event was planned to showcase the site and the significant geo-conservation effort that the group has undertaken there during 2012. It is hoped the event can be rescheduled soon.



**Claydon House, East Claydon and Botolph Claydon landscape and geological/archaeological walk** led by Clive Rodgers. Saturday April 27th 2013

The walk started by examining the building stone of Claydon House, where this year's AGM was held. The primary stone used was a creamy buff coloured oolitic limestone (**photo below; right**), probably from the Middle Jurassic Inferior Oolite Group. A small number of marcasite nodules were identified, a type of iron pyrites which oxidizes to create an orange iron staining (**photo below; left**). Fossil evidence also included bioturbation and shell fragments within the limestone.



The group then moved on to examined the Jurassic limestones in the nearby Church wall. The graveyard revealed a wealth of different rock types; older gravestones were made of sandstone, while newer ones included weather resistant red granites and sculpted white marbles.



At East Claydon, one of the buildings there was found to be made of Portland Limestone and contained the fossil bivalve 'Laevitrigonia'. The Portland limestone may have originally come from Whitchurch Hill to the immediate South or recycled from one of the nearby manor houses such as Salden (near Mursley) originally the home of Sir John Fortescue.

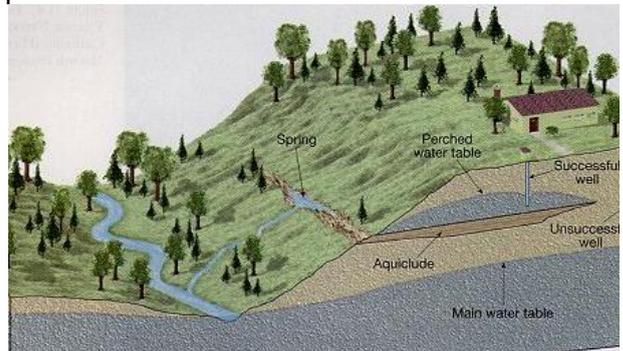


Photo above: The group outside Claydon House.

The walk continued to Botolph Claydon where the group examined the link between the hydrology and geology by visiting the Bernwood springs, ponds and Botyl Well. Glacial outwash gravels and sands cap the hill top, sitting on Jurassic clays. Rainwater drains through the permeable hill top gravels, but on reaching the underlying clay the water moves laterally out to form a spring line below the crest of the hill top ridge, marking the boundary of where the gravel sits on the clay. The springs feed small ponds.



Photo above shows the gravel-clay interface and the diagram below illustrates how a perched water table can occur.



The springs never run dry and were once regarded as blessed and pure. We also succeeded in finding the Botyl Well, covered with a concrete slab with a brick surround. In addition a rare find of a piece of late Saxon pottery was made in the ploughed field next to the old well! The rain held off and everyone enjoyed an excellent walk.

Clive Rodgers

**Geological Walk - Great Brickhill and Stockgrove Park.** Led by Clive Rodgers  
Originally planned for Saturday March 23<sup>rd</sup> but rescheduled due to bad weather to April 10<sup>th</sup> 2013



The combined group of BEHG and Bedfordshire Geological Group members met on a lovely Spring morning just right for a walk! Clive supplied a comprehensive handout with details of the route and information on the local coprolite industry, geology and scenery. Our first stop was in the beer garden of the Red Lion PH, where we were able to look over the scarp face of the Lower Greensand ridge and take in the panoramic view of the Jurassic clays in the valley (**photo below**).



The Greensand Ridge is a low escarpment; the edge of the more resistant sandstone forms a steep scarp face with a gentle dip slope, parallel to the bedding to the SE. Softer clays erode to form the main valley below the escarpment. There is a gentle unconformity between the overlying Cretaceous age Lower Greensand and the Jurassic age Oxford clay underneath.

Making our way towards Stockgrove Park we stopped at various points to look some houses with good examples of ferruginous sandstones. (**photo below**). It was explained how the iron mineral originated from a nearby land area and was carried into the marine environment in solution, eventually precipitating as a hydrated iron carbonate.



Entering Stockgrove, via Cuff Lane, the public footpaths took us past dry river valleys and through woodland and heathland full of acid loving plants. We had a tea break at Stockgrove's Visitor Centre, before making our way back to Great Brickhill. We crossed onto Rannamere Heath and on to join part of the Greensand Ridge Walk.



Arriving back at Great Brickhill we walked on to the Church where we examined the boundary wall which was made up with quite a variety of rocks; Jurassic limestones, Chalk as well as the ubiquitous sandstone.

We ended at the Red Lion PH for a well deserved drink and lunch. Thank goes to all those who attended and especially to Clive for his expertly led walk and handouts.

Lindsay Hiles

## **BEHG Minutes of AGM – Claydon House, Middle Claydon, Bucks.**

**Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup> 2013**

1. **Apologies:** Mick Oates, Julia Carey, Graham Hickman, Joe Ibbett, Ian Hudson, Nicky Muizelaar. **Present:** Mike Palmer, Clive Rodgers, Jill Eyers, Lindsey Hiles, Philip Clapham, George Lewis, Tony Britton and Madge Williamson.
  
2. **Minutes of 2012 AGM:** Mike Palmer referred to the Minutes from the last AGM which were approved by members present. There were no matters arising.
  
3. **Membership:** Lindsay Hiles gave an update on the membership which has fallen from 53 last year to now stand at 45, despite the increase in events from 'Rocks and You'. Jill expressed her opinion that rather perversely, 'Rocks and You' by providing free events had inadvertently reduced membership because if 'Rocks and You' events are free, then there is no incentive to join BEHG with a subscription fee. Hence, those currently enjoying the 'Rocks and You' programme now need to become members to enjoy future events. However, Lindsay expressed a hope that this may be turned round by a proposal by Jill to make available a new category of 'School Membership'. Jill is starting to contact those schools that offer 'A' level and GCSE Geology in order to look at offering 'Group Membership'. Schools might join for the information package, newsletter and fieldwork opportunities. At William Borlase there are 40 boys aged 16-18 that are studying 'A' level who are a particular target. The new category will be called 'Group Membership' rather than 'School Membership' in case there are any adult groups to which this could also apply. A discussion ensued and Mike and Lindsay pointed out that the Constitution will require amendment to allow 'Group Membership' to proceed. It was agreed that this would be formalised within a Constitution change for next year, but temporary arrangements could be explored in order to speed up the process effectively. To be discussed further at the next Committee meeting.
  
4. **Report on the Previous 12 months:**
  - a) **Rocks & You:** Jill Eyers described the variety and large number of field meetings, workshops, training, site conservation work and talks of the Group, with reference to the events spreadsheets covering the last financial year. The actual number of events within 'Rocks and You' has been well in excess of those originally planned; e.g. we said we would do 10 walks but we have done 21; we said we would do 20 talks but have done 25; of 5 family days we actually did 12, and with schools we planned 10 but delivered 12. We have also done 47 training events. Jill thanked those who had helped to deliver all of these events. 'Rocks and You' is due to be wound up by July, and Jill will liaise with Graham to arrange for a special Newsletter to be issued on the project.
  - b) **Conservation work:** Jill pointed out that many Council owned sites (such as Coombs) will be changing management this year, and we will need to negotiate with new management teams for visits once the process of transfer of management has been completed.
  - c) **Field meetings and talks:** Jill has been especially pleased with the broad spectrum of types of events and number offered (previously referred to).
  - d) **Newsletter and Website:** Graham was congratulated by Mike and the Committee for his continuing outstanding work on both the Newsletter and Website.

**5. Treasurers Report:** Jill Eyers gave out a summary of the Group's accounts for the last financial year:

<b>Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group</b>		
<b>Income and Expenditure Account for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013</b>		
<b>Income:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Book Sales (and donations)	0	
UK RIGS	750.00	
Natural England grant	4500.00	
Curry Fund Grant	1050.00	
Membership	343.50	
Rocks and You, Lottery Fund Grant	19720.00	
Deposits (Norfolk)	2160.00	
	28,523.50	
<b>Expenditure:</b>		
Bugle Pit site work	1400.00	
UKRIGS work	744.00	
UK RIGS subscription	10.00	
Insurance	106.78	
Norfolk hotel	2360.15	
Rocks and You expenditure	26624.90	
	31,245.83	
Less excess of Income over Expenditure		- 2,722.33
		=====
Opening Bank Balance		15534.57
Add excess of Income over expenditure	less	2,722.33
Closing Balance		<b>12,531.55</b>
Plus late payments and unrepresented cheques		153.30
Less late credits		10.00
Balance as per Bank Statement (31 March 2013)		12,674.85
Projection of Rocks & You project and accounts:		
Total Rocks & You grant =	£44,370.00	
Total spend to date (31March13) =	£37,659.71	
Spend for tax year 2013-14 to be	£ 6,710.29 (to complete Rocks & You)	
Hence workable funds in the BEHG account = £5,821.26		

From a start of £44,370 HLF grant, the total spend amounted to £37,659.71 by 31st March, 2013. This left £6,710.29 to complete the project by July this year. After 'Rocks and You' has finished, this will still leave £5,821.26 within the BEHG bank account. The Financial Statement was approved.

**End of Treasurers Report**

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**6. Election of Officers:** Mike pointed out that those members of the Committee who were elected last year will continue for another year (unless they have decided to stand down) because the Constitution only requires election every two years. Hence Mike will continue as Chairman and Jill will continue as Treasurer. Graham will continue on the Committee as Webmaster and Newsletter Editor. Clive (Secretary and Vice Chair) and Lindsay (Membership Secretary) have chosen to stand down from their posts and the Committee but are continuing as BEHG members. Both were thanked by Mike for the work that they had done on behalf of BEHG. Tom Hose has stood down from the Committee and has resigned his BEHG membership. Mike offered his thanks for Tom's contributions to the Committee and Group over the last decade and a half. Julia Carey, Nicky Muizelaar and Mick Oates are continuing as Committee members and Julia will now also be stepping up to the Role of Membership Secretary (replacing Lindsay) and also hold Vice Chair (replacing Clive). The role of Secretary (taking minutes) is yet to be filled. These changes were proposed by Mike and seconded by Clive as it required a vote, and agreed unanimously. Jill named some of her contacts who were interested in helping. Hence, Phil Clapham had volunteered to go on the Committee, as had Ian Hudson, Judith Stanton, David Ward and David Price. Mike agreed to vote Phil and Ian onto the Committee today, but pointed out that the other three are not currently members, so getting them to join first would be preferable, though we had the power to co-opt individuals, so would if necessary proceed with that.

**7. Any Other Business: Date of Next AGM:** Provisionally agreed as the last Saturday in April, 2014.

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## End of Minutes

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### Members Letters: Fossil Frogs from India

One of our long standing members Dr Michael Oates writes from India regarding his re-discovery of the Mumbai frogs.

"This one (photo right) I found on Tuesday [March 19<sup>th</sup> 2013], in a couple of flakes that fell from a big chunk of rock I was washing. There's at least one more in the main chunk. The one illustrated is relatively big, at a couple of cm length. The shale was a sediment from a lake which formed between two successive lava eruptions. What is interesting is the strange abundance of these environmentally-sensitive animals so soon after the end Cretaceous extinction, and their occurrence in these freshwater intra-basalt horizons."

Dr Michael Oates



Photo above: fossil frog from Mumbai, India.

## **2013 Future Programme –**

Further trips and talks will be scheduled as the year progresses. Please check the BEHG website or email the organisers before any event, for the latest update.

**Saturday May 4th 2013 10am-3pm, Buckingham Sand Pit** site work and nature survey using simple ID guides. Survey and Clean-up teams needed - everyone can help no previous experience needed. For details and to reserve a place contact Jill Eyers: at (j.eyers@btopenworld.com) or call 01494 881325

**Sunday May 12th 2013, 10am-3pm, Linford Quarry** for logging the small sequence, and then building stones with the stone circle, church and other buildings. 10 am to 3'ish. For details and to reserve a place contact Jill Eyers: at (j.eyers@btopenworld.com) or call 01494 881325

**Saturday 3rd August 2013; 12:30am-3:30pm.** Clean up and conservation work at Coombs Quarry. Results of the research we have been doing will be revealed. bring packed lunch as we start with a picnic! For details and to reserve a place contact Jill Eyers: at (j.eyers@btopenworld.com) or call 01494 881325.

**Sunday August 4th, 2013: time tbd. Buckingham Sand Pit community event organised by Monique Van Assouw** nature and geology trails, activities, etc (contact details and timings to follow).

**Sunday August 11th 2013, 11am-4pm latest, Rock picnic at Coombs.** A family event - children welcome - bring your picnic with blanket or folding seats for comfort. Picnic and childrens' activities organised by Jill while parents have a rest or forage for fossils! For details and to reserve a place contact Jill Eyers: at (j.eyers@btopenworld.com) or call 01494 881325. Let Jill know how many are coming and then meeting place will be announced.

**Thursday August 15th 2013, 10:30am-2:30pm, Conservation Clean up at Whiteleaf Quarry.** with a nature survey in the woods and on the chalk grassland to follow. Simple survey using laminated keys. Please come and help and bring children or family and friends too. Bring packed lunch. For details and to reserve a place contact Jill Eyers: at(j.eyers@btopenworld.com) or call 01494 881325. Let Jill know how many are coming and then meeting place will be announced.

**Sunday October 13th 2013, 10am, Geological Excursion: New Bradwell, Milton Keynes.** Leader Dr Tom Hose. The walk (and cyclists are welcome) entitled "Nobby and the Cut" will be following the new Geotrail along the Bradwell to Newport Pagnell railway walk/cycle route. For details and to reserve places contact Tom Hose: at (t.hose123@btinternet.com)

**Saturday 26th October: Geological "fly-drive" based upon an old GA Centennial Guide route.** Leader Tom Hose. More details to follow.

**Autumn - joint BEHG/BAS event,** probably at Aylesbury Museum. Leader Mike Palmer

# Membership

A thank you to those that have already renewed their subscriptions for this year, 2013 and a reminder to those that have yet to renew to forward on their membership fee as soon as possible please to Julia.

Annual membership runs from 1st January. Individual membership for the 2013 calendar year is **£7.50** and family membership is **£12**.

A copy of the membership form (Page 9) is available on our website:  
[www.bucksgeology.org.uk/pdf\\_files/BEHGMembershipForm2013.pdf](http://www.bucksgeology.org.uk/pdf_files/BEHGMembershipForm2013.pdf)

If you would like to join please complete and send the application form together with payment to:

Membership Secretary, Julia Carey, c/o BMERC. Place Service 9th Floor, County Hall,  
Aylesbury. Bucks. HP20 1UY

email: [jcarey@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:jcarey@buckscc.gov.uk)

Alternatively, you can pay your subscription direct to the **BEHG** account at :  
Lloyds TSB (White Hart Street, High Wycombe)  
**Sort code: 30-94-28 Account no. 00744003**

Confirmation of receipt will either be by email or by post. The BEHG welcomes all new members.

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*The Buckinghamshire Earth Heritage Group aims to record, conserve and promote the geology of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.*

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Website: [www.bucksgeology.org.uk](http://www.bucksgeology.org.uk)

For general enquiries please contact:

Mike Palmer, Tel: 01296 624519  
email: [mpalmer@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:mpalmer@buckscc.gov.uk)  
Bucks County Museum Resource Centre,  
Tring Road, Halton,  
Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5PN

Affiliated to the Geologists' Association



# Bucks Earth Heritage Group

## Bucks Earth Heritage Group

Membership Subscription due 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013

### **Individual membership £7.50**

INDIVIDUAL/PRINCIPAL MEMBER (Please use BLOCK CAPITALS):

In order to keep costs to a minimum, correspondence will be forwarded via email wherever possible.

TITLE: ..... NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

..... POSTCODE : .....

TELEPHONE: ..... MOBILE: .....

EMAIL: .....

### **Family membership £12.00**

2<sup>nd</sup> MEMBER – NAME: .....

3<sup>rd</sup> MEMBER - NAME: .....

4<sup>th</sup> MEMBER - NAME: .....

*I/We hereby apply for membership of the Bucks Earth Heritage Group*

*A cheque/PO for £..... is enclosed (cheques payable to BEHG)*

Signature : .....

Date : .....

How did you hear about the BEHG?.....

### **Please send this completed form together with payment to:**

BEHG Membership Secretary:

Julia Carey,

email: [jcarey@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:jcarey@buckscc.gov.uk)

c/o BMERC.

Place Service 9th Floor,

County Hall,

Aylesbury.

Bucks. HP20 1UY

For general information about the Bucks Earth Heritage Group and for an up to date programme of events please visit:

[www.bucksgeology.org.uk](http://www.bucksgeology.org.uk)