

# EAST HERTS GEOLOGY CLUB

Newsletter No.12

April 2009

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## Saturday School

“Building Stones of SE England.” Hertford Regional College (Ware College), Ware, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 10am – 1pm.

External building stones used from Roman times onwards, interior polished limestones, marbles and other geological materials, kerbstones, road setts and modern shop fronts will all be included in this one morning course, with a variety of specimens. A building stone walk around Ware or Hertford, probably on the same afternoon or the day following, will be arranged by prior consultation with course members.

Running of the course will depend on there being sufficient enrolments. If you want to join it, please try to do so at least a week beforehand. If there is a problem with that, or you are doubtful about it, please let Steve know.

Enrolment is by phoning 01992 411411 during working hours. The course code is KWR667X. The fee is £20.

## Open University Courses

A few of us are thoroughly familiar with O U courses. For those who are not, the courses are composed of “units”, successful completion of each is worth a specific number of “points”. To get an Honours degree you need 360. Individual units can be followed by anybody, without any commitment to continuing further towards a degree. Units on geological topics at level 1, which does not require much scientific background knowledge, include

- S170 Darwin and Evolution
- S193 Fossil and the history of life
- S180 Life in the Oceans
- S196 Planets: an Introduction
- S186 Volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis

Each of these cost £140 (soon £150) and is worth 10 points and can be completed in 3 or 6 months as you choose.

(I recently completed the Fossils course and quite enjoyed it. I knew a fair amount already obviously (!) but it was a good way of bringing my rather bitty knowledge all together in one place, and sometimes I knew more than the course book, which was very satisfying. There is a computer marked assignment at the end. *Diana* )

The full-blown course “Geology”, 30 points, £360, is a second level, but “should be accessible to anybody who has a basic scientific background.” The course, numbered S276, is a new one, replacing one that was numbered S260, and the first running of it will start next February. You can test yourself to find out whether it would be suitable for you with their booklet “Are you ready for S276”, which can be viewed or downloaded from [www.open.ac.uk/science/courses-qualifications/are-you-ready-for-science/index.php](http://www.open.ac.uk/science/courses-qualifications/are-you-ready-for-science/index.php) (the underlined will get you into the site). There is an associated one week residential field course, SXR260 which is called “The geological history of the British Isles” and is based at Durham University. It is worth a further 10 points and costs £430.

If you decide to do an OU Geology Course, or are already doing one, do please tell one of us or Jane. There would be advantages in our being able to organise some mutual support, and perhaps relevant field trips. No unwelcome publicity. (Diana would like to do another course soon.)

*Diana and Steve*

## **Book Review**

“The Geological History of the British Isles” by A. Hunter and G. Easterbrook. OU 2004 Price (in 2006) £19 (£18.95 on Amazon). There is a copy of this book in Ware College Library and some of us will have borrow it when college geology courses were running. It is the course book for the residential field course of the same name referred to above. As such, it is a bit lopsided, because it deals in most detail with the parts of the history which can be related to the places visited from Durham. However despite that, and despite its short length, which is 143 pages, it manages to be a valuable reference book. There are 8 world maps showing the continents in different positions from 550Ma ago onwards, 16 pages of paleogeographic maps, and 11 pages about major tectonic processes. There are plenty of clear diagrams. It is the sort of book which you can use to look up something, and end up reading about something else altogether. (Actually the two of us do that with almost any book.) Anyway those of us with a moderate knowledge of geology will find it a useful and enjoyable one to have around.

*Diana and Steve*

## **Answers to the Newsletter No 11 Crossword**

Across: 2 Chalk 4 Moho 5 Dip 7 Micraster 9 Nickel 10 Atoll 11 Terebratula 12 Foram

Down: 1 Sediment 2 Core 3 Epicentre 4 Mantle 6 Calcite 8 Dinosaur 10 Aquifer 11 Till

## **G.A. visit: Northamptonshire Churches**

There will be a one day tour of Northamptonshire churches on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May. It will be led by Prof. John Potter, who is a specialist, and will go into detail about how the building stone types have been used. We have more details.

*Diana and Steve*

## **Talk by Jack Doyle (“Up and Coming Events”)**

The talk will be on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June, but the venue has still to be decided.

## **Festival of Geology**

The date for the G.A. Festival of Geology in London this year has been changed to 31<sup>st</sup> October, a week earlier than was originally planned.