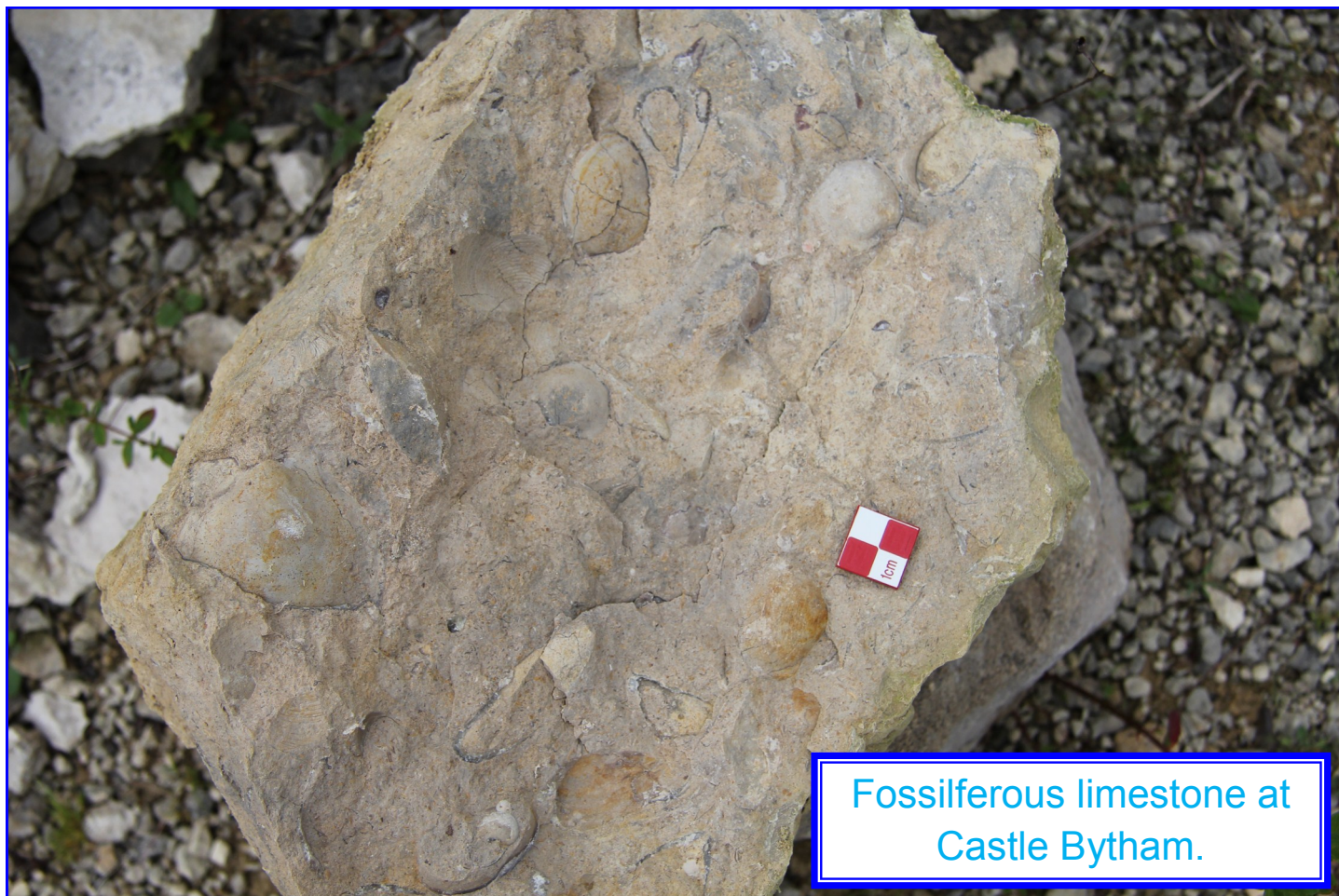




LINCOLNSHIRE LIMESTONE FIELD MEETING JUNE 23 2012



Fossiliferous limestone at
Castle Bytham.

An early start saw the group head off to brave the elements in Rutland – or was it Lincolnshire? It turned out the elements didn't need braving because the rain stayed in Oxford for the day. We arrived at Castle Bytham Quarry, where we were met by our guide for the day, Andrew Swift.

Inferior Oolite

The Quarry provides one of the most complete and stratigraphically significant exposure of the Upper Lincolnshire Limestone Formation which is a feature of the Inferior Oolite. It was laid down in the Jurassic, approximately 170 million years ago in shallow, sub-tropical seas.

A brief explanation of the local geology was followed by the opportunity to hunt for fossils, all the while being careful not to get run over by a

local 4x4 club that were preparing for an off-roading event in the quarry. Fossils on offer included corals, bivalves, the occasional crinoid and, for our guide Andrew, a *Laeviuscula* ammonite. This particular zone fossil has been instrumental in dating the formation and correlating it with the Inferior Oolite in southern England.

Pretty soon, Land Rover dodging became unnecessary as the club took an interest in what we were doing and wanted to learn more. The rest of the Oxford Group must have more patience than I do because I cringe every time I hear someone call an ammonite a snail.



Sandy & Mike.

We ate our packed lunches at the top of the Quarry before departing for our second location, Glebe Quarry. Glebe Quarry is an active quarry, and owner Andy Smith was available to show us around. We learned about everything from, the different beds quarried, which stones sell best and their different properties, to the progression of extraction techniques. Andy took great pride in showing us all the machinery used in the quarry, including the “overgrown chainsaw” used to cut out blocks. This method was preceded by the Plug and Feather technique. A method by which a three piece tool, (the ‘plug’ and two ‘feathers’), are hammered into a hole drilled in the rock, applying an even pressure along the entire length of the drill hole, causing the rock to split.



Mike & Chris.

More fossil hunting followed. This time in the Rutland formation, comprised mainly of mudstone which overlies the Ancaster limestone beds that are excavated in Glebe Quarry. Gypsum proved to be relatively abundant at this location (it marks the unconformity between the limestones and the overlying clays). So did large amounts of squelchy clay of the Rutland formation, the majority of which got transported back to Oxford in the minibus.



Zach.

Eventually, we left Andy to cut some more stones for his garden wall, and headed off to find a pub on our return journey. A quest which proved somewhat problematic as neither of Castle Bytham’s pubs are open at four in the afternoon. An open pub was eventually found, and drinks enjoyed, before we set off back to Oxford.

Two very important things were also decided on this trip:

1. That someone should be put in charge of making sure Paul has remembered his coffee.
2. That all villages whose pubs are not open all day should be required by law to indicate this is some way; perhaps by putting up signs on the edge of the village giving ample time to turn around and find a different pub.

Filed by
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