

WHITBY FIELD MEETING APRIL 2011

ThE PARTY DROVE UP TO YORKSHIRE on the Friday, arriving in mid-afternoon. Warm sunshine blessed much of the trip, and we ate excellent fish and chips on the Saturday evening. Our engaging and informative local guide was Roger Sutcliffe, blues singer and geologist; he and his wife gave us tea before we set off home on Sunday afternoon, and Roger played the guitar for us.

The geology fills a hole in the Lower Jurassic succession we had seen at Charmouth, between the Belemnite Marls and the Black Ven Marls, with reminiscences of Oxfordshire exposures in the Cleveland Ironstone Formation.

We devoted Saturday to the classic foreshore east of Staithes. There is a low angle dip to the east, and the sandstone that peeps out at the base of the cliff near the village soon disappears as the later strata, with their various ironstone bands, take over the whole height. At times faults slightly disturb the equanimity of the strata, and fault planes are clearly visible on the foreshore, where the different levels can be studied conveniently. There is one small anticline. We walked round Old Nab, where fossils (including exceptionally fine trace fossils) from the Pecten beds proliferate in the rocks of the headland, as far as Port Mulgrave, where a mighty landslide has destroyed the old jetties, before climbing a breach in the cliff wall and returning through fields much more cheerful than the grim cliffs below them.

On Sunday we explored a more populous stretch of

beach south of the Youth Hostel at Boggle Hole (Robin Hood's Bay). The cliffs here are plastered with glacial till; under them families picnicked perilously, despite some obviously recent falls. The OGG party kept their distance, examining the changing ammonites as we passed from one zone to another along the shore. There are remarkable erratics, brought by the glaciers from far away.

Back in Whitby, we paid a visit to the fine museum, remarkable not only for its local fossils but for pictures by Whitby artists and much curious material of every kind.

Michael Winterbottom



The group at Old Nab, near Staithes.