

BRISTOL FIELD MEETING OCTOBER 23 2011

PAUL SARGENT DROVE a party of nine to Salford, where we met members of a local naturalist society and were briefed by our excellent local leader, Simon Carpenter.



Salford village church

Salford lies on the A4, on a hillside above the Avon. In the village, ammonites have often been used to decorate walls. We passed a medieval manor house, and a fine church with a Saxon tower. In the mild countryside nearby a ploughed

field yielded fossils to the attentive eye. Directly below this, on a cycle track that follows the old Midland railway line, we saw a good exposure of the upper part of the Blue Lias, massive limestone blocks. And when we came down to a pleasant reach of the river, there was a wider exposure to be seen up a field.

After lunch at the Bird in Hand we drove west to

Stowey Quarry near Bishop Sutton. The quarry is no longer worked and a landfill is threatened; Simon is engaged in a battle to preserve some of



The sun beds in Stowey Quarry

the exposures, particularly impressive above the deep far end of the site. That can only be seen from a distance, but in other places one can inspect from near at hand the top of the sequence, in the Lower Jurassic, and the point where Triassic passes up into Jurassic. The learned dispute exactly where the boundary lies but a rule of thumb is that ammonites start in the Jurassic. Firmly in the Jurassic is a distinctive Sun Bed, a pale handsome rock. Just above this, fossils are fairly abundant, ammonites, bivalves, and plant remains.

Much dark Cotham marble has been dug from lower down. This 'hard, splintery calcite-mudstone', grown from algae on Triassic flats, is attractive stuff even before polishing. Philip Powell, after stout work with the pickaxe, bore an enormous chunk away and got it over the perimeter wall single-handed. The Chairman, on the other hand, would still be in the quarry had it not been for the kind help of several younger members.



The north eastern exposure at Stowey Quarry, near Bishop Sutton, Somerset. NGR: ST (55) 9786

Michael Winterbottom