

Essex Rock & Mineral Society Annual Report for 2021

Membership

Our membership is currently 100, much the same as last year despite pandemic progress. Our Affiliation to the Geologists' Association is aided by the fact that 12 ERMS members are also GA members. Thanks go to Mark Matthews for continued promotion and efficient management of our Membership system and help with the Shenfield venue, plus ERMS bank and payment systems updating. Our Treasurer, Alistair Rickards, has borne the brunt of unrelenting and eternal machinations of bank account changes.

Venues and meetings

Both the Shenfield and Stanway venues remained closed for much of the year, until August, following Covid19 lockdown restrictions. Online Zoom talks continued monthly, often with members joining from remote locations. Speakers are also able to present talks from remote locations, another benefit of using Zoom. Hall meetings resumed with a moderate but very enthusiastic attendance, with plenty of interest in showing specimens. We shall maintain the two monthly venues, as well as a regular Zoom offering for those who cannot attend hall meetings.

ERMS publication and production

Produced with the aid of the Geologists' Association Curry Fund, the 'Essex Rocks' chart was delivered at the start of lockdown. We await the hastening of face-to-face events to enable us to sell these more rapidly.

A new signboard for the puddingstone boulder at Oaklands Park in Chelmsford was produced and installed by Chelmsford City Museum with the help of Ian and Ros. The stone looks good in its new, more visible setting.

Work on the planned second edition of the book, 'Essex Rock' is almost complete, aided greatly by time made available by Covid lockdown. The continued assistance of ERMS members is much appreciated. ERMS member Trev Johnson has produced a huge number of wonderful colour illustrations for the book.

Field Visits

Only 4 of the planned trips took place this year due to Covid19 restrictions. Thanks go to David Turner and Gerald Lucy for organising a variety of visits. A highlight was when AGS Chairman Mike Howgate led a tour of the Solar System in Kent, followed by a look at hard rock structures in a nearby quarry. A tour of the revamped Pebble Walk and Ice Age Wall at Thorndon Park was led by Ian and Ros in July.

Shows and Open Days

Members helped Ros and Ian exhibit their Essex Rock display at Walton Town Show in August Bank Holiday weekend; they exhibited a similar display at the British Science Festival in Bell Mead, Chelmsford in September. Both events were gratifyingly busy.

The 39th ERMS *Essex Gem and Mineral Show* in February was delivered simply as an online set of vendors' contacts this year due to lockdown. We are planning with the usual venue for the 40th show for 2022. Thanks go to Jeff Seward for his continued efforts despite uncertainties through the year.

Publicity

Our publicity and Show leaflets continued to bring success. ERMS Facebook was maintained by Helen Vickers who also publicised the Society in other ways. The website www.erms.org was

maintained by committee members with updated information including full details of talks, visits and events, the Show, news updates and member information.

My sincere thanks go to all of our members and committee for keeping our Society buoyant and popular throughout the past two years of disruption.

Ian F Mercer, Chairman
October 2021