

Essex Rock & Mineral Society Annual Report for 2023

Membership

Our membership of 142 is higher than it has been for many years. Our Affiliation to the Geologists' Association is sustained by the fact that 12 ERMS members are also GA members. Thanks go to Mark Matthews for continued promotion and improvement of the Membership and payments system, working with ERMS member Jan Dunford to make online membership and renewals so much more straightforward. Society accounts record a surplus on operations for this year of similar magnitude to the previous year. Funds cover various projects such as signboards and publications.

Venues and meetings

Meetings continued with increased attendances at both the Shenfield and Stanway venues. Online Zoom talks have also continued, often with a differing selection of members. Hall meetings have attracted much interest in showing specimens. We aim to maintain the two monthly venues, as well as a regular Zoom offering.

ERMS publications

The Ashdon Meteorite centenary commemoration event on 9th March was, despite adverse weather, a most memorable event organised by ERMS member Gerald Lucy and Mike Howgate; their ERMS publication, 'The Ashdon Meteorite' has reached a wide audience and is available online. Sales of the book, 'Essex Rock' have been continued to be brisk; it is in stock at Chelmsford City Museum and at Essex Wildlife Trust visitor centres, as well as online. The three ERMS wallcharts continue to be sold and distributed widely.

Field Visits

There were eight ERMS visits; the Colemans Farm visit had to be called off at the last moment due to stormy weather, postponed to early next year. Visits were attended by a varying number of members plus paying guests. We revived visits by coach, initially organised by Linda Powell. Our comfortable journey on the Dons of Dunmow coach to Oxford's Museum of Natural History was a great success, members spared the strain of driving in rainy mid-September weather on crowded motorways. The Society took a moderate loss on this visit but it will hopefully lead to a fuller coachload for a possible further trip. Thanks to Jonathan Spencer for taking over the task of organising field visits during the year from Linda who has moved house and was unable to continue this job. An easy online booking system has been set up and Jonathan has worked with Jan Dunford and Mark to streamline the visits programme and bookings. Thanks go to all leaders of visits for their guidance. Ros and I also ran a Pebble Walk tour at Thorndon Park for International Geodiversity Day on 6th October.

The ERMS Show

The 41st ERMS Essex Gem and Mineral Show in February was again very successful, with over 330 visitors and a continued waiting list of vendors. The 42nd show at North Romford will be on 17th February 2024. Thanks go to Jeff Saward for his continued effort; an understudy is needed, eventually to take on running of the show.

Publicity

Our publicity and Show leaflets continued to bring success. ERMS Facebook was maintained by Helen Vickers. The website www.irms.org was changed and thoroughly updated following a forced swap to another platform. New features, site structure, online forms, etc. continue to be installed and tested by Mark and our IT expert member Jan Dunford. The ERMS Members' Facebook page is gently used and could be more prominent.

Chairman Succession Planning

To help a new chairman take over from myself from the November AGM, current jobs have been dissected with a view to splitting and devolving many tasks undertaken not only by myself but by other committee members. Members are already helping e.g. with libraries and field visits. After more than 10 years it is time to hand on to others. My sincere thanks to all our members and committee for keeping ERMS buoyant and popular.

Ian F Mercer, Chairman

October 2023