

GEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION BOARD

LEIGH DELAMERE SERVICE STATION

WILTSHIRE GEOLOGY GROUP NEWS

Amanda Parr from BBC Points West Regional News unveiled a new and exciting geological interpretation board at Leigh Delamere Service Station on Saturday 6th August at 12.30 p.m. The board tells the story of this area of Wiltshire as it would have looked 165 million years ago. The interpretation board project has been coordinated by Wiltshire Geology Group in close collaboration with Moto who manage the Leigh Delamere motorway services site. Funding for the project has come from English Nature, the Government's independent wildlife advisor, which champions the conservation of wildlife and geology throughout England.

Leigh Delamere is on the gently undulating south-eastern slope of the Cotswold Hills. The rock seen here is part of the Middle Jurassic formation known as the Forest Marble. The name is misleading as the rock is a shelly limestone, not a marble. These rocks are approximately 165 million years old.

Leigh Delamere Services occupy the site of an old quarry, which was last worked around 1970 to provide fill for motorway embankment work. In the past, the stone was widely used for local buildings, as well as for walls and as a base for tracks and roads. The extensive quarry face (200 m long and 3.5 - 6.5 m high) is of particular interest for its sedimentation features. It can now be examined closely by the public.

The interpretation board, located in front of the rock face, explains the history of the rocks, how they formed under the sea and why they are being protected for future research and general interest. The interpretation board is located in the Travelodge garden, below the hotel entrance.

Isobel Geddes, a member of the Wiltshire Geology Group and author of a book on the Geology of Wiltshire, says "I am delighted that Amanda Parr has agreed to unveil the new board. In recent months she has been involved in several BBC TV programmes raising awareness of the beauty of the West Country landscape and explaining its origins. This is the culmination of many months of planning and improving the site so that the public can enjoy and learn more about Wiltshire's fascinating geological history. As well as the unveiling ceremony in the garden, there will be children's activities and refreshments, with displays including rocks, fossils and minerals of Wiltshire to highlight the importance of geological conservation. This is the first of many geological projects coordinated by the Wiltshire Geology Group and I am particularly grateful to Moto and Travelodge for allowing this project to proceed".

Margaret Feneley, Conservation Officer at English Nature's Wiltshire Team said, "We were delighted to support this project, which has created an excellent opportunity for the public to experience the fascinating geological history of this site."



*Unveiling the Interpretation Board at Leigh Delamere
Isobel Geddes, Amanda Parr and Gilbert Green*



The Board explaining the Forest Marble exposure behind

**For further details, email -
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Wiltshire Geology Group is a member of the Geology Trusts, a national umbrella organisation which promotes and supports local geological conservation groups. Their aim is to raise the profile of geology and its effect on the landscape of our country as well as conserving local sites where the rocks can be seen.