DORSET GEOLOGISTS ASSOCIATION GROUP
DGAG IS AN AFFILIATED MEMBER OF THE GEOLOGISTS' ASSOCIATION
Public Website: https://dorsetgeologistsassociation.org/
DGAG Facebook group: https://www.facebook.com/groups

Event Write Up: DGAG GEOFEST: Saturday 24 October 2026
Location: Main Hall; United Church, 49/51 Charles Street, Dorchester, Dorset DT11EE
Theme: A festival celebrating Geoscience: Fossils, Rocks and Earth Science. A DGAG annual event that is a small part of October's two global events and;
→ **This year:** The Jurassic Coast is celebrating its 25th anniversary as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

→ International Geodiversity Day: with the 2026 theme "Geodiversity on Our Doorstep". The theme is a chance to explore the geodiversity that lies just beyond our own threshold and asks people to recognise the geodiversity where they are from, where they live, and in their everyday lives
→ Earth Science week: organized by The Geological Society - "Critical Minerals for a Thriving Society." - how we find, extract, and use Earth's critical minerals responsibly. These are the about 50 essential minerals needed for modern tech, smartphones, renewable energy, and healthcare. It highlights how geoscientists manage the impact of mining on landscapes, water, and air.
Summary: Volunteer DGAG members and invited guests exhibited their collections and shared their Geoscience/Earth Science enthusiasm and knowledge.
A total of 15 displays were on show, larger than the previous events run in 2024-2025. Displays and activities were enjoyed by the exhibitors and visitors of all ages and abilities. It was estimated that about 130 members of the public visited and the informal feedback indicated that they thoroughly enjoyed the occasion despite the inclement weather outside.
Attached are photos taken at various times during the event and showing some of the activities and discussions with engaged members of the public of various ages and abilities (photos taken with approval).
Displays at the event and contributors:

1. We were privileged to see another ("World Class") display, this year with detailed excavations of fossil "death assemblages" (thanatocoenoses) ; ammonites, belemnites and various molluscs and other critters too numerous to name individually. It was better than in a museum as people could touch the displays and get up close and personal under good lighting. Collected and specially prepared by Phil James of the Dorset Geologists Association Group and the Southampton Mineral and Fossil Society. Phil has been collecting fossils for over 50 years, specialising in corals, ammonites, and bivalves and spends a great deal of his time carefully

preparing and extracting the fossils from their matrix for all to enjoy. Phil was helped by fellow geology enthusiast Martyn Downs.

2. John Whicher had an excellent collection as a first-time outing at GEOFEST this year of some 5-6 slabs from his collection. The "Ancient Sea Floors" combined well with the adjacent displays. The preparation involved is special and illustrated beautiful detail on the fossils of ancient sea creatures and ably assisted by Jenny Whicher in discussions with the public.
3. Giles Droop had an important display and actual samples of the "hard rocks"; igneous and/or metamorphic rocks as part of this year's global earth science themes. The special ores samples from his collection attracted much attention. Interesting to learn how these supply some of our useful industrial metals. Expertise and samples that is unfortunately rare in the educational arena these days, so indeed quite special.
4. Etches Collection had a colourful display with leaflets and material to demonstrate the some of the aspects of giant sea reptiles. Ably presented by Emily Ford and Nick Nugent who are both deeply involved with Education and events at the Etches Collection: Museum of Jurassic Marine Life. Jurassic (Kimmeridge Clay about 148 to 157 million years old). This included hands on activity puzzles using various fossil sea reptile vertebrae and teeth to place on ID photos of sea reptiles. Also supplied was a "design-o-saur" puzzle/quiz and outline drawings of various Late Jurassic age sea creatures for colouring in with pencils; a popular activity every year for children and some adults too!
5. Jeremy Poole with his special SEM (Scanning Electron Microscope) skills was kept busy with various ages of people trying out a small microscope and finding how to focus on those tiny critters so important for our food chains, in the past/ present day and future. Jeremy had impressive standing poster display of SEM (Scanning Electron Microscope) images from the Eocene age London Clay formation. Chris Webb displayed some posters of Late Jurassic age (Kimmeridge Clay: 148-157 million years old) microfossils and nannofossils as SEM (Scanning Electron Microscope; images from Jeremy Poole) and optical focus stack microscopic images on posters of various microfossil creatures.
6. Sheila Alderman/Kelvin Huff ; and Dorset and Somerset building stones) had a wonderful array on display of building stone samples and as usual attracted a lot of interest with hand lenses being used. Link to website - https://www.dorsetbuildingstone.org/
7. Wessex OUGS (Open University Geological Society) by Bill Hinton had a great display on critical minerals including that "Lithium stuff" that attracted a variety of folk who came away with more knowledge on these critical minerals – great job Bill!
8. Roger and Janet Brown delivered another "tour de Force" with a new and popular display ranging from mammoth fossils to various fossils from several different sequences. Many interested people made sure they were kept busy - lots of material was actively pointed at and discussed.
9. Andy Steadman & Jackie Steadman - Good selection as usual from this team of various fossils from the Inferior Oolite of Middle Jurassic age (163-174 million year old). Plus, some neat small models of what the living creatures may have looked like in colour! So, lots to inform and entertain the mix of people that came by.
10. Richard Barrett was also kept busy on the table with the guidebooks, guides, maps and booklets.

11. DIGS (Dorset Important Geological Sites) group was represented by a display stand with a series of fold board displays of the important geological conservation work in the area with support from Richard and Sheila
12. John Scott as expected delivered an entertaining display of educational material on things DINOSAUR! Including a large actual fossil footprint of the front foot of Iguanodon. A great communicator of sometimes complex things so that all can understand very entertaining and much fun indeed.
13. Andy Gordon of the Somerset Geologist Group had a special display and a microscope and interesting mini-workshop on various rock types and geology; another great display with lots of attention by mixed aged groups. He even got asked by people about their own rocks they had bought in for interpretation – great job.
14. Geoff Rowland: Somerset & Ham Hill Geology - Stand had a few hand specimens, leaflets and several important a rolling PowerPoint presentations projected and panels showing regional and Ham Hill geology. There was also a very interesting movie show showing the Palaeogeography of the UK since Pangea earth times!
15. Jacqueline Bainbridge: Bournemouth Natural Science Society - Stand had a table with pretty BNSS rocks, minerals and fossils that attracted attention.

Finally, but by no means least, we must give a big thanks to volunteers (DGAG and OUGS)
- Jonathan Stiby, Amanda Williams, Andy Stait, Alan Driscole
They played a key role by guiding visitors from the street entrances to the event in the hall, without their stalwart efforts in the rain, we would not have had the numbers we got – great job, thanks.
Also, thanks to Janet Moody who helped in the hall with various displays and providing much needed coffee when required! Also big thanks to Sheila Alderman and Jeremy Cranmer providing critical publicity material and their pre-event contacting people – without it we would not have had the numbers.
Congratulations and thanks for a job well done to everyone who contributed. Onto next year !

Chris Webb (*DGAG Events – Editor)*

Display 1: Fossil “death assemblages” (thanatocoenoses)



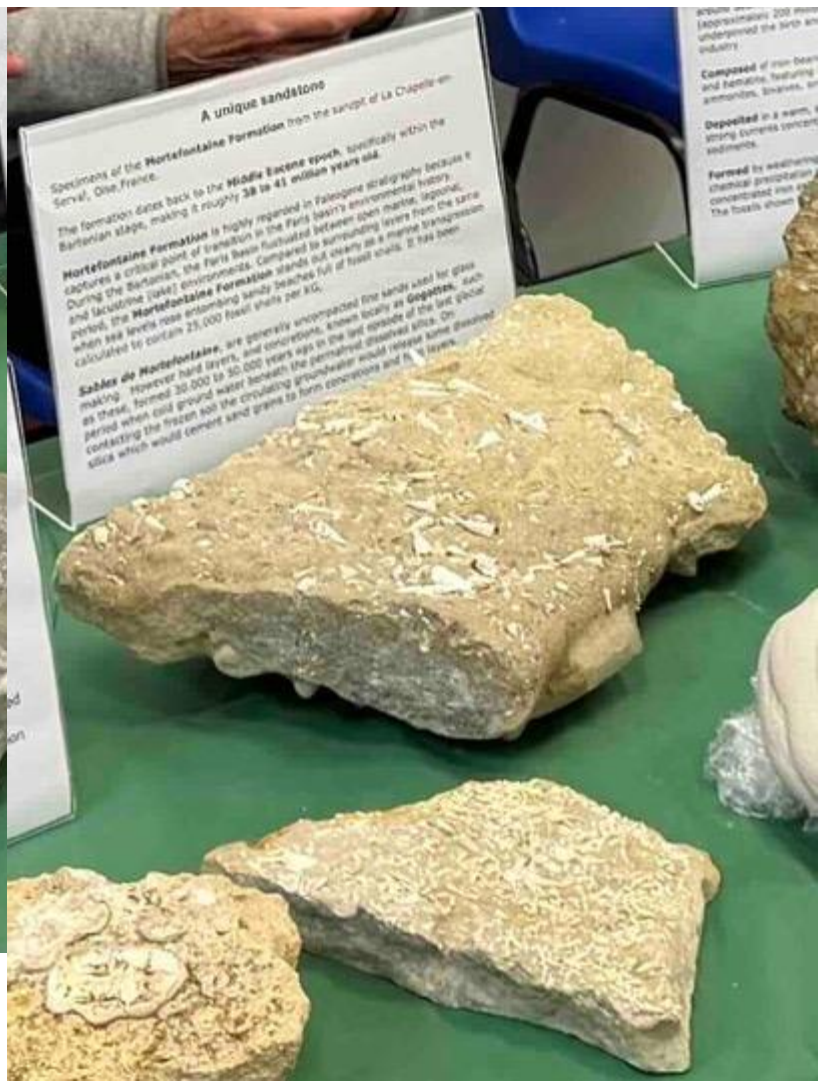




Display 2: Fossil Ancient Sea Floors







Display 3: Ores and heavy metal





Display 4: Etches Collection: Jurassic Sea Reptiles



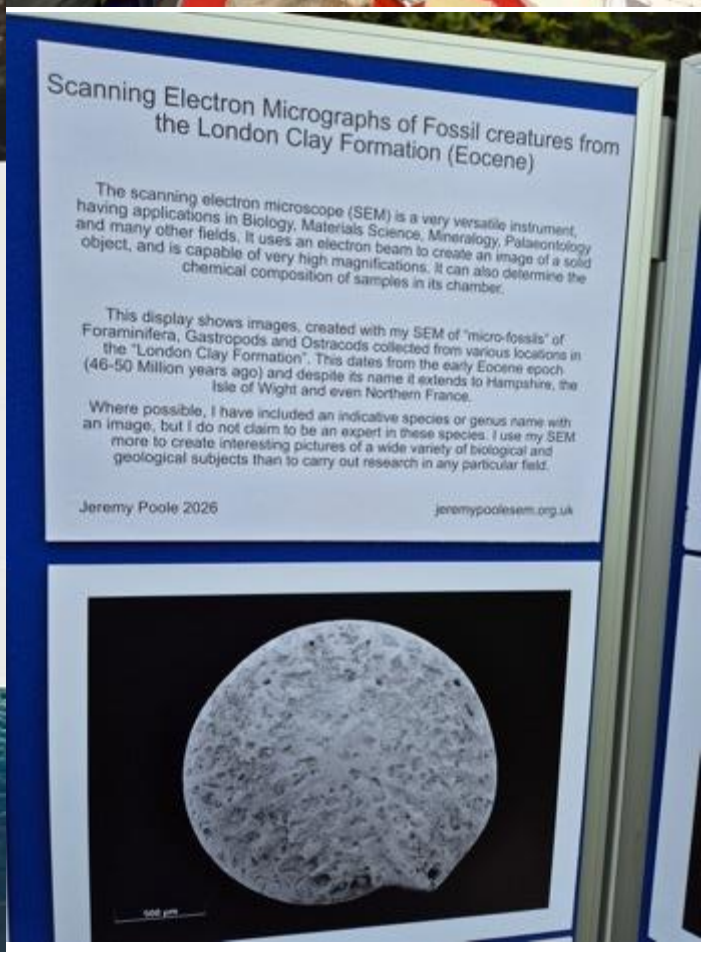




Display 5: Microscopic fossil universe







Display 6– Dorset & Somerset Building Stones





Display 7: Wessex OUGS – Critical minerals



Display 8: Splendid Fossils galore



Display 9: Inferior Oolite Fossils (Mid Jurassic age)



Display 10: Geological guides and publications



Display 11: Dorset Imprtant Geological Sites (DIGS)



Display 12: Dinosaur footprint fossil discussion!



Display 13: Somerset Geology

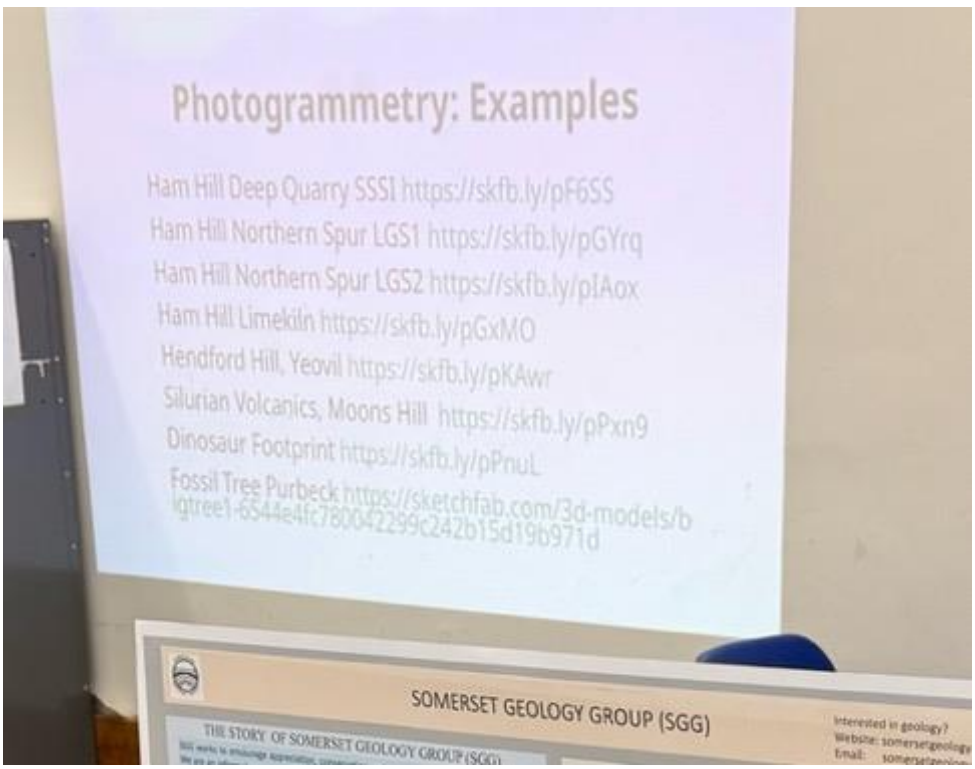






Display 14: UK, Somerset and Ham Hill Geology





Display 15: Bournemouth Natural Science Society

