**GA Yorkshire Coast trip by Pete Rawson and John Wright,
to celebrate the publication of their latest GA Guide**

Speeton Cliffs:
The *Paracrioceras* as it was on Saturday afternoon just after John found and part-exposed it

18th May 2019
Saturday afternoon. Note the disposition of the few boulders stuck in the clay (circled) as this was to become critical in the later operation

After leaving the site, about 50m N of the Speeton Beck footpath, I covered the ammonoid with clay and a large chalk slab.

Imagine our surprise on arriving back on-site on Sunday (19th May) afternoon, to discover that the intervening two high tides had dumped about 40cm of gravel and boulders right across what was an exposed clay surface. Luckily, Graham had a photo on his phone, showing the distinctive boulders (noted above) and also circled here. They identified where we would need to dig. To re-expose what we had left behind.

Digging commenced, casting aside hundreds of pebbles to reach the clay bedrock. The tide was advancing so we had to get a move on. At this stage, bearing in mind the water and pounding by boulders, I did not expect to find anything of much use when we did reach the clay surface.

To my surprise, although a lot of sticky mud was present, the phosphatic ammonite was found and we decided it was still worth the trouble of digging up, so cleared more pebbles to enable a trench either side of the fossil in preparation for undercutting and lifting.

The fossil came loose in its chunk of matrix, but was rather too heavy to lift from the pit we had created. Also, the clay was soaked and not strong enough to support the whole fossil without it breaking.

We ended up prising the slab from the hole, cutting off excess clay but leaving enough to provide some support, particularly covering the upper surface with a sticky clay plaster.

Although the end result was about five separate wrapped sections, we are hopeful that it will be possible to reconstruct the whorls from what we rescued, as although shattered into many pieces, the phosphate preservation provides at least a decent 3D basis for conserving and sticking back together. A lot of Paraloid B72 is going to be used over the next few weeks.

By the time we had packed all the material, it was almost high tide and bigger waves were on the verge of washing over the platform on which we were working. We elected to walk back along the beach, which provided a narrow escape path although a few excursions over the slumped clay were necessary to avoid cut-off sections. Finally we reached the concrete slipway and heaved our spoils into the car for transport back to Barrow.