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## **Home Counties North Regional Group**

### **FULL-DAY GEOLOGY FIELD TRIP**

**Sunday 29 March 2015 10.00 – 17.00 approx**

**Stratigraphy, sedimentology, economic geology, hydrology and archaeology of Watford, Aldenham, Letchmore Heath, and Aldenham Country Park, Hertfordshire.**

**Led by John Wong FGS**

Park and meet in the public car park on the north-eastern side of Whippendell Wood on Grove Mill Lane. Watford (Ordnance Survey grid reference TQ080983, post code is WD3) for 10.00 start.

At Whippendell Wood SSSI (for natural history but not for geology), we will see the pre-diversionary ancestral Thames terrace deposits of the Pre-Anglian Gerrards Cross Gravel Formation, and in nearby Cassiobury Park the Pre-Anglian/Anglian Winter Hill Gravel Formation. The former is thought to originate from mass flow of materials derived from the ancient adjacent river slopes, whereas the latter have sedimentary structures associated with braided river deposits. The diagnostic lithic clasts of the Gerrard Cross Gravel Formation are the classic 'potato-shaped' vein-quartz cobbles. John will discuss how the natural physical processes formed the major geomorphological features on this ancient plateau surface, include the profiles of the dry valleys and the concept of optimum curve of erosion in correlation to marine transgression and regression events correlated to the Marine Isotope Stages. John will talk about the 20<sup>th</sup> century and present-day gravel quarrying in the vicinity of Watford area.

There have been archaeological finds from Iron Age settlements to Roman burials in Whippendell Wood. The discovery of a fungus *Crepidotus cinnabarinus* in Whippendell Wood SSSI in 1995 is only the 4th European record of this species. Scenes of the Star Wars movies and of the TV programmes *Silent Witness* and *Holby City* were filmed in the wood.

The second locality is the banks of River Colne and the Grand Union Canal where we will see the present-day river gravels in the alluvium, and the outcrop of the Seaford Chalk Formation before we have lunch in the café in Cassiobury Park. A scene in *Eastenders* was filmed in this park not long ago.

After lunch, we travel to Aldenham village to see the building stones of the 700-year old Church of St John the Baptist and other historical buildings in a village that was ranked the least deprived ward out of the 8414 in England!. We may have a guided tour of the church by the church warden on the day. Both the church and the village have been used in the filming of the movie *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* and the BBC television series *Pathfinders*. The pseudo-sedimentary structures

on the Puddingstone rubble stones are interesting and may set the foundation for a future classification of Puddingstone. There is an outlier of Boulder Clay nearby resulting from an ice tongue advancing to the south-west of the village during the Anglian Ice Age.

En route to Letchmore Heath we will stop at Battlers Green Farm, then a quick stop to see the outcrop of the Palaeocene Lambeth Group mottled clay with sand and pebble beds along the way, and more puddingstones used as building stones on private garden walls.

The final locality of this field trip is a tour of the recreation of Winnie the Pooh's Hundred Acre Wood in Aldenham Country Park. The geology is Eocene London Clay Formation and Quaternary head deposits. The lithic clasts of these head deposits in the park are different from the various head deposits some HCNRG members saw during last year's Barnet Plateau field trip. Aldenham Country Park is also the source of one of the tributaries (Tykeswater) of the River Colne.

If there is time, we will take a glimpse of the Gothic style Hilfield Castle built by French prisoners of war in the 1790's. The castle was featured in the 1960's television series Randall and Hopkins (Deceased).

There is a maximum of 15 participants for this field trip with priority given to Fellows, Candidate Fellows and Juniors of the Geological Society who are members of the Home Counties North Regional Group. If you would like to get picked up at Watford underground station, please let us know.

Please book your places on a first-come-first-served basis by e-mail to [homecountiesnorthregionalgroup@gmail.com](mailto:homecountiesnorthregionalgroup@gmail.com)

Attendees will be asked to sign the usual indemnity form for field trip insurance purposes before the start of the field meeting.

