Home Counties North Regional Group

FULL-DAY GEOLOGY FIELD TRIP

Sunday 31st May 2015   10.30 – 17.00 approx

Geology of St Paul's Walden area, Hertfordshire.

Led by John Wong FGS

Meet at 10.30 at the lay-by car-parking area near the entrance to a footpath opposite All Saints' Church, St Paul's Walden. The lay-by is on an unnamed side road that turns off the B651 next to the Strathmore Arms pub, in St Paul's Walden (Grid reference TL193222). The post code for the pub is SG4 8BT.

We will examine the Anglian glacio-fluvial deposits and look for glacial erratic Mesozoic fossils in a small disused quarry. In passing, John will outline the distribution of the 6 types of burial channels in this part of Hertfordshire. The burial channel beneath the nearby Little Wymondley village is Type 1, which is more extensive than the other 5 types. The geology at Little Wymondley village is predominantly Anglian chalky sand, glacio-fluvial gravel, silty clay, glacio-lacustrine fine sand, and boulder clay.

The next locality is All Saints' Church in St Paul's Walden. Recently discovered architectural features in the church point to a Saxon foundation and excavations in 1973 showed that this church was built by the south side of a pagan Saxon graveyard. The nearby St Paul's Walden Bury House has been owned by the Bowes-Lyon family since 1725; some historians think that the house was the birthplace of the late Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother. It was where she accepted a proposal of marriage from Prince Albert (the future King George VI. According to local legend the people attempted to build the church on a field near the present day St Paul's Walden Bury House but, each night, the devil moved the stones to the opposite hill where the church now stands in St Paul's Walden.

Lunch will be in a friendly, small café inside a rare breed animal farm near Whitwell.

After lunch, our next stop will be Hill End Farm Chalk Pit at Langley End. This is one of Hertfordshire's RIGS, which is managed by Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (yet it is extensively overgrown with vegetation). Hill End Farm Chalk Pit is the type locality of the Hitchin Wood hardground of the Chalk Rock Member within the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation. It is the type locality of the siliceous sponge genus _Hillenddia_. The chalk pit has previously yielded 22 out of 24 species of Chalk Rock ammonites. Many of the fossils that have been found here are now in the Natural History Museum in London or at the British Geological Survey in Keyworth. Some of these ammonites are holotypes and others are paratypes. (A holotype is the single original described type specimen of a species, whereas a paratype is a specimen chosen to illustrate species characters additional to those seen and described from the holotype.) If there is interest from HCNRG members, a weekday behind-the-scenes tour of the Palaeontology Department to see these chalk fossils can be arranged.

After the chalk pit, we will see the hidden ruins of the 14th century Minsden Chapel, near Chapelfoot, and John will discuss the geoarchaeology and the theory of the lost/deserted village of Minsden. Minsden Chapel was built on the high ground of a hard-ground chalk. Unknown to the medieval builders was the fact that their chosen location for the Chapel is on the Melbourne Rock, which is at the boundary between the former Lower Chalk and the former Middle Chalk.

If there is time and it is accessible on the day, we may go to see the swallow hole near Little Almshoe.

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.

Please book your places on a first-come-first-served basis by e-mail to
homecountiesnorthregionalgroup@gmail.com

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

For more information on the Home Counties North Regional Group visit the website

http://www.geolsoc.org.uk/hcnrg