

HARROW & HILLINGDON GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



FIELD TRIPS 2025

Please note that meeting locations and times will be given in the joining instructions for those who have confirmed attendance (see email address in 'Notes'). These will be issued 1-2 weeks before the trip with a reminder just before.

11 January (Sat). **Thorndon Country Park near Brentwood (Essex)**. To join a visit arranged by Essex Mineral and Rock Society, leaders Ian and Ros Mercer. Pebble Walk waymarked trail and the Ice Age Wall (exposure made by ERMS members). The area of the park we'll be visiting lies on Eocene London Clay Formation (Claygate Member) with patches of the younger Eocene Bagshot Sand Formation and Pleistocene Stanmore Gravel Formation, Anglian glacial outwash and till deposits. The visit will last about 3 hours. Easy walking on good tracks, but wellingtons advised.

[Thorndon Country Park webpage](#)

[Map of Thorndon Country Park](#)



Thorndon Country Park

Photo © Simon Judd ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))



Countryside Centre

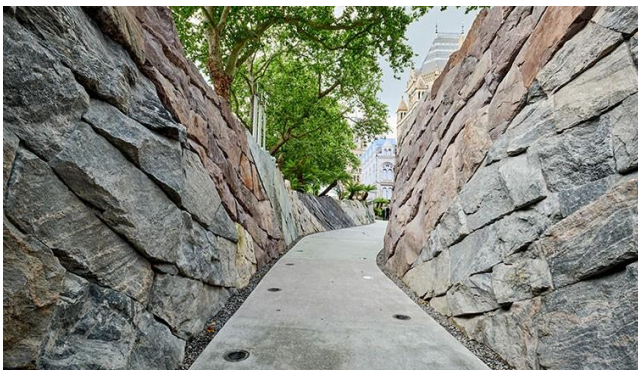
Photo © Robin Lucas ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))



Jurassic tree stump

Photo © Sean Davis ([cc-by-sa/2.0](#))

25 January (Sat). **Evolution Garden, Natural History Museum**. One way of arriving at the Evolution Garden is to walk along the subway from South Kensington station to emerge into the Evolution Garden by way of the *Timeline Rock Canyon*. This is constructed of ancient rocks that lead you through geological time, from the oldest rocks in the UK (Lewisian Gneiss and Torridonian Sandstone) and then via 24 other rock types in the garden to the present day. There are many plants to see which can be regarded as living fossils and a replica skeleton of *Fern the Diplodocus* dominating the middle of the garden.



The Timeline Rock Canyon

Photo: NHM



Fern the *Diplodocus*

Photo: NHM

1 March (Sat). **Caesar's Camp (Hale Plateau)** north of Farnham, Surrey, the highest point **within** the London Basin at 181m (~600ft) and a superb viewpoint. (For this reason, fine weather and excellent visibility is essential for the visit, and if conditions aren't right, the visit will be postponed and may be replaced with an alternative.) Bring binoculars if you have them. On a clear day you can see much of the London Basin from the City of London and Docklands into Berkshire, and the Chobham Ridges, the Chilterns, the North Downs and the North Wessex Downs. The seeing is better after lunch, so suggest

meeting in Farnham beforehand. The walking route depending on where to park will be confirmed. One option is a ~1.6 km walk to Caesar's Camp with ~60m total ascent over intermittent gradients which are mainly moderate. The hill is capped with ~1 million-year-old Caesar's Camp Gravel which rests on the Camberley Sand Formation (CSF), the youngest bedrock in the London Basin. The CSF, together with the slightly older Windlesham and Bagshot Formations, belong to the Paleogene (Eocene epoch) Bracklesham Group. Members of this group rest here and there on the London Clay (Thames Group). Mostly easy walking on gravel tracks but gravel will be loose on steeper sections.



Photos: Thames Basin Heaths Partnership

A view from Caesar's Camp

Caesar's Camp Gravel

21 March (Fri). **Harefield Great Pit SSSI geoconservation.** This follows on from work done on 19 March 2024 and approach route clearance in July. The section to be cleaned exposes a near 30-million-year unconformity between the Upper Cretaceous Chalk and the Paleogene Lambeth Group (here comprising the basal pebbly Upnor Formation and the Reading Formation – mainly sandy here). Work will comprise vegetation and talus clearance. Some tools may be provided but bring whatever you have suitable. Boots, waterproofs, work gloves and packed lunch advisable.



6-9 April (Sun-Wed). **Suffolk.** The itinerary is being put together and is a follow-up to the visit in May 2023. We will be focussing on the coast further north in the county with a possible base in Lowestoft. We will be looking at Pliocene and Pleistocene sediments. The photos below are of locations that we are likely to visit but note that appearances are likely to change owing to high rates of erosion. Beaches are mainly sand and gravel.



Pakefield SSSI – Dark Cromer Forest-Bed and glacial deposits
All photos: [GeoSuffolk](#)



Pleistocene Norwich Crag sands and Westleton Beds gravels, Dunwich



Glacial deposits on Norwich Crag sand, Thorpeness

26 April (Sat). **Lesnes Abbey and Woods.** London Borough of Bexley; close to Abbey Wood station (Elizabeth Line & Southeastern). This area includes three geological localities: *Abbey Wood SSSI**, *Chalky Dell RIGS** and the ruins of *Lesnes Abbey* for its building stones. The area comprises the White Chalk Subgroup overlain by the Palaeocene Thanet Sand Formation, the Eocene Lambeth Group and the Eocene Harwich Formation. The latter is known here for its Blackheath Beds with its distinctive black flint pebbles and the 'Lessness Shell Bed' which is one of the most fossiliferous deposits in the Greater London area providing remains of a diverse mammal assemblage. The deposits are also important for studies in the evolution of bird faunas. There is no London Clay (next in succession above the Harwich Fm.) in the immediate area, the nearest outcrop being between Falconwood and Welling. Lesnes Abbey Wood features a gated sandy enclosure where public fossil hunts occur from time to time. Chalky Dell is a disused quarry featuring the junction between the Chalk and the Thanet Sand, but it is gated off though can be climbed over. Café and toilets near the Abbey.

10 July (TBC). **Harrow Weald Common Geotrail** with Reading Geological Society, featuring the Stanmore Gravel Formation, devised by Diana Clements assisted by AW. This is the subject of a new chapter in the second (2023) edition of the Geologists' Association guide *The Geology of London*, by the same author. The Stanmore Gravel caps parts of the South Hertfordshire Plateau and some other hills in the London Basin, and although for now it has been assigned to the Plio-Pleistocene Crag Group by the British Geological Survey, its origin is uncertain and is the subject of a HHGS research project. The visit will end with a view of an exposure excavated by members. Before walking the trail (about 3 km long, some uneven surfaces) we'll discuss the view from the meeting point over the London Basin towards the North Downs (visibility permitting). Refreshments at the Grimsdyke Hotel.

Other dates to be arranged

Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, Cambridge, with 'behind-the-scenes' tour, either of the Woodwardian Collection or the John Watson Building Stones Collection. Dr John Woodward (1665-1728) collected nearly 10,000 specimens which were part-bequeathed to the University in 1728 and part-purchased from his executors, and one of the world's oldest intact geological collections - [further details](#). The John Watson Building Stone Collection is a comprehensive collection of traditional building stones, roofing slates, road stones, flagstones and decorative and ornamental stones that were in extensive use throughout Britain and its colonies during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Awaiting date - [further details](#).

Fourth HS2 site visit to the Chiltern Tunnel East Portals and the Colne Valley Viaduct. It's hoped to arrange this visit for those who have missed previous visits. Visits are arranged by the contractor for this section of railway [Align JV](#) (the Colne Valley Viaduct and the Chiltern Tunnels joint venture contractor). There are **six** remaining places (out of 24) available for this visit. The 1.5-hour tour starts and ends at the Visitor Centre (exhibition, refreshments and toilets) with minibus travel around the site. Note: Both the Chiltern Tunnels and the Viaduct have been completed apart from fitting out. A further visit is being investigated to the section between the West Ruislip Northolt Tunnels portals and Harvil Road and/or the Old Oak Common station site (contractor for both: Skanska Costain Strabag JV - [SCS JV](#)).

Updates to this programme will be issued from time to time with later/additional visits added.

*SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest

*RIGS – Regionally Important Geological Site

Please Note:

Members attending field trips are reminded that they accept full personal responsibility for their own safety, and that of their personal possessions, whilst on the field trip; also, that they are fit to undertake the trip. (If you have a mobility problem, cardiovascular disease, or other serious infirmity you must declare it before joining the field trip; however as most of our field trips are taken at a gentle pace, this is unlikely to stop you participating. Please consult one of the committee if you are at all concerned.)

There will be a risk assessment carried out for each visit, with a safety briefing on site.

An attendance fee of £2 is charged to non-members (for day membership to provide insurance cover).

Joining instructions and further information (which could be a Zoom preview) will be provided nearer the date for those who have confirmed attendance. An emergency phone number will be available if you are lost or late for the start of a meeting, or unable to attend.

For longer trips requiring accommodation, a hotel will be recommended, and participants are advised to make their own bookings.

Express interest and confirm attendance to wheelera957@gmail.com or text 07767 201557.