

The “...cretes of Hertfordshire”

A trip in search of Calcrete, Silcrete and Ferricrete in South Hertfordshire.

Saturday 11th September 2021

Leader: Mike Howgate



Calcrete cliffs at Waterford Heath

We will meet up in the car park at Waterford Heath Nature Reserve which is just north of Hertford (O.S. TL 317150) at **10.30 am**. This is a small car park much used by dog walkers so it would be best to come in as few cars as possible. Here we can examine spectacular cliffs of calcrete within the glacial gravels where we can find erratic fossils. We will then move on to see silcrettes starting with the ‘Balloon Stone’ at Standon Green End where I have arranged for us to park up in the farmyard of Mott’s Spring Farm (O.S. TL 363199).

The Balloon Stone is a sarsen stone moved here from Bengoe in the eighteenth century to celebrate the landing point of the first flight in a balloon in England by Vincenzo Lunardi. Our final stop of the morning will be in the village of Standon (O.S. TL 396223 to see their famous Hertfordshire puddingstone boulder - the Standon Stone. Park up in the wide part of the road before you reach the church, then walk past the church and the stone is on a small green as the road curves round to the left. I will explain why I think that this HPS boulder has pagan significance. A sandwich lunch can be picked up at Day’s Bakery in the village.

In the afternoon we will meet up at North Mymms church (O.S. TL 222045) where we can have our picnic lunch in the churchyard. Park in the road leading up to the church rather than in the church car park. We will examine the church building stones for examples of ferricretes then look for their source in the surrounding farmland. These has been missed for years despite being noted on the 6” to the mile Geological Survey field slips. This part of the trip will involve a two mile walk along well used tracks so boots are recommended.

SAFETY NOTES.

We will cross three country roads and be walking on uneven pavements, rough tracks and across fields. The farmer should have removed his livestock from the ‘Balloon Stone’ field. If not beware of inquisitive sheep.