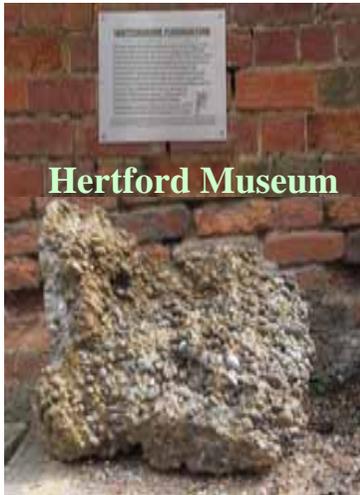


In 2005 East Herts Geology Club presented Puddingstones & Plaques to:-



'There are other puddingstones adorning the doors of the learning space in the museum, and in displays, including some for touching'.

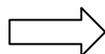


Ware Museum also has a display of puddingstone.

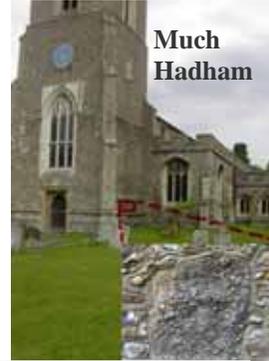


This large piece is nearby in the Priory garden.

More places to see Puddingstones



More East Herts Puddingstones.



www.hertfordmuseum.org



www.waremuseum.org.uk

This leaflet produced by East Herts Geology Club.
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Thanks to all those involved with this ongoing project.

50p where sold



The story of Hertfordshire's distinctive stone began in the age of the dinosaurs, but exactly when and how it formed remains a mystery.

Its enigmatic nature gave rise to superstitions that it possesses strange powers, such as growing in fields, repelling evil, and breeding.

People have found uses for Hertfordshire Puddingstone since at least Neolithic times.



Geology

About 80 million years ago the chalk was deposited on the floor of a warm clear sea that covered most of Britain. Later, flint formed chemically from silica as hard irregular lumps within the chalk.

This area then became dry land, and rivers eroded flints from the soft chalk. About 60 million years ago the sea once more covered south east England and eroded flints were rounded by wave action on the beach.



We don't know exactly when or how Hertfordshire puddingstones were formed. Most geologists think that soon after the flint pebbles were rounded, they were stained by iron compounds producing the attractive colours, and the distinctive dark rims. These pebbles then became embedded in fine pale sand. The final stage was the binding of these pebbles and sand into puddingstone by hard natural silica cement.

Because its pebbles, sand, and cement are all made of silica, Hertfordshire puddingstone is a hard and coherent rock that breaks straight across. Concrete can resemble puddingstone but fractures unevenly.

Folklore and superstition

Pagan idols. Puddingstones can often be found built into or near churches because they were objects of pagan worship and when Christianity came to Britain Pope Gregory decreed 'pagan idols should be incorporated into the fabric of the church'.

Breeding stone. Superstitious villagers called puddingstone 'Breeding Stone' or 'Mother Stone' believing it gave birth to pebbles and gathered fruit or children to itself. Some people thought that the stones were alive, could move, and had feelings and emotions.

Growing stone. Puddingstones exposed in fields by hard frosts, soil erosion and ploughing, seem to appear from nowhere. This caused a superstition among farmers that puddingstones grew in the ground. They broke up large lumps to prevent further growth which they feared would damage crops or ploughs or block streams.

Hagstones. Pieces of puddingstone called hagstones (or witch stones) were placed on doorsteps to ward off evil. A parish record of 1662 shows how a suspected witch was to be prevented from escaping from the grave.

"A hagstone be placed on the coffin for her bodie within be bewitched."



Uses

Milling. Puddingstone is ideal for grinding grain because it is so hard and coherent.



← 10cm →

Rubbing stone used with a saddle quern circa 3500 BC



← 24cm →

Top section of a Roman rotary quern

Building.



Hertfordshire Puddingstone blocks have been used in building since Roman times.

← St Andrews Street car park Hertford.

Decoration.

Hertfordshire Puddingstone is valued by lapidarists as it can be cut and polished. Pebbles in this slice have rings of different colours.



Jewellery. Hertfordshire Puddingstone is so cohesive it can be worked in fine detail



Cuff links and pendant by
www.eborjetworks.co.uk