

GLA 22 Keston Common

Grid Reference: TQ 419 640	Site Type: Natural exposures on scarp slope, springs & sinks
Site Area (hectares): 11.82	Current use: Recreational
Site ownership: London Borough of Bromley	Borough: London Borough of Bromley
Field surveyor: Joanna Brayson	Date: March 2011
Re-surveyed: Paul Rainey/Diana Clements	Date: 2014
Last visited: Paul Rainey	Date: 2017
Current geological designation: RIGS	Other designation: Forest: Keston and Hayes Commons SSSI (Biological); Metropolitan SINCS (River Ravensbourne, Ravensbourne Valley Woodlands, Hayes and Keston Commons); Scheduled Ancient Monument

Site Map

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Stratigraphy and Rock Types

Time Unit: Pleistocene	"Darwin's bog"
Rock Type: Sand and gravel	Peat
Time Unit: Eocene	Rock Unit: Blackheath Member, Harwich Formation, Thames Group
Rock Type: Sand and gravel	Details: Sand and pebbles (mostly round, black), widespread.
Time Unit: Paleocene-Eocene	Rock Unit: Lambeth Group
Rock Type: Clay, silt, sand	Details: Laminated beds have been revealed in past in animal excavations close to the ponds.

Site Description

Best exposure of the Harwich Formation is on the steep bank to the east of the London Loop trail to the south of the car park (TQ 4190 6395), at the top of the slope adjacent to Westbury Road. They lie at the top of a gully formed by gravel extraction. In places the small rounded black pebbles are cemented by calcite. The ubiquitous black pebbles of the Harwich Formation are found all over the common.

On the west side of the middle pond, small exposures of a sandy facies may belong to the top of the Lambeth Group or the base of the Harwich Formation.

The most southerly, top pond is fed from Caesar's Well, the spring probably enforced by a clay layer within the Lambeth Group.

<p>Darwin's bog (valley mire) lies to the north of the Fishpond Road that bisects the common. Here Darwin studied various aspects of natural history and observed sundews in this boggy area underlain by clay.</p>		
<p>Assessment of Site Value</p>		
<p>Geodiversity topic: sedimentology, lithostratigraphy, groundwater processes</p>		
<p>Access and Safety</p>		
Aspect	Description	
Road access & parking	Car parks off Westerham Road (and Heathfield Road)	
Safety of access	Paths through wood and around lake	
Safety of exposure	Best exposure at top of steep slope, seasonally muddy	
Permission to visit	Open access	
Current condition	Small exposures at top of steep embankment	
Current conflicting activities	none	
Restricting conditions	Possibly masked by vegetation	
Nature of exposure	Small exposures on slope and in woodland. Spring at Caesar's well and along east side of ponds.	
<p>Culture, Heritage & Economic</p>		
Aspect	Description	Rating
Historic, archaeological & literary associations	Drain includes bog crossing common immediately to north was source of insectivorous plant, round-leaved sundew for Darwin. There are Iron Age fortifications within the area	6
Aesthetic landscape	Valuable green spaced used by local community	6
History of Earth Sciences	Caesar's Spring described by Tertiary Research Group	4
Economic geology	Gravel extraction created the gully where the exposure can be seen. The two top ponds were used as reservoirs to feed Holwood House.	6
<p>GeoScientific Merit</p>		
Geomorphology	Springs arising from beneath Harwich pebbles (and or sand)	5
Sedimentology	Environment of deposition	6
Palaeontology	None seen	0
Igneous/mineral/ Metamorphic Geology	None	0
Structural Geology	None	0
Lithostratigraphy	Correlation of Harwich Formation	5
Potential use	Points of Interest on London Loop; on-site interpretation; higher further education	
Fragility	Natural overgrowth producing shade and reducing temporary exposures.	
<p>Current Site Value</p>		
Community	Used daily by dog walkers etc; London Loop; Ravensbourne Trail; Keston Trail	10
Education	Darwin connections	6
<p>Geodiversity value</p>		
RIGS:	Good small exposures with adequate access; springs; Darwin's Bog	6

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Exposure at top of slope in gully

Cemented layer

Photos: Diana Clements, 2014



Caesar's Well leading to lake and River Ravensbourne.
Photo: Laurie Baker, February 2016