

GLA 58 Coldfall Wood	
Grid Reference Park entrance TQ 277 901	Site Type: small public park
Site Area (hectares): 13.43	Current use: woodland paths with Nature Trail
Site ownership: London Borough of Haringey	Borough: London Borough of Haringey
Field surveyors: Diana Clements	Date: 2009
Revisited: Diana Clements	Date: November 2018
Current geological designation: LIGS	Other designation: Borough Grade I SINIC (Coldfall Wood)
Site Map	OS Topography © Crown Copyright



Stratigraphy and Rock Types	
Time Unit: Quaternary	Rock unit: Lowestoft Formation, Albion Glacigenic Group
Rock Type:	Details: Chalky till, together with outwash sands and gravels, silts and clays. The till is characterised by its chalk and flint content
Time Unit: Quaternary	Rock unit: Dollis Hill Gravel Member, Sudbury Formation, Kesgrave Catchment Subgroup
Rock Type:	Details: Gravel, sandy and clayey in part, with some laminated silty beds. Sand and gravel, locally with lenses of silt, clay or peat and organic material. Predominantly flint but contains clasts of Lower Greensand Chert and vein quartz.
Time Unit: Eocene	Rock Unit: London Clay Formation, Thames Group
Rock Type: Clay, silt, sand	Details: Fine, sandy, silty clay/ clayey silt, clay.

Site Description

Coldfall Wood is a small area of ancient woodland still surviving in an area that is mostly built over. It slopes down to the north cutting a gully. The three rock types of glacial till, underlying pre-Anglian Dollis Hill Gravel and Eocene London Clay within the area are not easy to see but there is potential for geological interpretation, particularly in relation to the deep gullies cut as successive ice ages melted. The area was originally part of the Finchley depression that allowed the Anglian ice sheet to come close to London and it is the site of the discoveries which first led to the recognition that glaciation had once reached the south of England. Evidence of till can be seen more easily in the adjacent St. Pancras & Islington Cemetery.

<p>Haringey publish a nature trail aimed at Primary school children. There is potential for identifying the different lithologies from clues in the landscape – spring lines, vegetation and small exposures, although they are not so obvious as elsewhere. London Clay is best seen in the eroded banks where the main bridge crosses the stream from the south. Clasts washed out of the Dollis Hill Gravel can be observed in the stream beds.</p>		
Assessment of Site Value		
Geodiversity topic: lithostratigraphy, sedimentology; geomorphology.		
Access and Safety		
Aspect	Description	
Safety of access	Access is from two entrances in Creighton Avenue and via the adjacent Muswell Hill Playing Fields	
Safety of exposure	There are rough footpaths through the wood but actual exposures are difficult to see under the vegetation.	
Permission to visit	Open access.	
Current condition	The park is maintained by the Friends of Coldfall Wood. There is a tendency for flooding at the base of the wood but a wooden walkway over the boggy area allows access.	
Current conflicting activities	none	
Restricting conditions	Vegetation, limiting exposure	
Nature of exposure	Woodland with a stream running through and a gully at the bottom of the hill.	
Culture, Heritage & Economic		
Aspect	Description	Rating
Historic, archaeological & literary associations	The Friends of Coldfall Wood has a website detailing the history of the wood and highlighting what biodiversity can be found there	6
Aesthetic landscape	Footpaths through the wood used by local community and as a teaching asset for Primary School Children. There is an interpretation board for the biodiversity at the entrance.	8
History of Earth Sciences	Site of the discoveries which first led to the recognition that glaciation had once reached the south of England.	8
Economic geology	None	0
GeoScientific Merit		
Geomorphology	The till-topped ridges were formerly the 'Finchley depression' through which the glacier forged its path. The gullies provide evidence of the ice ages, created as the ice melted and subsequently when permafrost melted during succeeding ice ages.	3
Sedimentology	Exposures are poor but Lowestoft Till and London Clay are easily distinguishable on newly-dug graves in the adjacent cemetery. Chalk fragments in clay provide a common and easy indicator of till.	3
Palaeontology	Jurassic fossils have been found in both the Finchley cemeteries, transported by the Anglian glacier	4
Igneous / mineral / metamorphic geology	Igneous rock fragments have been found in both cemeteries carried by the glacier and deposited as erratics	4
Structural Geology		2
Lithostratigraphy	Lowestoft Till, Dollis Hill Gravel, London Clay located mainly by spring lines and vegetation as exposure is poor.	3
Potential use	education; there is a potential to add information to the existing educational materials available for the wood	
Fragility	Well maintained by the Friends but the lithology is not normally exposed	
Current Site Value		
Community	Valuable woodland in an urban setting. The Friends of Coldfall Wood are very active and for several years have organised a geotrail around the Wood which has been well attended.	7
Education	Nature trail and interpretation boards for biodiversity already exist	6

and a leaflet explaining the geology of Coldfall Wood is available at: www.londongeopartnership.org.uk/informationboardsandleaflets/#coldfall. It is also described in LGP Bus Pass Geology 1, *Round the southern limits of the Anglian Ice Sheet*, which may be seen at: www.londongeopartnership.org.uk/geotrails/#buspass

Geodiversity value

LIGS: This is a good teaching location for explaining the extent of the Anglian glaciations particularly as it is the site of the discoveries which first led to the recognition that glaciation had once reached the south of England. Actual evidence is best seen in the newly-dug graves in the adjacent cemetery. The deep gullies emphasise the importance of successive ice ages in creating the landscape seen today.

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Photo: Diana Clements