

GLA 57: Wickham Valley Brickworks Complex, Potential LIGS

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Ownership: Private. No access.

The complex is the remains of three adjacent pits that have been described by visits from the Geologists' Association and others^{1,2,3,4,5}.

- 1) Cemetery Brickyard (1861-1908, now Rockcliff Gardens),
- 2) South Metropolitan Brickyard (1880-1912, reworked for sand in 1940s and 50s) (now Radnor Crescent and Prestwood Close) and 3) Gregory's Pit, also known as Wickham Lane Brick Pit (c. 1840-1930) (now between Alliance Road and Wickham Lane).

The area has been entirely built over but behind the garages in Radnor Crescent the tall cliff forming the southern edge of the South Metropolitan Quarry can still be seen through the trees (best viewed in winter). The geology of this cliff is similar to Gilbert's Pit SSSI (GLA 14) except for an unusual unit of blue-grey sand at the top of the Upnor Formation. Woolwich Cemetery is at the top of the cliff but allows no access. A recently installed fence surrounding the base of the c.100m long exposure, perhaps to discourage dumping, allows no access from the bottom either but with binoculars small patches of exposure in mid- and upper- cliff can still be seen (see GA Guide 68, pp. 97-98). All three Brick Works were mixing clay and sand from Upnor, Woolwich and Thanet Formations from their open pits with chalk from their own underground mines but also exploited local 'Brickearth'.

In the 1950s the underground mines were filled with fly-ash slurry and sealed off^{6,7}. Rockcliffe Gardens are of interest as an attempt to develop a major area of subsidence into the mine in 1937.

Radnor Crescent is 400 m south of the Green Chain Walk Section 4 (see http://greenchain.com/downloads/file/1/green_chain_geo_trail_guide).

References:

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- ⁴ Pitcher, W.S, 1948. Field Meeting at Charlton, Plumstead and Abbey Wood. *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, 59, pp. 172 – 173.
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- ⁸ Pearman, H. 1973. Caves and Tunnels in Kent. *Records of the Chelsea Spelaeological Society*, Vol. 6, pp. 43 – 52.

From Radnor Crescent

Source: London's foundations, page 243 (Diana Clements)



Site Map

Source: London's foundations, page 241

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