



HARROW & HILLINGDON GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

A Local Group of the Geologists' Association

Founded 1973

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Wednesday 12th November 2025 at 8pm on Zoom

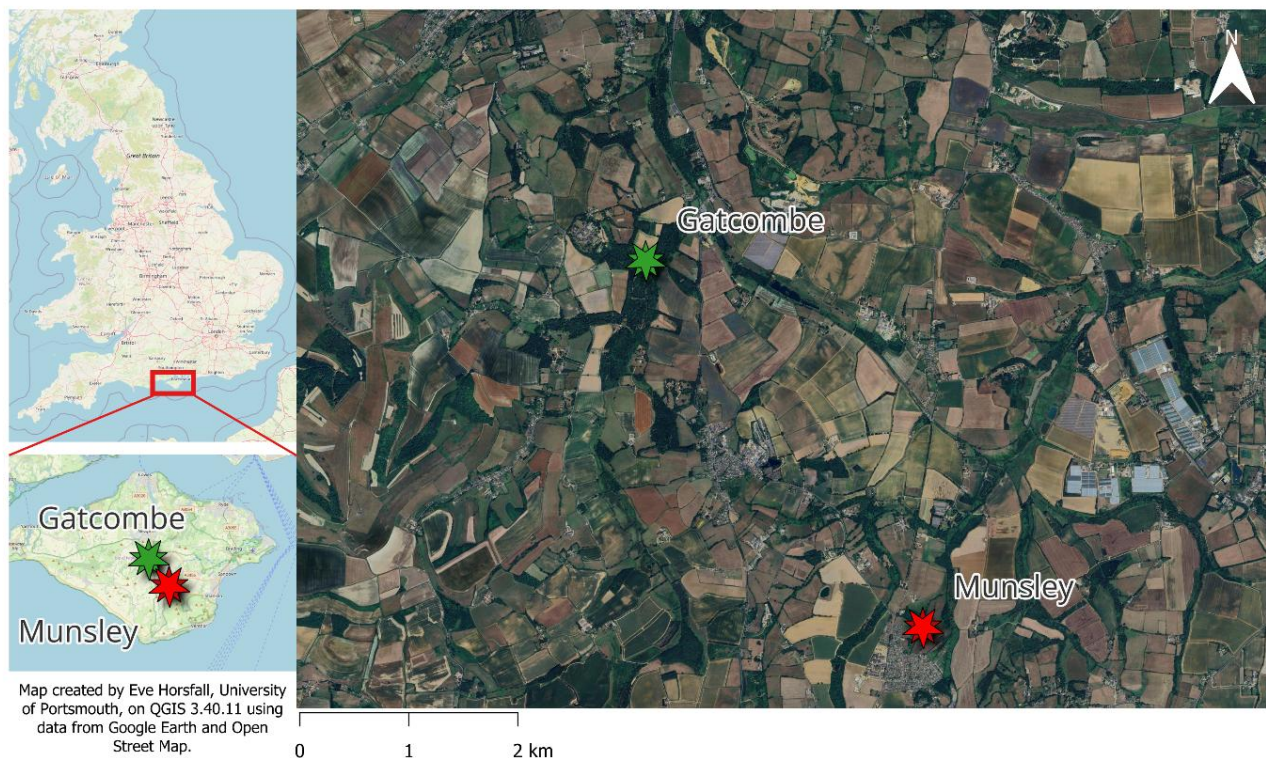
“Past environments of the Isle of Wight”

By Eve Horsfall (University of Portsmouth)

Determining past climatic conditions and fire history are essential for modelling future anthropogenically driven climate change, hydrological changes and the subsequent increase in wildfire events.

Environmental changes since the Late glacial period have transformed Britain from an unrecognisable past into the familiar landscape we know today - but what exactly were these changes? What were the hydrological conditions and how did these affect wildfire dynamics?

Coring locations for Gatcombe Withy Bed and Munsley Bog



A PhD project based at the University of Portsmouth is using sedimentary core data from the Isle of Wight and regional scale mapping to investigate past climate, Holocene fire history and pyrogeography in southern England. The area is both highly populated and sensitive to the impacts of future climate change, particularly an increase in wildfire events, as demonstrated during 2022 when there was a marked increase in UK wildfire events.



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Current results indicate that palaeo-climatic changes and periods of palaeo-fire activity can be identified within the core samples from the Isle of Wight. As this is an ongoing project these initial results are open to further interpretation as further dates are obtained, and as the data examined on a regional level is incorporated with secondary charcoal data, climatic data and archaeological evidence.



Speaker: Eve Horsfall

Eve is a PhD student from the University of Portsmouth who is studying past environmental change and fire history. She previously worked for an environmental charity on a UK-wide tree planting project as their Science Coordinator, and has also been a cheesemonger!