



# **HARROW & HILLINGDON GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

*A Local Group of the Geologists' Association*

*Founded 1973*

[www.hhgs.org.uk](http://www.hhgs.org.uk)

Twitter @HHGeolSoc

[contact@hhgs.org.uk](mailto:contact@hhgs.org.uk)

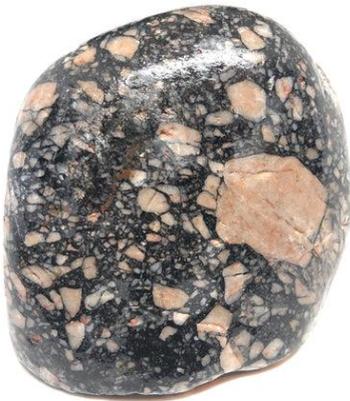
**Non-members, please register by email: [contact@hhgs.org.uk](mailto:contact@hhgs.org.uk)**

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 8pm on Zoom

## **“Thames Through Time – Cornish Flavour”**

By Ian Mercer (GeoEssex)(Essex Rock and Mineral Society)

Ian Mercer reveals the story of the Thames across Essex by digging into the landscape in and around the county. The Thames has changed course dramatically and repeatedly throughout the past two million years of the current ice age. The greatest impact of the Thames upon the landscape is during times of cold, when Spring thaws create mighty torrents of water. River-bed gravels have been deposited while the land has been tilting gradually throughout this time, resulting in ‘staircases’ of gravel terraces across the landscape and beneath the temporary flood of the North Sea. During this time, the rivers have brought rocks from across the area of southern Britain as evidence of their journeys.



These include beautiful black-and-white pneumatolytic quartz-tourmalinite from around the granite intrusions of the South-West. Ian has collected many of these from across Essex and East Anglia and has grown to love them. He reveals their evidence in the land and in church walls. The Thames will change again many times as climate continues to oscillate.

*Cornish rock from Essex gravel*

### Ian Mercer

Ian Mercer has previously worked for the British Geological Survey and was Education Director for the Gemmological Association of Great Britain. With his wife Ros he wrote [Essex Rock: Geology Beneath the Landscape](#), a comprehensive guide to the region's geological history. Essex Rock (2022) covers 500 million years of history, including Ice Age impacts, fossils, and local landscape formation.



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*Ian and Ros Mercer at their Halstead Medal presentation Thorndon, 29 June 2020.*

[Essex Rock: Author Interview – Pelagic Publishing](#)

Together, Ian and Ros are long-time leaders of the Essex Rock and Mineral Society and were awarded the 2020 Halstead Medal for their work in geological education and conservation.

They were involved in the Channels Mammoth project to erect a sculpture based on fossils found at the local gravel pits. The mammoth is designed to look as if it is rising out of a hillside at the entrance to the Channels development near the A131 roundabout.

