



East Midlands Geological Society

60th Anniversary 1964-2024

Spring Lectures 2024



Saturday 9 March 2024, 6.00 - 7.00pm

Geology of Stonehenge and the Bluestone controversy

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*From south-west Wales to Salisbury Plain. How were
the Bluestones transported*

from here.....

.....to here?



Venue: School of Geography, Sir Clive Granger Building,
University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham,
NG7 2RD [Google Maps](#)

www.emgs.org.uk

ABSTRACT:

Stonehenge has recently come into the public eye due to the publication of the results of new geochemical work. The Sun newspaper declared 'Mystery of where the giant rocks came from SOLVED' whereas The Guardian was more cautious with a headline 'Archaeologists discover likely source of Stonehenge's giant sarsen stones'. The senior English Heritage properties historian said that she was delighted that one of the most intriguing questions about Stonehenge had been answered. The background to this euphoria will be critically examined and the geological fundamentals reviewed.

Apart from the sarsens, the other geological problem lies with the assemblage of 'foreign' rocks incorporated into the henge structure, i.e. the so-called Bluestones. There now appears to be little doubt that the Bluestones are primarily derived from outcrops in south-west Wales but the mechanism whereby they arrived to Salisbury Plain is far from being resolved. Most archaeologists have accepted the hypothesis that Neolithic people were responsible for the transport of the Bluestones from their source to the plain but over time the favoured routes have changed drastically. In contrast geologists have been split between those who accept the human transport mode and those who favour natural earth surface processes as being responsible for transportation – i.e. glaciation. The strengths and weaknesses of these competing ideas will be discussed.