

LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

TENDRING DISTRICT



TeG7 Mistley Cobble Wall

Site location: The south side of Mistley High Street, east of the Post Office.

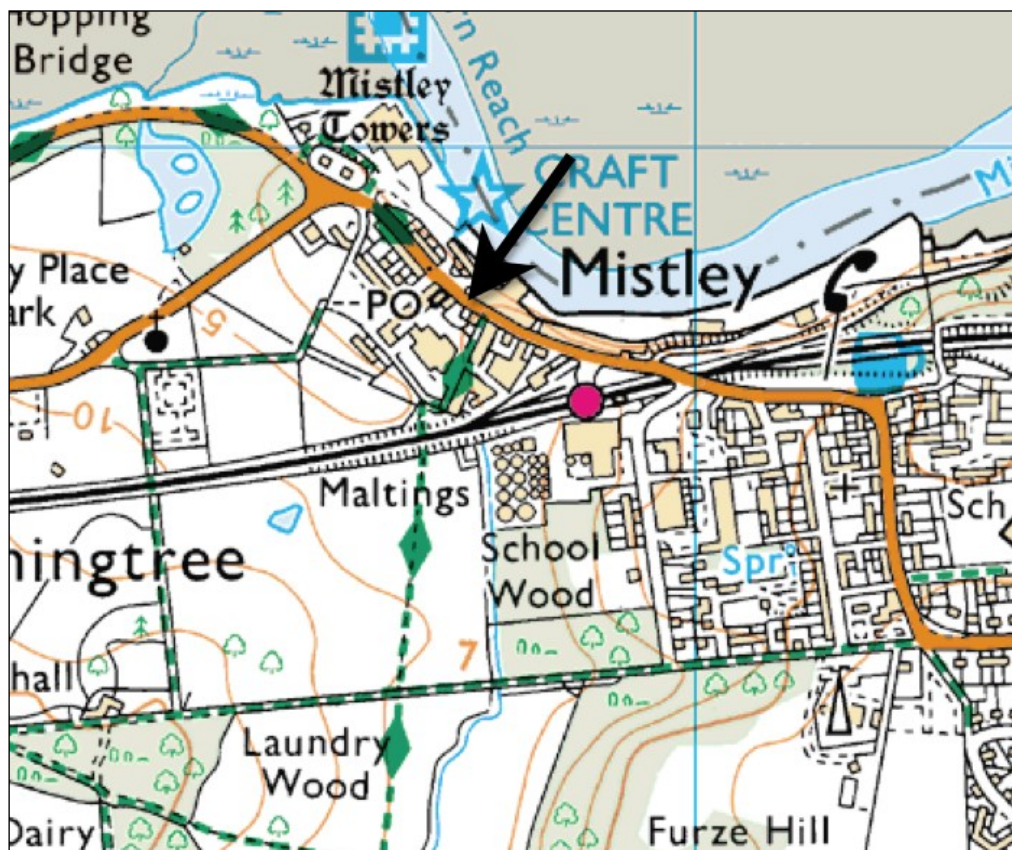
Grid Reference: TM 11741 31822

Status: Accessible at all times

Summary of the geological interest:

On the south side of Mistley High Street, east of the Post Office, is a brick wall with a section composed entirely of rounded cobbles. Here can be seen numerous 'exotic' rock types such as granite, dolerite and gneiss. There are even several cobbles of rhombporphyry, a rock type from the Oslo region of Norway.

These rock types are typical of those found in local glacial deposits but the high number of exotic rocks in such a small section of wall is extremely unusual.



Site Assessment. Local Geological Sites (LoGS) in Essex are assessed using criteria based on DEFRA guidance. An assessment form is used which asks key questions under four value categories: scientific, educational, historical and aesthetic. This site has been assessed and qualifies under these criteria.

Scientific interest and site importance

It was originally thought that the stones in the Mistley Wall might have been gathered locally. This is because 'exotic' rocks do occur in Essex, having been brought here during the Ice age by the Anglian Ice Sheet, some even from Norway. However, the great variety of rock types in this wall made this unlikely. The answer was found following extensive research by geologist Ian Mercer who established from various written records and oral testimonies beyond any doubt that these rocks were brought to Mistley from Norway in ballast in trading ships in the early 19th century.

In the wall there are 280 million year old lavas from Larvik, near Oslo, with distinctively shaped crystals. These have provided a rock-solid link between Mistley's maritime past and this surviving, historic wall. A valuable display of geology as well as history lesson, the Mistley wall is a treasure of the Essex coast. It has considerable local historical conservation value.

The full story of the wall, and how the link with Mistley's maritime history was established, can be found in the December 2014 issue of the Magazine of the Geologists' Association (Mercer 2014). A signboard is in place on the adjacent wall (2023).

Other information

This section of wall is a surviving fragment of a more extensive wall of cobbles that formerly existed here in front of the Mistley Maltings.

Reference:

MERCER, I.F. 2014. A Mistley Mystery. *Magazine of the Geologists' Association*. Vol. 13, No.4. 2014. Pages 29-31.



The cobble wall in Mistley High Street.



Mistley Cobble Wall with signboard. Photo: I. Mercer, Nov. 2023



Mistley Cobble Wall Signboard. Photo: I. Mercer, Nov. 2023