

Birmingham's Erratic Boulders Heritage of the Ice Age

FEBRUARY 2022 PROJECT UPDATE

Our volunteers and the public continue to hunt out new boulders and clear the sites around known boulders.

On 22nd January, Dr Mike Lambert galvanized the local community to clear the site and clean the quartz stone in Broadhidley Woods.



Quartz stone before the clearance



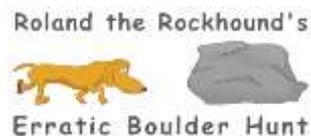
.....AND AFTER

Thanks to everyone
who took part.

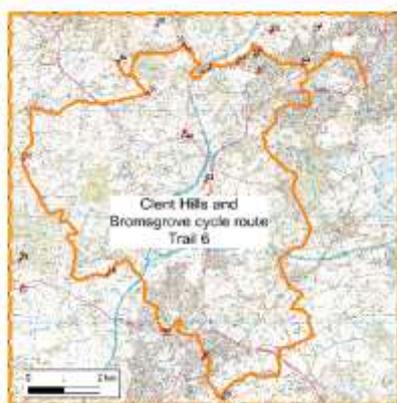
We revisited Frankley in early February to update the local community on progress of the “Fire and Ice” trail. There is the possibility of moving a new boulder to the site, logistics and permission permitting.



Our “Roland the Rockhound” campaign is in full swing and will run until the end of March. If people are out and about in our catchment area of South Birmingham and Bromsgrove, and come across a possible erratic boulder, please send a photo and location to erraticsproject@worc.ac.uk and one of our geologists will take a look. Details can be found on our website <https://erraticsproject.org/>



On 25th February we met with Romsley Parish Councillors to ask permission to erect an interpretation board on Romsley Hill, which will be part of one of the cycling routes, and to encourage the local community to get involved in the project. There is one stone that looks like Welsh volcanic rock hidden under a tree on Romsley Hill, but we know that there were others, from a letter sent to Professor Lapworth in 1912.



Romsley is worth a visit as there are lovely walks in the area.

Information on “Romsley Circular” walk can be found at <https://www.alltrails.com>



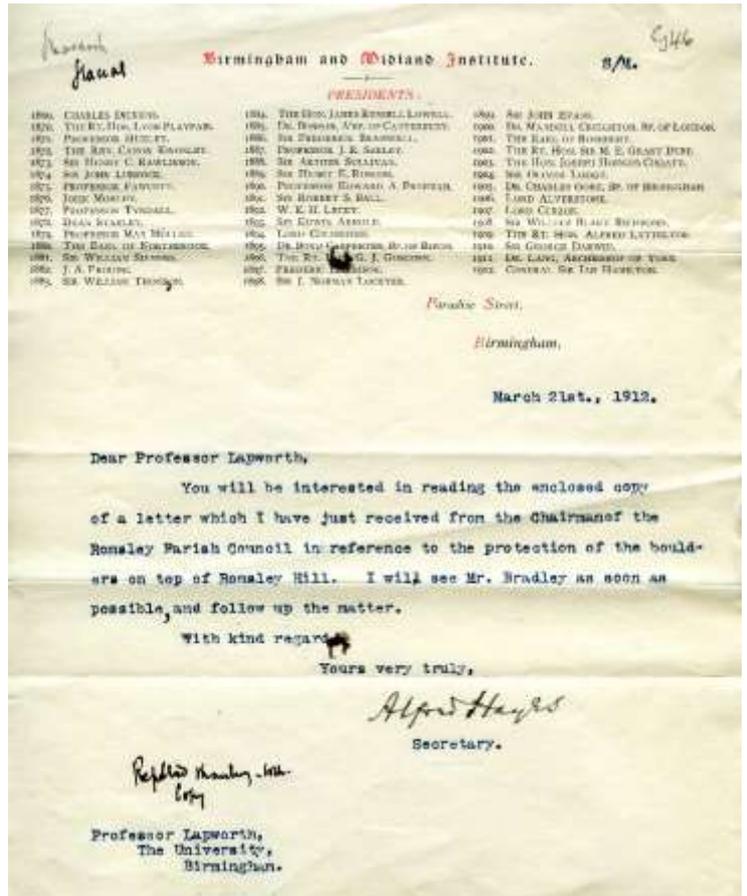
If you do visit, please be on the lookout for the missing boulders.



ARENIG BOULDER ON ROMSLEY HILL

This boulder is no longer on Romsley Hill, but we are hoping someone will be able to shed some light as to where it is now.

Rev. Henry William Crosskey a minister and geologist discovered three such boulders on Romsley Hill in 1888.



The two large stones on the concrete block are basalt which must have come from Rowley Regis. We believe they were brought from the quarry at the time of Charles and Diana's wedding, but we are hoping that local residents may be able to confirm this. There are some basalt erratic boulders recorded south and east of Rowley Regis, including two on Frankley Hill (amongst 20 volcanics and 1 vein quartz).



Prof. Ian Fairchild with members of the Romsley Parish Council

A huge thanks must go to our volunteers, led by volunteers Julie Schroder and Roland Ketch around the work they have undertaken in the village of Illey, to the west of the A5 just on the boundary of Worcestershire and Dudley. The project team already knew of several erratic boulders, which had not been included in any of the proposed trails but now this has all changed!



Volunteers Malcolm and Roland investigating a possible erratic in Illey Way

Another trail starting from Woodgate Valley Country Park is on the drawing board. Nearer to home and with the launch of Trail 1 approaching, it has been gratifying to see that a massive and magnificent boulder has been the subject of some much needed clearance. The boulder in question lies beside the pond along Garland Way, Bournville. Roland Kedge has a photo of his father with his grandson, and the boulder standing in all its glory around 40 years ago.



Recent photos showed it totally obscured by trees and invasive bushes but after Julie discussed this with Daniel Callicott, Bournville Heritage Trust, Heritage officer, he got things moving and the site is now cleared and the stone visible.



The stone is barely visible under the brambles



The work undertaken to reveal this magnificent example of an erratic boulder



One of the objectives for the project is to comply with the mandatory outcome of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to widen the range of people who will be involved in our heritage project and to increase accessibility to a wider range of communities.

One of the ways we can do this is by making our website accessible to those with visual impairments. Trainers from “**Vocaleyes**” offered advice on ways we can do this including assistive technology such as screen readers, alternative keyboards and scanning software. They suggested simple ways of formatting the content that would make it easier for people to have access to information. If anyone would like a copy of the notes, please email Valerie.turner2@worc.ac.uk

If anyone would like to volunteer, we have a number of opportunities available which can be found at <https://erraticsproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Volunteer-opportunities-handbook-2-Mb.pdf>

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