Geological Information

The rocks underlying Greensand Country are the sandstones, loose sands and clays of the Woburn Sands Formation, part of the Cretaceous Lower Greensand Group (deposited 125 - 113 million years ago (mya)). Despite its informal name of Greensand, the sands vary in colour from white, yellow and orange to a dark red-brown due to the varying iron content cementing the grains together. The quality is high and it has been quarried extensively in the Leighton Buzzard area. The sandstone contains much more iron and it resists erosion, forming high ground which contrasts with lower ground west and north of the Ridge. It has been used for building stone. Soils are acidic supporting abundant plantations of coniferous trees and heathland plants. As rainfall soaks into the ground, streams and ponds are generally absent.

The Woburn Sand Formation rests on older, Jurassic (201-145 mya) rocks. On the highest parts of the geotrail venture onto much younger, glacial Boulder Clay containing flints and other erratic stones. Soils on Boulder Clay are more fertile but less well drained and ponds are abundant. It was deposited on the plains of Europe during the latest Ice Age of the Pleistocene epoch and is called the Anglian Advance. It was last there 400,000 years ago, the only time that an ice sheet reached this far south in England.

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Dick Turpin's Hideaway

The infamous highwayman, Dick Turpin (1705-1739), local legend suggests, hid in this cave during his flight from London to York following his Essex Gang's arrest in 1735. Although there is no evidence of Dick Turpin having hid in this cave during his flight from London to York following his Essex Gang's arrest in 1735, there is evidence of another highwayman circa 1100, Dick Turpin's Hideaway

To reach this favorite locals' hideaway turn right NOt taking the narrow road). Beyond the village is ‘Poor’s Acre Pocket Park’, a partially infilled ‘Sand Hole’ or quarry. Continue along the bridleway.

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