

A self-guided geology walk around Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bath Road, Bristol.

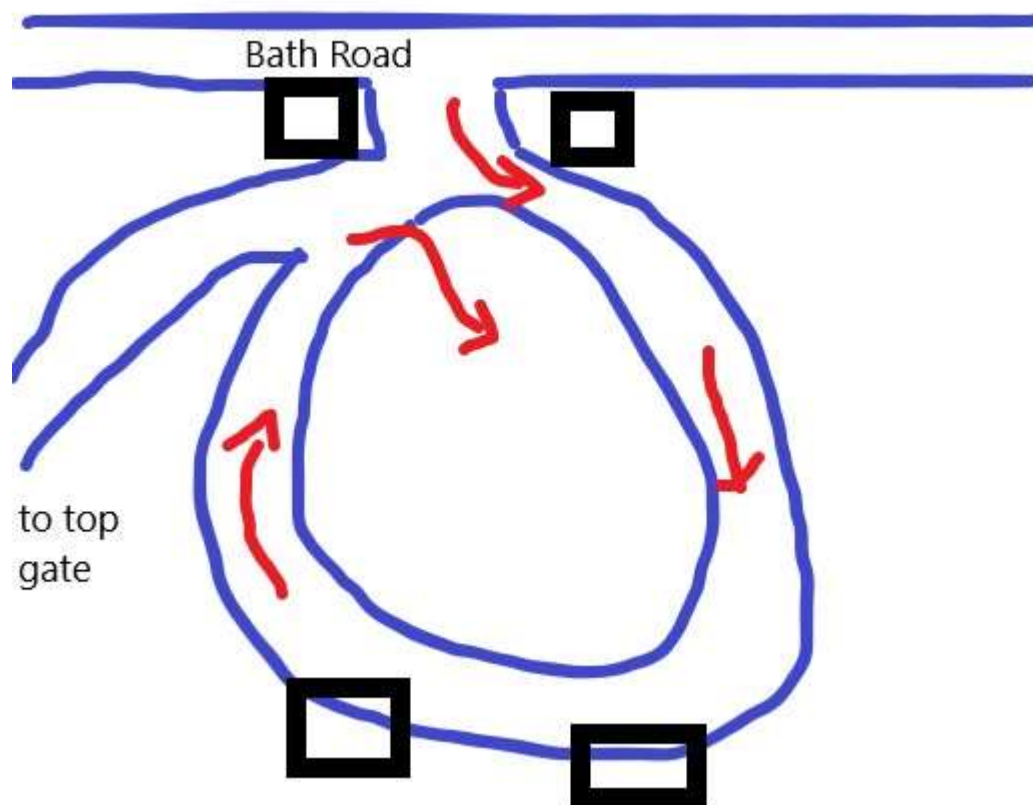
By Mike Horne FGS, Honorary Fellow, Department of Geography, Geology and Environment, University of Hull. With the help of Anne Horne.

General notes –

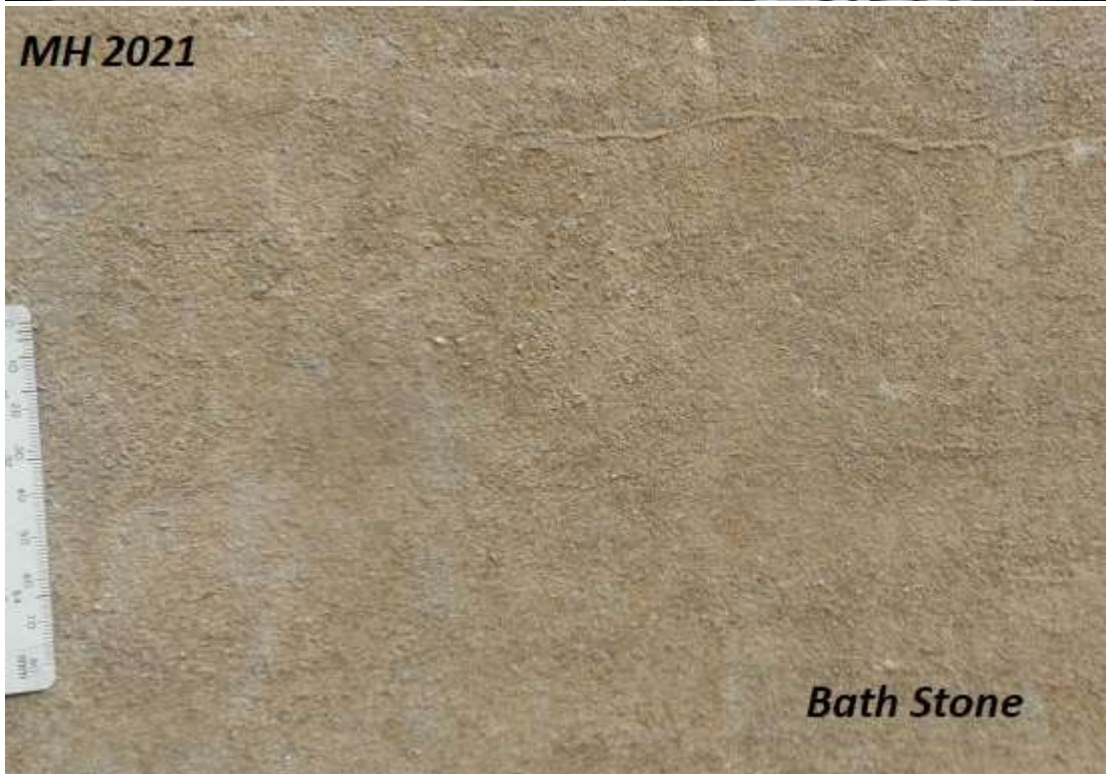
- Check the opening and closing times – you will not want to be locked in!
- Walking distance – not very far, over mostly flat ground
- At the time of writing there is car parking available on the site, public toilets and a café.
- Be respectful to the site and other visitors
- When you leave the roadway be careful – the ground may be uneven and slippery; there may be trip hazards such as brambles.
- As it would be disrespectful to carry out tests on the monuments the identifications of the rock types is visual only so may not be 100% accurate.
- The name used to identify the monuments is the first named engraved on the stone; there may be other family members buried in the plot.
- The scale card on the photographs is metric and about the size of a credit card.
- The GPS National Grid readings may be a few metres out.
- [Click here](#) to view some more links about Rocks in Graveyards and Cemeteries



Our walk begins at the entrance gates off the Bath Road and follows the fairly level lower circular road in a clockwise direction. Many of the memorials are visible from the road, for some you will have to leave the road and walk a short distance.



1. The Eastern Gatehouse [ST 60843 71631] this is made of a Middle Jurassic Oolitic Limestone – probably Bath Stone. It is called an oolitic limestone because the rock contains little rounded balls of calcite mud that look like fish eggs.



Beneath this in the foundations of the building is Pennant Sandstone, a local rock of Carboniferous age, often seen in older buildings and garden walls in Bristol. At the time of writing there was a patch of red soil in the grass slope, indicative of the red Mercia Mudstone bedrock of Triassic age that occurs on the lower slopes of the hills in Knowle.



2. These are on the right hand side of the road. James Sanders – footballer and showman 1932-2007. This stone is white Carrara Marble from Italy. This is a true marble – a metamorphosed limestone. The original limestone has been recrystallized by intense heat. Next to it is the monument to the wife of Charles Heal died 1939. This is also made of Carrara Marble but the rock has weathered to a grey colour. This sculpture of a child is listed.



Cararra Marble



3. Charles Cove Cavill d. 1920 – Pink granite with black xenoliths. When this plutonic igneous rock was cooling pieces of the country rock into which it was intruded fell into the magma and became included into the



granite.



Behind that memorial are several polished black Basalt memorials to members of the Heal family. Basalt is a fine grained volcanic rock, you cannot normally see the crystals with the naked eye.



4. Francis Bacon d. 1918 – fine-medium grained grey Granite



5. Emmanuel Roma d. 1912 – dark red Granite.





6. Walking on further we will come to [ST 60853 71563] on the left side of the road – James Anthony Gardner d. 1861 “accidentally drowned whilst bathing” – a grand memorial showing military flags, sword and helmet, with an urn at the top. Urns were a popular Victorian symbol of mourning, symbolically containing the bones or remains of the

deceased. This is made of Carrara Marble with lead lettering. It has a



base of pink Granite.

7. On the right side of the road. Richard Arthur the family name is illegible d.1892. Carrara Marble which has been weathered by acid rain: the marble dissolves and the lead lettering which was originally flat with the polished marble will stand out proud and eventually the letters will fall out from their setting.



8. Beside no. 7 is an obelisk of very weathered sandstone with no visible



inscription.



9. P P J d. 1872 – “York Stone”. This is a sandstone of middle Carboniferous age from the West Riding of Yorkshire (not from York).



10. Off on a side path to the left of the road [ST 60875 71547]. Emma Harvey d. 1962 – a cross made of unpolished coarse grey granite, perhaps from Cornwall, the horizontal part has been polished.

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11. Arthur Fletcher d.1957 – memorial of a grey igneous rock (dolerite or diorite) surrounded by green slate chippings, probably from the Lake



District.



12. On the right hand side of the main road [ST 60851 71534] – Nicholas Robins d 2014. A War Grave – these are usually in Portland Stone – a shelly limestone from the late Jurassic of Dorset, but the War Graves Commission are replacing older ones with a grey granite.



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Portland Stone



13 On the left of the road beside the left side of the Anglican Chapel – two Victorian Draped Urns in Carrara Marble and an obelisk of weathered polished pink Granite.





14 To the right of the Chapel [ST 60833 71505]– John Norman Brown d. 1881 – capital of weathered oolitic limestone (probably Bath Stone) which has perhaps been recycled, with inscriptions on Carrara Marble

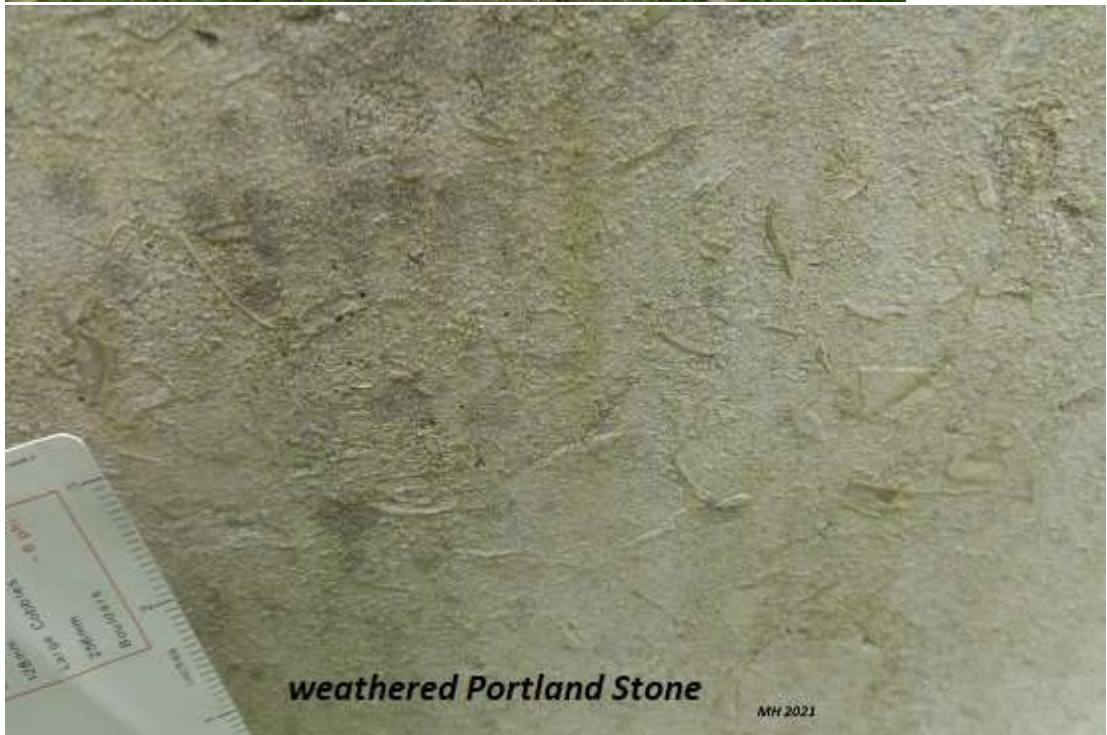
and columns of black basalt and pink granite.



15 Behind the Cloisters [ST 60751 71511] – Arthur Charles Perry d.1952 – Shap Granite from the Lake District showing distinctive domino-shaped crystals of pink feldspar.



Nearby is a War Grave from 1941 made of Portland Stone. The limestone is dissolving slowly and the tougher fossil oysters and other shells are beginning to stand proud (this is more noticeable if you gently rub your fingers across the stone which was originally smooth).



weathered Portland Stone

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16 The Non-Conformist Chapel (now called the Spielman Centre) is made of Bath Stone which has been patched in places where it sustained damage during a bombing raid in WWII.

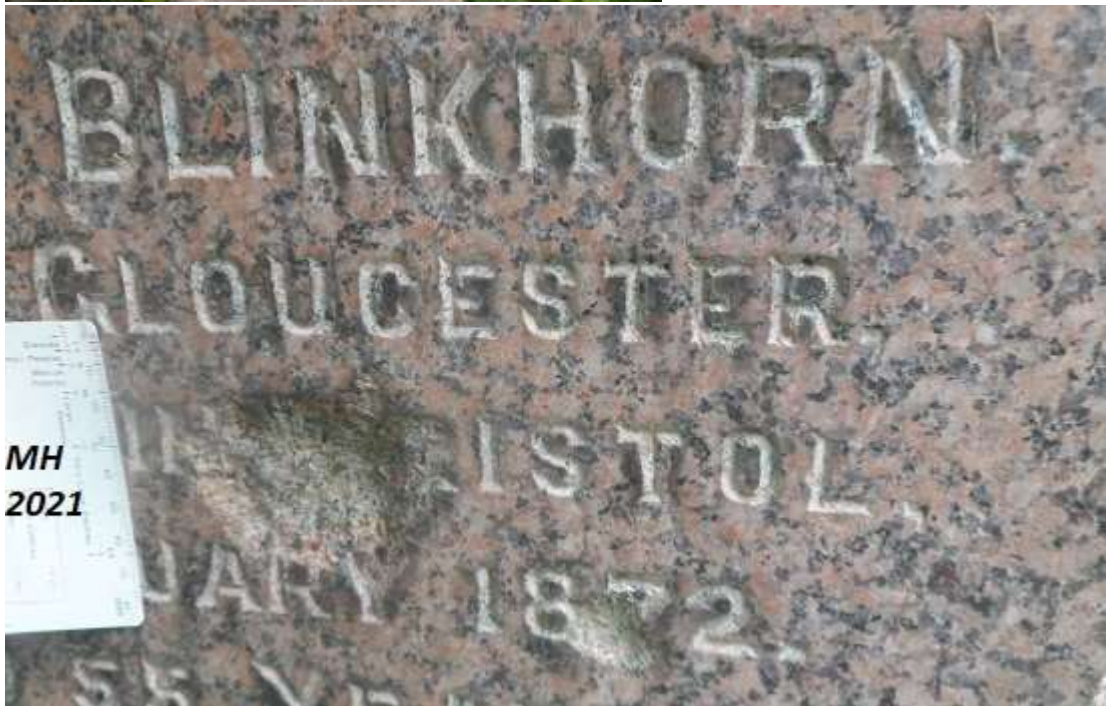




Inside the building is a café and in the basement there is the cremations furnace, a display about the history of the site and public toilets.



17 On the right of the road [ST 60776 71558] – William Blinkhorn d. 1872 – obelisk of pink Granite damaged during WWII and nearby a monument with no legible name of Carrara Marble and grey Granite also damaged.



18 To the left of the road is a group of three interesting memorials [ST 60772 71583] (left to right) – Hester ?Hughes – pink Granite containing dark xenoliths. Lizzie ?Judson – the rock looks like weathered Larvikite from Norway (see no. 25 for a newer polished Larvikite monument. Amelia Puddy d. 1861 – this looks to be weathered Bath Stone and the monument may have been recycled. William Hespeth (Professor of Chemistry) d. 1868 – Grey Sandstone.





Near here on the right hand side of the road is a monument to James Parsons FGS who was the Principal of the Mineral Survey in Ceylon who was lost in the Jungle 29th January 1908. An obituary was published in the *Geological Magazine* (vol. 6 p 192). He was the son of James St. John Parsons who was the Cholera Medical Officer in 1849.

- 19 To the left, behind the tomb of Raja Ram Mohan Roy [ST 60786 71607 – Thomas May d. 1905 – lead lettering on an unpolished grey granite



monolith.



20 Raja Ram Mohan Roy 1772-1833 [ST 60796 71611] – a magnificent (listed) memorial mostly made of Bath Stone. A lot of information about

the Raja is available on the internet.



21 Next memorial – Maria Brock d 1897 – grey granite with elongated white

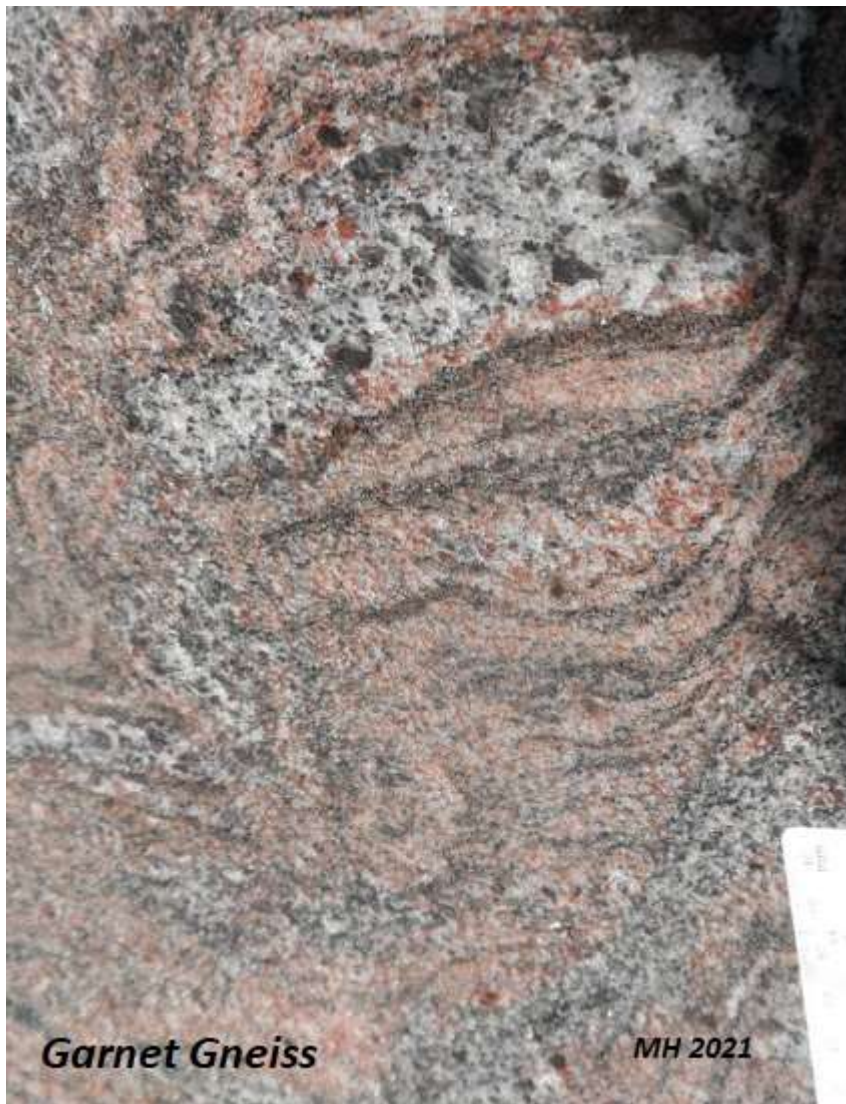


feldspar crystals.



22 Opposite on the right hand side of the road – Carmen Beckford MBE d.2016 – folded garnet gneiss (pronounced “nice”). A lot of information about Carmen is available on the internet.





23 On the left just before the road to the upper gates – Rev. John Pratt d. 1867 (listed) – Carrara Marble with a carving of him teaching children –

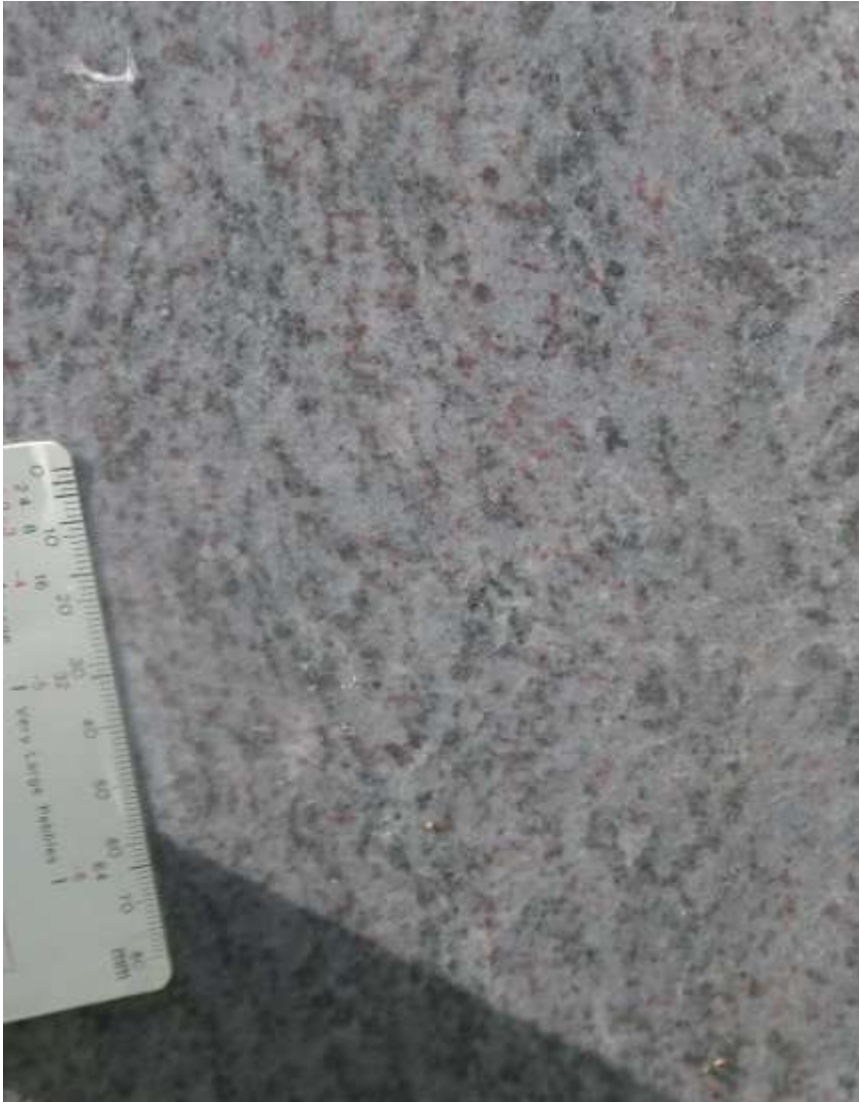


quite weathered.



24 On the walk from the main entrance towards Garden of Rest Number Two, on the left [ST 60830 71619] – Tristan Kalsi d. 2017 – Garnet gneiss.





25 David Sheppard d. 2016 - polished Larvikite from Norway; the large crystals in this plutonic igneous rock have a distinctive blue colour when



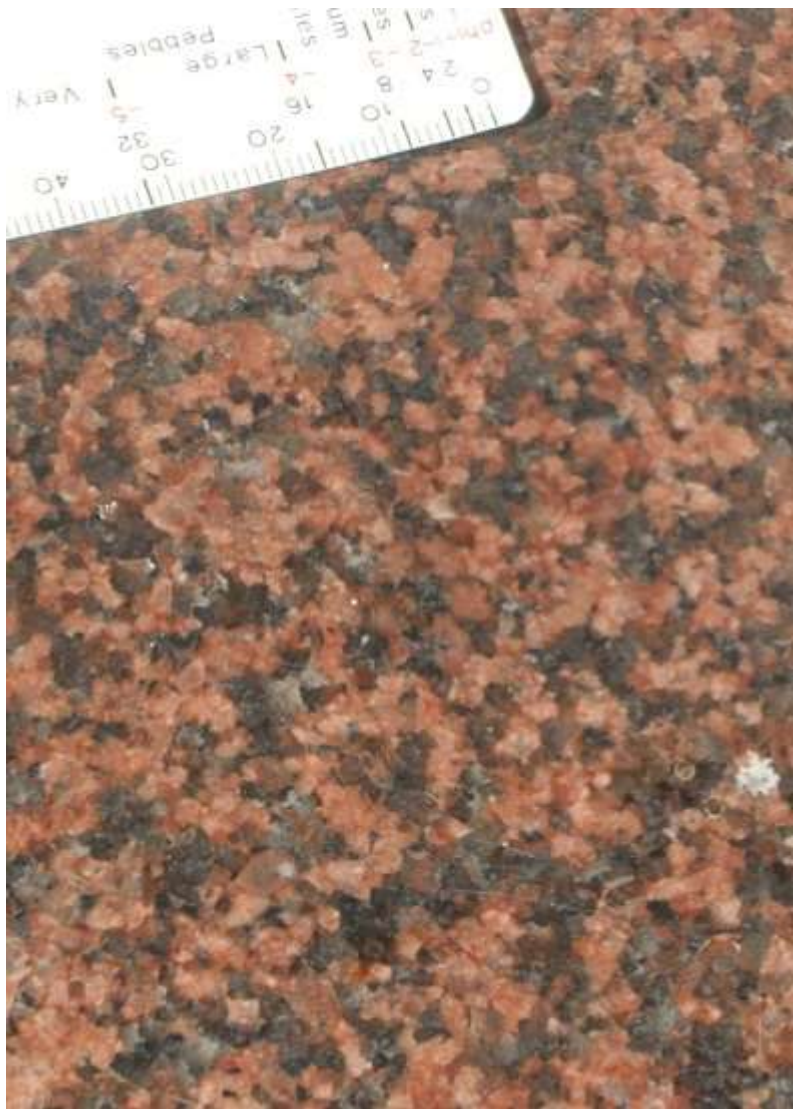
they catch the light.



Larvikite

26 Muriel Weston d. 2014 – polished red Granite.





27 Two rows behind – Alice Tanner d. 1994 - grey slate, probably from

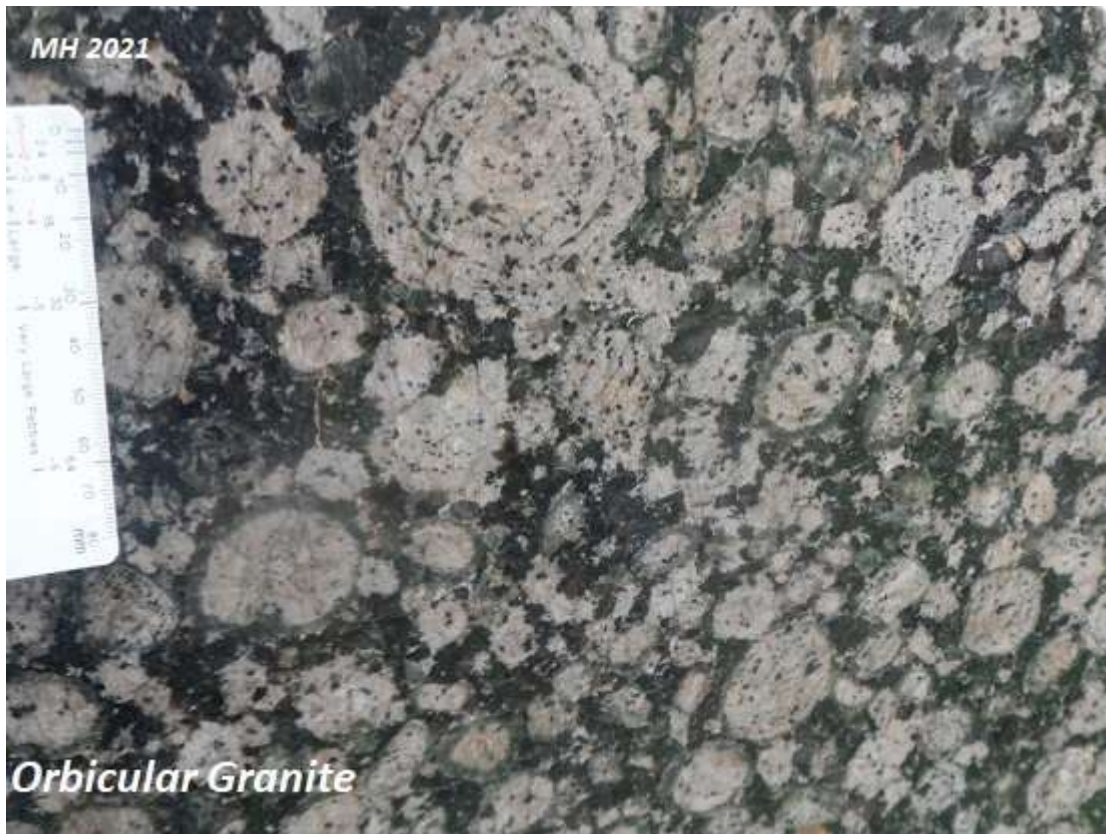


Wales.



28 [ST 60834 71576] – Alexandros Christodoulou d. 1990 – a cross and grave surround of orbicular granite, known in the masonry trade as “Baltic Brown”. A very distinctive rock with large rounded crystals with inclusions, formed by the repeated cooling and reheating of the magma.





This walk is dedicated to the memory of my Grandfather and Aunt whose ashes were scattered in Garden of Rest Number Two at Arnos Vale Cemetery.

I thank Janine Marriot and Vanessa Spencer of the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust for their help and support.

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