

# GeoSuffolk Times



Newsletter No.4

March 2010

Welcome to GeoSuffolk Times, keeping you up-to-date with geodiversity news, achievements and activities in Suffolk. Please pass it on to anyone who may be interested.

Caroline Markham

29.03.10 [www.geosuffolk.co.uk](http://www.geosuffolk.co.uk)

## Unwanted Gold, Wanted Gold

'Sell your unwanted gold for cash', newspaper and television advertisements exhort us. So where does gold come from? Not from Suffolk – our geology is 'wrong' for gold, but history tells us of gold mines in Suffolk. In 1449 King Henry VI commissioned two people to account for silver and gold from Suffolk's minerals. In King Henry VIII's household book (State Papers Domestic) in 1538 is the King's order for the trial of ore in his mine in Suffolk, and the overseeing commissioners brought miners from Cornwall to work them. Camden, in Britannia, alleged that Henry VIII made excavations for gold on the Little Haugh estate at Norton village in Blackbourn Hundred. In Robert Reyce's 1618 ms 'Breviary of Suffolk' he refers to a 'mine of gold ore about Banketon in Hartismere Hundred in ancient times'. These early explorations for gold in Suffolk were to safeguard the Crown's share should natural gold be discovered; it may be that robbers finding gold in burial sites gave rise to such hopes. (I have not read the original of the information quoted). Bob Markham (RM)

## Suffolk and Norfolk Life Magazine

This monthly journal (£2.20) often has geological articles by Laurie Forsyth. *Suffolk's Stones and Statues* in the January issue describes both ancient and modern uses of stones e.g. the flints in Butley Priory, the Bawdsey East Beach sea defences and of course mentions the Blaxhall 'growing stone' (probably a glacial erratic). For a taster of GeoSuffolk's work, *Suffolk Rocks* in the February issue cannot be bettered. It covers Sutton Knoll SSSI; the 'Pliocene Forest' and climate change; building stones; links with Natural England and the GAP; and the Suffolk Mammoth Trail. The March issue carries an addendum by Roger Dixon on student artist Louis Wood's *Suttona Antiquior* a reconstruction of the Crag island at Sutton Knoll (and there is an article about Norfolk's Pingos by Laurie Forsyth). CM

## Have you Visited

### the Coralline Crag at Orford?

Richmond Farm SSSI shows excellent exposures of Suffolk's unique rock – the Coralline Crag. This disused quarry, on private land, is easily viewed from the Gedgrave Road leading SW out of Orford. The honey-coloured Crag exposures have a Mediterranean feel, especially on a sunny summer afternoon. A succession of spectacular ripple structures can be seen, indicating a high energy environment when the Coralline Crag was deposited 3.75 million years ago. Consequently there are few fossils, although some layers between the ripple sets have bryozoans (the corallines which give the rock its name).

On a visit to Orford you can also find Coralline Crag used as a building stone, for example, in the walls of the 13th century Augustinian Friary, remains of which can be seen on the south side of Broad Street and the east side of Quay Street. It has also been used in the interior of Orford Castle (£5.30 admission) and is easy to spot in the altar of the tiny chapel and in the lintel over the great fireplace. (This last is even on the Orford Museum web site *Virtual Museum* page! [www.orfordmuseum.org.uk](http://www.orfordmuseum.org.uk)) CM

## Stoke Tunnel SSSI Panel

This community panel, sponsored by Abbey New Homes with information provided by GeoSuffolk, is now in place on site by Worsdell Close, just south of Stoke railway tunnel in Ipswich. When the tunnel approach was dug in the 1840s no one expected to find elephants! These and many other 210,000 year old fossils are celebrated on this board. CM

## Sponsor a Tree

The 'Pliocene Forest' is growing!

GeoSuffolk has been awarded £1692 from the Curry Fund (thanks to Roger Dixon and the GA) for stockproof fencing at Sutton for this innovative project. If you wish to sponsor a tree please contact Barry Hall [bj.hall2@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:bj.hall2@mypostoffice.co.uk)

## Suffolk GAP News for Partners in Geodiversity

### Explore the Earth Beneath Our Feet

This was the by-line for Ipswich Museum's energy themed Science Week drop-in event on March 20th. Performances by 'Science in a Suitcase' drew 200 plus parents and children into the Museum and everyone visited the Geology Gallery. Here curator Ann Ainsworth had a 'hands on' activity for children, sorting rocks into igneous, sedimentary or metamorphic using a key and provided enrichment with an interactive diagram of the rock cycle. Learning and fun made easy work of progression to GeoSuffolk's stand showing the search for coal in Suffolk, with sections of the 1894/1896 experimental borehole drilled at Stutton. The children used specimen-matching to discover that there was no coal in the borehole, learning some palaeontology and stratigraphy in the process. The specimens of coal we provided (not from Suffolk!) proved to be of great interest. CM

### Suffolk Local Sites Partnership

This brings partners together at intervals to discuss local geodiversity and biodiversity sites. Suffolk County Council has to report on these as part of National Indicator 197. At the meeting on February 23rd GeoSuffolk was asked to give a presentation on the geodiversity of Suffolk and local geodiversity sites (County Geodiversity Sites and RIGS). Natural England, Forestry Commission, SCC, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Suffolk Biological Records Centre representatives were present and all explained the work of their organisation is doing related to local sites. CM

### Essex and South Suffolk draft Shoreline Management Plan

GeoSuffolk has just made its submission to this important document. Public consultation is until June 18th see: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/portal/re/flood/anglian/smp150310/consult>

### Pulhamite at Bawdsey Manor

The 400 metres of cliff below Bawdsey Manor (immediately to the south of the geological SSSI) is an (end of) 19th century rock garden of meandering walks, tunnels and grottos built of Pulhamite. This artificial stone is made from Roman cement, crag and beach shingle. The GeoSuffolk team has just visited this important geo-site to review our site record. The seaward side can be viewed from the beach but better still treat yourself to a guided tour of the Manor and gardens - £15 including tea and cake. See [www.bawdseymanor.co.uk](http://www.bawdseymanor.co.uk) CM

### Salt Solutions

The recent cold weather has seen much rock salt used in gritting roads. In the East Anglian Daily Times March 25th Suffolk County Council cabinet member Guy McGregor informed us that the Council had 'sourced our grit from Cleveland' by boat. Presumably this was from the Boulby mine which is better known for its Permian age potash (potassium) salts but also produces some rock salt (sodium chloride).

The UK's biggest rock salt (of Triassic age) mine is at Winsford, Cheshire; Triassic salt also comes from Co.Antrim. In 1963 Ipswich coal and salt merchants Mellonie and Goulder imported 3000 tons of salt from Tunisia. Late Victorian and Edwardian directories tell us that vessels delivered salt to Ipswich from Nantwich, Cheshire (Triassic rock salt) for cattle licks and preservative, and also Newcastle salt (from evaporation pans on the Tyne estuary) for preservative purposes. F A Christie was a salt and coal merchant in Salthouse Street in Ipswich. RM

### Suffolk Show 2010

This year's Suffolk Show, at Trinity Park near Ipswich, will be on June 2nd and 3rd. There are always items of geological interest to see. Needham Chalks Limited of Needham Market, producers of agricultural lime and knapped flint for building, usually have a display of photographs of their quarries, and sometimes have Paramoudra flints (from Caistor-by-Norwich) for sale as 'planters for patios'. West Suffolk College usually have working demonstrations by students – flint knapping and bricklaying (bricks made of Marks Tey ancient lake clay). Stone masons are usually represented – in 2009 it was Wrights of Cemetery Road, Ipswich – with some wonderful rocks from around the world. RM

### Snippets

- A *Flora of Suffolk* - the recent Holocene (living) flora of our county by Martin Sanford (SBRC) and Richard Fisk. Highly recommended. £40 from SBRC c/o Ipswich Museum, High Street, Ipswich IP1 3QH.
- The EADT January 1st had a photograph of an excellent model stegosaurid dinosaur made by young people of Bury St Edmunds Supporting Contemporary Adolescence group.
- Community News, EADT March 17th reported Horry Parsons, project manager for the new Millennium Tower on the Cathedral at Bury St Edmunds, gave a talk on his work to the Stanningfield District Agricultural Club. Barnack and Clipsham stone and Warwick Pepper bricks were the geological interest. RM