

# GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

Welcome to issue no.34 of GeoSuffolk Times – for those who value Suffolk's Geodiversity. Caroline Markham 21.10.17 [www.geosuffolk.co.uk](http://www.geosuffolk.co.uk)

## 'Holywells Park' Ipswich

Gainsborough's House at Sudbury recently published a leaflet 'The Landscape of Gainsborough and Constable' which features the painting 'Holywells Park, Ipswich by Thomas Gainsborough' in the Ipswich Borough Council collection, stating that Thomas Cobbold commissioned Gainsborough to paint it.

The painting was identified as 'Holywells Park' by Suffolk historian Norman Scarfe at Agnew's in Old Bond Street in 1991, and then acquired by Ipswich Museum. I and another science member of staff at the museum compared its topography with the OS map, and it certainly did not appear to be Ipswich.

In 2009 Phillip Mould, in 'Tom will be a Genius' stated that it was 'almost certainly commissioned by John Cobbold'. And so in the leaflet, hypotheses became presented as facts....  
Bob Markham (RM)

## 'The Westleton Beds'

The Proceedings of the Geologists' Association has published 'Tidal-inlets and gravel deposition during the late Norwich Crag of north-eastern Suffolk' by Howard Mottram (PGA 128, 2017). Howard tackles the origins of these large gravels, present in the cliffs at Dunwich and Minsmere, producing evidence of their deposition between offshore barrier-islands. He also establishes that they are separate from and younger than the clays at Easton Bavents. CM

*Starting your Christmas shopping early? Check out the fabulous chocolate fossils at the Edible Museum website <https://www.ediblemuseum.com/> – based at Sible Hedingham in Essex.*

**Ipswich Museum's 'Ask the Expert'** on October 25th is a 'show and tell' event. GeoSuffolk members will be on hand from 10.30 – 3 to identify and explain your geological treasures.

[https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/default/files/whats\\_on\\_oct-march\\_web.pdf](https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/default/files/whats_on_oct-march_web.pdf)

GeoSuffolk is on Facebook and Twitter – find us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/GeoSuffolk>

<https://twitter.com/geosuffolk>

## Thorpeness to Sizewell

GeoSuffolk was at Thorpeness with the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB team last week. Standing on the 'ness', the sloping vegetated cliff to the north in front of Sizewell power station contrasted well with Thorpeness cliff to the south, which is very active and unstable at the moment (see our new header photo above). Although the net movement of shingle along Suffolk shores is southwards our 'nesses', curiously, move northwards as material moving south is accreted on their northern flank whilst their southern flank loses material to the south. The Sizewell C Environmental Report (2012) states that whilst 11,000m<sup>3</sup> pa of shingle passes through Minsmere from the north, only 300m<sup>3</sup> pa moves south past Thorpeness 'ness'. So the Sizewell power stations have good natural protection – enhanced by the stability of the 'ness', which appears to be stationary at present (see 'Where is Thorpe Ness?' by C Markham, White Admiral Spring 2013

<http://www.sns.org.uk/files/pdfs/wad84.pdf>).

An offshore outcrop of the Coralline Crag is holding the 'ness' in place and eroded fragments of this are to be found along Thorpeness and Sizewell beaches. GeoSuffolk was in Sizewell earlier in the summer helping with a Suffolk Wildlife Trust holiday activity for children. They found several Coralline Crag blocks and a variety of interesting flints, including an *Inoceramus* fossil (below). CM



### Flint and Paramoudras

Recent 'Opinion Articles' in the Magazine of the GA interpret flint as forming on the sea floor and the paramoudras (massive barrel-like flints) in the Chalk at West Runton, Norfolk (and elsewhere) as a Cretaceous sponge reef. Interpretation of paramoudras as of 'marine worm burrow' origin by other authors is based on the presence of a thin green tube in the centre of the chalk inside the flint cylinder, as noted by Robert Fitch of Norwich in specimens at Horstead, in the Magazine of Natural History, new series, 1840. As a trace fossil, these structures have been named *Bathichnus paramoudrae*. Also to be looked for should be Cretaceous calcitic shells, e.g. oysters, worm tubes, adhering to (not enclosed within) flint in the Chalk for evidence of its sea-floor origin. I have not seen any. For more on paramoudras see GeoSuffolk Note 32.

<http://geosuffolk.co.uk/index.php/archive/geosuffolk-notes>

RM

### Sutton Revisited

GeoSuffolk's stand at the GA Festival of Geology at University College London on November 4th this year (<https://geologistsassociation.org.uk/festival.html>) gives an update on our wonderful SSSI at Rockhall Wood, Sutton. An article on this geosite by GeoSuffolk's Barry Hall has just been published in Earth Heritage Magazine no.48, <http://www.earthheritage.org.uk/>. 'Clearing the Craggs at Sutton Knoll' chronicles the clearance of the Coralline Crag exposures at the SSSI by GeoSuffolk over the last 13 years to create what must now be one of the finest soft rock exposures in the south of England.

Sutton Knoll is of course home to the Pliocene Forest and Barry's account of the creation of this imaginative interpretation project has just been put onto our web site <http://geosuffolk.co.uk/index.php/pliocene-forest>. 'Life, the Universe and Sutton Knoll', which details the first three years of the Pliocene Forest, is the first of the articles in Dr Roger Dixon's 'A Celebration of Suffolk Geology' (2012) we have put online. Watch this space....

Sutton is in the SCH AONB and we are working towards a 'work party' day with them on December 5th to tidy up the Chicken pit area of Sutton Knoll. Keep an eye on the SCH AONB web site <http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/volunteering/volunteering-learn-more/work-parties/> for a chance to enrol to work on this flagship geosite.

CM



### A Seismic Event in Suffolk

On 04.10.17 an RAF Quick Reaction Alert Typhoon fighter crossed Suffolk at supersonic speed to intercept a passenger jet after a security alert. The sonic boom caused houses to shake and the earth movements (localised to Suffolk) were detected and recorded by the British Geological Survey's seismic station at Elmsett, Suffolk at 08.37. You can view the exterior of the station (don't get too excited!) on [http://www.earthquakes.bgs.ac.uk/monitoring/stationbook\\_elms.html](http://www.earthquakes.bgs.ac.uk/monitoring/stationbook_elms.html) and there is a real-time seismograph. RM

### Ipswich Rocks

'Portland Comes to Suffolk' is an article by Gill Hackman in the Ipswich Society October Newsletter (<http://www.ipswichsociety.org.uk/newsletter/newsletter-october-2017-issue-209/>). Gill starts her Portland Stone spotting expedition with the Town Hall and Corn Exchange in Ipswich, paying much attention to the fine 1870s Post Office building (pictured below). Ipswich is the star turn, but Gill finds Portland Stone in Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds too. A good read.



Photo: [www.ipswich-lettering.co.uk/cornhill.html](http://www.ipswich-lettering.co.uk/cornhill.html)

Ipswich Museum has a fine reference collection of rocks and on August 16th GeoSuffolk showcased 'Real Granites' from the collection at a 'Geologist in the Gallery' session. These ranged from Shap granite from Westmorland, known to us all by its large pink phenocrysts, to the white biotite granite of Machu Picchu in Peru. And behind the scenes, GeoSuffolk members have been honing their identification skills helping to sort rocks of all sorts as the Museum prepares for better access.

CM

### Lot 410: Dinosaur Egg

Lot 410 in Bishop & Miller's (auctioneers and valuers of Stowmarket) sale on 07.10.17 was advertised as a fossil dinosaur egg found on the Suffolk coast in 2013. At 21cm in length the estimated auction interest was £500-£700. The photo of the item online showed it to be, in my opinion, a rounded but internally quite fractured flint, not a dinosaur egg – but then it was listed in the category 'Works of Art'! It sold for £1,150.

RM