GeoSuffolk Times

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Welcome to issue number 24 of our GeoSuffolk Times - for those who value Suffolk's geodiversity. Caroline Markham 08.04.15
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A Tale of Three Sarsens

The work of sculptor Bernard Reynolds (1915-1997) is being celebrated in an exhibition by his family at the Waterfront Gallery, University Campus Suffolk, Ipswich (until 16th May). One very geological piece is, '*32. Parrot Head. Clipsham Stone.1958*.'

In 1973 sarsen stones (large boulders of hard sandstone, often with a characteristic mammilated surface) were, as part of an Ipswich flood protection scheme, removed from below the river bed between Stoke Bridge and Princes Street Bridge in Ipswich and placed on ground beside the old yeast works (now gone) just up river from Stoke Bridge. As part of a landscaping scheme by the Ipswich Society the three largest sarsens were arranged by Bernard Reynolds, with two on end and well dug in, in what is now Stoke Bridge Pocket Park – a fine example of local sculptor and local natural material. And so began a new chapter in the history of Ipswich's biggest stones, forming an impressive work of art. They soon attracted attention. Local 'artists' have spray-painted them – is this street art or vandalism? One has suffered chemically, apparently from urine and another has suffered mechanical distressing. Is this a heritage crime and what can be done about it?

- Some of the graffiti has been removed or painted over, some is of a sensitive nature (recording the death of a young man) but surfaces have been permanently damaged.
- The adjacent skatepark tells us 'This park has a zero tolerance on graffiti, which is an act of vandalism'. Legal action can be taken in relation to damage and anti-social behaviour – it is possible to make a victim personal statement with a complimentary heritage crime impact statement.
- GeoSuffolk has designated these sarsens a County Geodiversity Site.
- Education is part of the answer - Ipswich Borough's Greenways initiative has provided an information panel. The seat in front of the stones needs moving and the artwork needs better publicity. Meanwhile the sarsens stand tall and Ipswich should be proud of them (and give a little tlc). Bob Markham (RM)

Glaciotectonics

Our 1933 photograph of the Hadleigh Road Railway cutting, Ipswich (GeoSuffolk Times 18 October 2013) inspired GeoSuffolk member Howard Mottram to research the work of local geologist George Slater. The result, *Unravelling the Glacial Geology of the Ipswich Area* is published in the Transactions of the Suffolk Naturalists' Society, *Suffolk Natural History Vol. 50 (2014)*. http://www.suffolkbrc.org.uk/node/174
Slater's work, recording and eventually (after a trip to Spitzbergen to see glaciers in action) explaining glacial tectonics in the Ipswich area, is covered in detail – with colour plates of his interpretive sketches alongside photographs taken by another local geologist Percy Boswell. (See page 2 for more on Percy Boswell.) Meanwhile, here is another archive photograph of the Hadleigh Road cutting. CM

Dunwich Heath Cliff

In the same edition of *Suffolk Natural History*, Howard Mottram also has an article, *The cliff against Dunwich Heath – its further importance in our understanding of the Norwich Crag sands and gravels*. In this he uses reconstruction of the eroded cliff top as a device to enable relative dating of the Norwich Crag/Wroxham Crag gravels here. CM

Addendum to GeoSuffolk Times no 23, *New Plaques at Walton and Playford* - the dates for Samuel Durrant Wall are 1880-1977.

Suffolk Walking Festival

Join GeoSuffolk and the Touching the Tide team for a *Beachcombing for Beginners* walk at Felixstowe May 15th and 22nd.
http://www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk/walks/category/coastal-walks

News: Geodiversity Providers and Owners

Searles Wood Grave, Melton Old Church

On March 5th 2015 GeoSuffolk teamed up with Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB volunteers and members of the Melton Old Church Society to clear the last resting place of two eminent Victorian geologists, father and son, both named Searles Valentine Wood. Their memorials, which testify their geological credentials, are inside the church. SV Wood senior was author of the first monograph of the Palaeontographical Society: *The Crag Mollusca, Volume 1, Univalves.* S V Wood junior co-produced the first drift map of East Anglia, preceding that of the British Geological Survey. The brambles were so high, we had to establish the location of the grave using the churchyard plan and the two adjacent graves and our labours revealed just a shallow hollow in the ground - giving our Chairman pause for thought….. CM

Eggs and Egyptians at Ipswich Museum

GeoSuffolk organised geo-exhibits as part of the very well-attended Easter 2015 events at Ipswich Museum. We talked to lots of adults and children – these two labels are a taster of our work.

- Crag from Newbourne. This shelly sand was once much used by poultry keepers, egg shells benefitting from the calcium carbonate of the fossil shells. In Victorian times Ipswich men used to go to a pit at the Lairs (Gainsborough Lane) to get bags of crag for their chickens. Jimmy Frost, known as Crag-O, used to dig up crag to sell to people in the town.
- Aswan Granite. This microscope slide feature rock from near the Great Dam at Aswan. It is a granite containing quartz, microcline feldspar, biotite and hornblende. A fine block of this granite, showing its red-pink colour in mass, may be seen in Ipswich Transport Museum, commemorating the involvement of former Ipswich engineering firm Ransome & Rapier in construction of the Dam. RM

1915: The War Continues

Prior to the outbreak of war in 1914 British firms had depended on Germany for imported glass, and also the material to make it, for their optical glass industry. By 1915 war conditions made the position of the glass-making industry in Britain very serious – glass was needed for telescopes, binoculars and camera lenses. Dr Percy G H Boswell, Demonstrator in Engineering Geology at Imperial College in London, was appointed Scientific Advisor (Geological) to the Ministry of Munitions from 1915-1919. (He was born in Woodbridge in 1886 and was educated at Ipswich Municipal Secondary School - later Northgate Grammar School for Boys, where a school house was named after him). During the war, home resources needed developing and Percy Boswell undertook exhaustive studies of British sands suitable for glass making, including some from a pit at Sproughton. Very quickly West Norfolk supplied the foundry moulding sand used in the manufacture of high temperature steel castings. Germany had the world potash monopoly in Alsace, and in his connection with the Potash Production Department of the Ministry of Munitions, the first German literature that Percy Boswell read on potash production mentioned that the earliest series of experiments on the value of potash for agriculture were conducted at Bramford! Percy Boswell was appointed to the Chair of Geology at Liverpool University in 1918. RM

Geo-Anglia

- April 17th-19th, Cambridge University Institute of Continuing Education has a weekend geology course, *Evolution and the fossil record* taught by Dr Peter Sheldon. See www.ice.cam.ac.uk/Fossils
- The new programme of North Norfolk coastal walks led by geologist Martin Warren, is online at www.northfolk.org.uk/geology.html
- Peter Minter's much awaited book about his brickmaking business, Bulmer Brick and Tile Co., Essex, has been published. Priced at £30, *The Brickmaker's Tale* is large format, 122 pages, with beautiful coloured photographs – including Harwich Formation exposures. It is available from the Kestrel Bookshop in Sudbury, or email bbt@bulmerbrickandtile.co.uk .
- A first edition copy of Charles Darwin's 1859 *On the Origin of Species*, given to Revd. John Gunn of Irstead, Norfolk, by (and signed by) his nephew Sir Joseph Hooker (botanist who was born at Halesworth) was sold at auction by Bonhams of London on March 25th 2015 for £98,500. The book was part of a collection assembled by the late Manchester physician Hugh Selbourne. John Gunn died on May 28th 1890 and his collection of Cromer Forest Bed fossil mammals is in Norwich Museum. RM