

GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

Newsletter 27

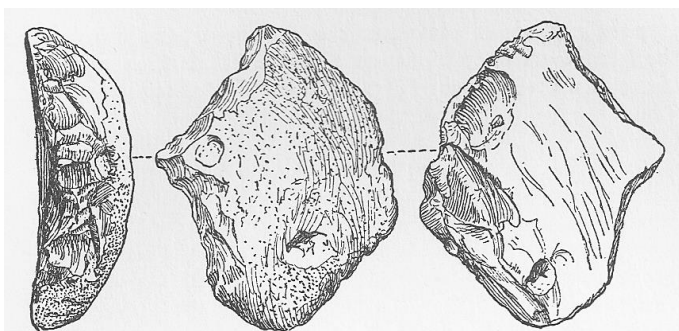
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Welcome to issue no.27 of GeoSuffolk Times – for those who value Suffolk's Geodiversity. Caroline Markham 17.01.16 www.geosuffolk.co.uk

Stony Dawn?

".....Pointless.....Debate....." commented two archaeologists on Ray Lankester and James Reid Moir's Crag flints in *The British Palaeolithic*, Routledge, 2012. The flints were excavated from Pliocene crag deposits, and claimed to be the earliest work of prehistoric peoples. There were objectors to these claims, and although the Ipswich duo won many of the battles, the modern archaeological establishment has claimed victory in the war. Lying defeated and hidden for many years - we showed some of these Pliocene survivors at Ipswich Museum's *Prehistory Day* on 17 October 2015. There was a 'Bramfordian Stage' flint from the Crag of Dales Road, Ipswich, showing re-flaking clearly against its stained and patinated original flaking. Other specimens were from Bramford itself and Thorington Hall, Wherstead. These flints were quite a surprise to visiting geologists, who found the flaking of more than ordinary interest. So do such flints lead us to a stony dawn beneath the Suffolk Crag? Perhaps not, but often re-flaked, and widespread in the 'stone beds' of the crags, they remain fascinating geological specimens. Debate need not be pointless!

Bob Markham (RM)



A Reid Moir Crag Flint from Bramford

Do you need more information on your geological specimens? Bring them to Ipswich Museum's *Show and Tell*, 11-3, February 17th or Colchester Natural History Museum's *Fantastic Fossils*, 10-12 and 2-4, February 18th. GeoSuffolk will be there to answer your questions.

GeoSuffolk is on Facebook and Twitter – find us at: <https://www.facebook.com/GeoSuffolk>
<https://twitter.com/geosuffolk>

Notes from the Pliocene Forest

- The first (modern) bird has nested here. There is a photograph by Judith Hall in the December 2015 Magazine of the Geologists' Association, showing Roger Dixon, the Coulter Pine (sponsored by the Friends of the Sedgwick Museum), but not the chaffinch!
- The large flint in the *Betulifolia* compound comes from a grave digging at Butley by Martin Hunt, and now forms a companion to the Black Poplar – a cutting struck from the tree at Butley
- GeoSuffolk joins in with Sutton Village's Gardens Open Day, opening the Pliocene Forest to the public at this event. This year it is on June 12th – please do visit us and bring your friends. There will be more information in the April GeoSuffolk Times. RM

The Geologists' Association Festival of Geology

Early in November 2015 GeoSuffolk used its stand at the GA Festival in London to launch its leaflet *In Breckland with GeoSuffolk*. The display included poster-sized air photos from 1976 showing periglacial patterned ground in Suffolk at Thetford Heath SSSI, at Weather Heath near Elveden, at Knettishall Heath and at Barnham. This last site also showed classic 'hummock and hollow' topography as in WM Corbett's *Breckland Forest Soils* (1973) - a photo of his exemplar site near Hockham, Norfolk was on display. Along with a specimen of clunch (a hard variety of Chalk used as a building stone) there was a poster on the use of this in West Suffolk buildings.

Several copies of Professor Richard West's new book *Evolution of a Breckland Landscape* were sold. It is available from the Suffolk Naturalists' Society (£10) <http://www.sns.org.uk/pages/books.shtml>

In Breckland with GeoSuffolk is available on the web. <http://www.geosuffolk.co.uk/leaflets/Breckland%20Leaflet%202%20lr.pdf>

CM

The Father of Australian Geology – a Suffolk Man

The Revd. William Branwhite Clarke, FRS, FGS (1798-1878; WBC) was born in East Bergholt and educated at the Grammar School at Dedham near Colchester, where his father was a master and where John Constable (1776-1837) was a famous old boy. Then at Jesus College, Cambridge, his studies ranged from the classics, through literature to geology, an interest stimulated by Adam Sedgwick's lectures. Soon after graduating in 1823, WBC was ordained as an Anglican priest and ministered in several parishes in Suffolk and elsewhere. He also taught for a year or so at his old school and wrote and poetry for magazines. In 1832 he married Maria Moreton at Aldersgate in London. Clarke's geological interests also continued; he wrote several short notes for magazines, became a Fellow of the Geological Society of London in 1826 and in 1837 published in that society's Transactions a major paper *On the Geological Structure and Phenomena of Suffolk*. In 1839, after a severe bout of rheumatic fever, WBC, with his wife and three children took a convalescent sea voyage... to Australia?! In the event they never returned. WBC's geological interests were re-stimulated during his appointments to parishes across New South Wales and he soon became the government's chief advisor on the extensive gold and coal deposits. At the same time he was also proved right in a bitter biostratigraphical row over the age of those coal deposits.

William Branwhite Clarke gives his name to a college in Kellyville, Sydney and his life, achievements and geological publications are extensively documented, especially on Australian websites such as that by Ann Mozley in the Australian Dictionary of Biography. <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/clarke-william-branwhite-3228> Peter Banham

Aldeburgh Brick Pit

In November 2015 GeoSuffolk (RM) met with Natural England to assess the SSSI at the disused Aldeburgh Brick Pit. This has an excellent Crag stratigraphy from the Coralline Crag up through Scrobicularia Crag and Chillesford Crag to the Chillesford Clay, which was quarried for the bricks. Above this are sands and gravels – possibly Kesgrave Gravel. The disused pit has proposals for residential development. CM <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx?startTopic=Designations&activelayer=sssiindex&query=HYPERLINK%3D%271002444%27>



Wet Feet Geology and More

- Hardstone aggregate - granite and shale, is being imported from Karmos, Norway, to Ipswich Dock (Griffin Wharf) and from there being transported by DB Schenker Rail UK Ltd to United Aspalt at Theale, Berkshire (Ipswich Transport Journal, December 2015). RM
 - An article by John Norman of the Ipswich Society in the East Anglian Daily Times 05.12.15 told the story of using septaria for the local cement industry. John says “the arrival of large (foreign) rocks as an erosion defence on the coast at Cobbold's Point in Felixstowe is ironic in that these stones are simply replacing those (septaria) removed 150 years ago.” RM
 - Seepages at the Red Crag – London Clay junction have been very active in Christchurch Park, Ipswich this month. Soggy ground, running water and standing water reach for over 125 metres north of the Wilderness Pond – excellent geology!
 - Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB volunteers are helping GeoSuffolk to clear access to the Red Crag SSSI at Butley Neutral Farm on February 4th. Contact SCH AONB if you wish to join us. <http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/assets/Get-Involved/Volunteering/Work-Parties/SCH-Vol-Tasks-Poster-Oct-15-to-Mar-16.pdf>
- GeoAnglia
- Remember the sacks of flint beach pebbles at Sheringham sea-front in the 1960s, ready to be transported to Midlands manufactories? This analysis of flint pebbles from the beach by Grose & Stocker, Ltd., Plaster & Potters' Merchants of Stoke on Trent in 1933 was sent to J Reid Moir of Ipswich: silica (SiO₂) 98.35%, alumina (Al₂O₃) 0.20%, ferric oxide (Fe₂O₃) 0.15%, lime (CaO) 0.50%, magnesia (MgO) 0.20%, potash (K₂O) traces, soda (Na₂O) traces, loss on ignition 0.60%.
 - The Essex Gem and Mineral Show is on February 20th, 10am – 4pm at North Romford Community Centre. See <http://www.erms.org/annual-show.html> for more information – an excellent day out.
 - One of the demonstration flint panels by William Carter (1857-1904) of Brandon, from the former Brandon Library, is featured in the 'Flint Rock' exhibition at the Ancient House Museum, Thetford - until October 2016.

A *Microfossil and Recent Microfauna* Course will be held at the Medina Valley Centre, Isle of Wight, 25-28 July 2016. Led by Dr Adrian Rundle (Natural History Museum, London), there will be talks, lab sessions and coastal field trips. info@medinavalleycentre.org.uk