

# GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

Welcome to issue no.28 of GeoSuffolk Times – for those who value Suffolk's Geodiversity. Caroline Markham 26.04.16 [www.geosuffolk.co.uk](http://www.geosuffolk.co.uk)

## Neglected Nature

A recent poll for The Wildlife Trusts reports that people in urban areas lack green space and are separated from nature, with adverse effects on their well-being. However geologists can revel in nature, even in heavily urbanized areas such as Ipswich Cornhill, for here you can see things Jurassic - of the time of giant reptiles and ammonites. Start at the wall of the NatWest Bank, behind the seats – here fossil oysters stand proud of the Portland Stone after years of weathering. Then to the Town Hall with both Portland Stone and (slightly darker) Bath Stone. And did Charles Dickens (see *Bleak House*) perhaps imagine a *Megalosaurus* walking along Tavern Street to the Great White Horse Hotel? No wonder geologists have more fun and are close to nature wherever they are. Bob Markham (RM)

## Museum Identification Days

GeoSuffolk members have been identifying specimens brought in by the public to special days held at (and by) Ipswich Museum and Colchester Natural History Museum, late 2015 and early 2016. We have seen a pliosaur tooth from Pakefield; a polished flint axe from Walton-on-the-Naze; a thermally fractured ('pot-lid') flint from Earl Soham; part of an irregular echinoid from the Algarve (Portugal); a double-valved *Inoceramus* in flint from Dunwich and more. And we met the daughter of Gary Mayne, the stonemason responsible for the stone plinth for Sir Alf Ramsey's statue in Ipswich (look at the back of the plinth to see his name). RM

The next Ipswich Museum 'Show and Tell' is on Wednesday June 1st – GeoSuffolk will be there from 10.30 – 3pm.

## Pliocene Forest Open Day June 26th

GeoSuffolk's Pliocene Forest at Rockhall Wood SSSI, Sutton is part of Sutton Village Gardens Open Day – Sunday June 26th 12-5pm. Programmes from Sutton Memorial Hall. <http://sutton.onesuffolk.net/>

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

## Knettishall Heath CGS

The Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Knettishall Heath reserve has the most extensive area of periglacial patterned ground in the Breckland. On April 12th their excavator was used, under GeoSuffolk direction, to uncover one of the sandy 'stripes' in the Chalk on the heathland. A furrow in the Chalk was revealed – just over a metre deep and about 6m wide – filled with sand containing flints. The Chalk beneath was heavily brecciated, indicating formation under extremely cold conditions, and the base of the sand was convoluted and disturbed. This fine exposure (see below) has been left open and is well worth a visit - it is at TL 945804 on open access land, (but don't wander too far into the adjacent area where skylarks nest). CM



## Neutral Farm Pit SSSI

GeoSuffolk joined with Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB volunteers at Neutral Farm Pit SSSI on February 4th. We lopped the brambles, dug out the talus and brushed the resulting exposure on the south face of this SSSI, designated for its 'Butleyan' Red Crag. A cross-bedded unit was revealed at the base, contrasting with the shell bed above where we found many of the fossil bivalves this deposit is noted for – *Macoma obliqua*, *Spisula constricta* and *Chlamys opercularis*. The discovery of the gastropod *Boreotrophon clathratum* gave an indication of the cooler water aspect of this 'Butleyan' fauna, which dates at about 2.75 million years ago. CM

### Rockhall Wood SSSI, Sutton

The unconsolidated lithology of the Craggs means the exposures need constant attention and the SSSI at Sutton Knoll is no exception. GeoSuffolk was thrilled with the turnout at the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB volunteers day on March 3<sup>rd</sup> - boosted by Environment Agency volunteers we numbered thirteen altogether. In the morning, two Coralline Crag faces – one with excellent stratigraphy and the other showing the junction with the Red Crag - were refreshed on the east side of the knoll. After lunch we worked on the Coralline Crag/Red Crag unconformity on the south side of the knoll, revealing the honey-coloured Crag exposures. All this by hand – thank you everyone!



On March 31st GeoSuffolk employed a digger to extend the north face of the SSSI. This shows the stratigraphy of the Coralline Crag and can easily be viewed from the public footpath - where there is an interpretive panel - so we are particularly keen to keep it in good order.

The entire site is on private land but, if you would like to visit, GeoSuffolk is joining in with Sutton Village Gardens Open Day on June 26th to show its 'Pliocene Forest' on the SSSI to the public. The Coralline Crag contains fossil pollen and our 'forest' has living representatives of genera identified by this pollen – 150+ trees, including Giant Sequoias, Cypress, Pines, Firs, Oaks, Walnuts, Willows, Ash and Birches. This imaginative interpretation was opened in 2010 and many of the trees are quite a good size now and starting to 'paint the sky'. CM

### Red Crag

If you like our new GeoSuffolk Times header photo of Red Crag at Buckanay Farm pit SSSI, June's photograph in the 2016 Geologists' Association Calendar is a splendid view of the same pit by Ian Mercer. CM



### In the News

- Geosphere Environmental Consultancy of Brightwell has been using a catamaran-mounted drilling rig, retrofitted with legs (rather than a standard jack-up platform) in the Harwich Harbour area. East Anglian Daily Times 09.02.16.
- The EADT 07.04.16 reported (from the Australian National University) a 'fall-out' of radioactive iron-60 between 3.2 and 1.7 million years ago, interpreted as from supernovae. Time to look in the Red and Norwich Craggs?
- The historical importance of our local London Clay is featured in the EADT 16.04.16 - 'Clay was the foundation of town as commercial centre', by John Norman of the Ipswich Society. RM

### GeoAnglia

- The new British Geological Survey 'East Anglia British Regional Geology' was published earlier this year – an excellent new overview of the region, but keep your old edition which has more plates of fossils. See [http://www.ukge.com/en-gb/Books/BGS-Regional-Geology\\_c-p-0-0-18-315.aspx](http://www.ukge.com/en-gb/Books/BGS-Regional-Geology_c-p-0-0-18-315.aspx)
- The Science Festival at Norwich Cathedral 6-18 March 2016 included an exhibition 'Evolution - Faith in a Changing World'. Amongst the specimens on show were some bones from the West Runton mammoth (courtesy Norfolk Museums Service), and a piece of 'Beetroot Stone' on the stand of the Guild of St Stephen & St George, training apprentice stonemasons at St Clements Church, Colegate, Norwich. RM

### Les Orgues d'Ille sur Tet

We recently visited this wonderful and protected site in the Languedoc Roussillon Region of southern France. Here are hoodoos – naturally sculpted sand columns 10-12 metres high, partly protected from further erosion by covers of hard rock. But why mention them in GeoSuffolk Times? The sands were deposited between 5 to 3 million years ago (and thus contemporary with Suffolk's unique Coralline Crag) and the cover rock is 1.8 million years old (Norwich Crag times). Another experience of the Pliocene world! There is car parking and a visitor centre. RM

### Bridge Wood CGS

The SWT is holding a bioblitz at the Orwell Country Park near Ipswich on June 12th. Visit us at the GeoSuffolk stand and join our landslip walk.