

GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

Welcome to issue no.30 of GeoSuffolk Times – for those who value Suffolk’s Geodiversity. Caroline Markham 14.10.16 www.geosuffolk.co.uk

Military Impact Features

Are those really pingos, dolines or meteor craters? Those of us who are old enough will remember the WWII German bomb craters on Bixley Heath, Ipswich. And those of us who have visited the Ministry of Defense’s military training area at Stanford, Norfolk will have seen (from a safe distance) the impact area where the Army fire live grenades and mortar bombs. The East Anglian Daily Times 29.04.16 reported a ‘depression’ caused by a sonic incident during military low flying. A couple of years ago we witnessed (from the roadway) an Apache helicopter hovering only a few feet above the surface of a field at Butley. A shallow circular hollow was soon formed, with ramparts of soil and sand thrown up by the powerful downdraft – an anthro-landform?
Bob Markham (RM)

Blue Plaques in Ipswich

On October 8th four new blue plaques, all for women, were unveiled in Ipswich. Among them was one for Nina Layard 1853 -1935, founder member and first woman President of the Society of Antiquarians in London. Her work in Ipswich included excavations of the interglacial beds at Stoke Tunnel and the Valley brickyard Foxhall Road. CM

<http://www.ipswichsociety.org.uk/blue-plaques/>

The Leonard Squirrel retrospective is in the Wolsey Art Gallery at Christchurch Mansion until January 2017. Ipswich Borough Council’s collection of this local artist (who also has a blue plaque) includes *Claydon Chalk Pits* – could this be the initial excavation at the Great Blakenham cement works? RM

The GA Festival Of Geology - Saturday November 5th at University College, Gower Street, London – is open and free to all. There are lectures (including one by Ian Stewart); a discovery room for youngsters; and exhibitors from the world of geology, including the GeoSuffolk stand. See you there! (Euston Square is the nearest underground station.)

<http://www.geologistsassociation.org.uk/festival.html>

GeoSuffolk is on Facebook and Twitter – find us at:

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

<https://twitter.com/geosuffolk>

Ipswich Flood Barrier

A flood barrier is currently being constructed across the tidal New Cut in Ipswich. As part of the scheme electric power cables had to be relocated, deeper than before, under the lockgate and now sit in a tunnel in Chalk, with ‘poor chalk’, sand and gravel and made ground above them. Thanks to John Norman (Chartered Institute of Building), Andrew Osborne (Project Manager) and Senior Engineer Ruth Snowden for information. RM

Ipswich Geological Group 1966-1996

“Saturday 2 February 1973. Visit to the East Suffolk County Highways Department’s Site Investigation Laboratory, 425 Wherstead Road, Ipswich, a short distance south of the ‘Black’ (railway) Bridge, meeting there at 10am. Members will be shown soil survey procedures: chemical and physical analysis of soft rocks; analysis of road cuttings, embankment construction and foundation loads.” You may have missed this Ipswich Geological Group (a precursor of GeoSuffolk) meeting, but you can see more on GeoSuffolk’s stand at this year’s Geologists’ Association Festival of Geology, celebrating 50 years since the start of the IGG in 1966.



IGG Sieving Red Crag at Landseer Park site, Ipswich on April 21st 1968 - we found a Pliocene beaver tooth. Fossil cowry shells floated in the spring water which was later piped and covered by Ipswich Council. RM

Clunch in West Suffolk

Roger Dixon's article of this title in Suffolk Naturalists' Society's White Admiral no. 93 Spring 2016 is online now at <http://www.sns.org.uk/files/pdfs/wad93.pdf> . Clunch is a Chalk building stone and there is plenty of it in West Suffolk - with photographs of clunch in buildings in Kentford, Lakenheath, Santon Downham and Brandon. CM

Heritage Weekend at Ipswich Crematorium

The Masonry Department of IBC's Bereavement Services deals with memorials, including resurfacing of stone and redressing of lettering, and has been working on the Cenotaph in Christchurch Park this year. Stonemason David Graves was on duty on September 10th and visitors could try letter cutting in stone. Welsh slate and marble take good lettering, alabaster is difficult (it is soft), and most people choose 'black granite' or 'South African granite' for their memorials. Incidentally, the catafalque in the West Chapel, opened in 1928, was made from polished Ancaster stone with Pavonazzo marble panels (a few changes were made in 1972). RM
Editor's note: GeoSuffolk had a good day at Blackfriars on the Sunday of Heritage Weekend (see GeoSuffolk Times no 29), showing probably 150+ visitors the London Clay septaria building stones. CM

Neutral Farm Pit SSSI Revisited

We went back for more! After the success of our day refreshing the Red Crag exposures at this SSSI in Butley last February (see GeoSuffolk Times no.28), GeoSuffolk and Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB volunteers cleared the east face by hand on September 27th. It was full of the fossil molluscs characteristic of the Red Crag - we found many bivalves and several gastropod species, including several well-preserved *Neptunea contraria*. The newly re-exposed east face complements the south face refreshed previously. Understanding the structures in sedimentary rocks is an exercise in 3 dimensions and two faces at right-angles are a real bonus at this SSSI. A big thank you to SCH AONB. CM



The Suffolk Archaeology CIC

This Community Interest Company, former Field Team of Suffolk County Council held an Open Day at their Needham Market base on 30.07.16. Items of interest included fragments of millstone cut from Rhenish lava stone found at an excavation at Rougham, and hammerscale – produced during smithing when the oxidised surface of a hot object is struck – from Flixton. RM

Summer in the Geology Gallery

GeoSuffolk had three splendid 'Geologist in the Gallery' days in Ipswich Museum during August, showing visitors specimens not on public display. On August 2nd people could say 'hello' to straight 'nautiloids' with names (including *Temperoceras* and *Rayonnoceras*) to rival the dinosaurs. We wondered whether our ancestors would have been afraid of these Palaeozoic carnivores. On the 16th visitors could try their strength on ductile and brittle rock structures (no one managed to replicate deeper crustal processes, but we made up for it by showing flexible sandstone from India). On the 30th we showed some assayed ores which had been exhibited in the Queensland Court at the Great Britain (Colonial) Exhibition at Earl's Court, London in 1899. After weighing it and looking up the market price of gold that day, we estimated that one specimen from Kiikivan contained about £3 worth of gold.

We identified visitors' specimens at the 'Show and Tell' on August 10th, plus the 'Stars of the Geology Gallery' trail, including the oldest pig (a tooth about 3 million years old) in town - Ipswich had numerous painted 'pigs' in town during the summer, raising money for the Hospice. Many thanks to the Ipswich Museum staff for their support. The next 'Show and Tell' is on October 26th 11am-3pm – bring your geological treasures to show us. RM

Visit the Ichthyosaur

The nearly complete skeleton of an Ichthyosaur from the Lias of Street, Somerset, was presented to Ipswich Museum by Alderman Edward Packard in 1880. It was built into the wall of the (then) new Museum, on the landing at the top of the main staircase. Large numbers of reptile skeletons, bones and teeth were found when the deposit was used in the manufacture of hydraulic cement. The Lias was also quarried for paving slabs, which were very well seen in the pavements of nearby Glastonbury. RM