

Welcome to GeoSuffolk Times, keeping you up-to-date with geodiversity news, achievements and activities in Suffolk. Please pass it on to anyone who may be interested.

Caroline Markham

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England Lost, Travertine Lost

If you did not go to Rustenburg (near Johannesburg in South Africa) to see England in the World Cup, you can see something of Rustenburg here in Suffolk. Two rocks have been used by McDonalds as an advertising symbol in many of their restaurants all over the world. At the base of the frontages of their town centre premises in Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Lowestoft is a small horizontal strip of dark-coloured rock – this is Rustenburg Black Accord Gabbro, an igneous rock about 2,000 million years old. Until recently, the vertical pillars showed a white limestone – St John's Travertine, a 'spring' deposit from Italy. These verticals have recently been painted(?) green in a 're-branding' exercise, but anyway, thank you to McDonalds for having been such a great supporter of the use of natural stone for so many years here in Suffolk. Bob Markham (RM)

Melton Old Church Open Day

Melton Old Church will be open to the public on Sunday July 4th from 2-5pm. The church contains the memorials of the Wood family, including Searles Valentine Wood 'Author of a Work on the Mollusca of the Crag' and of his son (same names!) who wrote about glacial deposits. Tea and home made cakes will be available. All proceeds to go towards upkeep of the building, which is in the care of the Melton Old Church Society.

A Child's Guide to Beachcombing.

Written by child author Amy Winterbottom, *A Guide to stuff you can find on the beach – shells seaweeds and pebbles of East Anglia*, has three excellent pages on pebbles. See www.aguidetostuffyoufindonthebeach.co.uk

Geo-safety

The Mineral Products Association has again (May 2010) warned youngsters not to trespass on Suffolk quarry sites, with their potential for injuries for untrained people.

Have you Visited Lakenheath?

Park at the north end of the town in the car park on Wings Road and walk back to Lakenheath High Street. Turning south towards the church, 'clunch' walls abound and you will pass several examples. Clunch is a hard form of Chalk, found locally and commonly used as a building stone in Lakenheath and other settlements to the north (most chalk is too soft for building).

Flint is much in use as well and look out for the brown quartzite pebbles in the end wall of the house before the church. These are probably from the Bytham river gravel - an ancient (pre-ice age) river which deposited material from the Midlands on its journey eastwards to the North Sea.

St Mary's Church has a cornucopia of local building stones: a clunch wall; a wall of ferruginous 'carstone' sandstone (from west Norfolk); flints and brown quartzite Bytham river pebbles. Non-local shelly limestone blocks and a slate roof complete the tally. How many can you find?

From the car park walk or drive about a mile eastwards down Cemetery Road to Mads Cross Hill Local Nature Reserve, a complex of former gravel workings, with some exposures of Pleistocene age sand and gravel. A good view of Lakenheath airbase is an added bonus! CM

Suffolk Building Stones

Tony Redman is researching a book on the building stones of Suffolk covering a general history of stone as a building material within the county, using both indigenous material and stone brought from elsewhere. He is interested in any insights people may have, including the locations of unusual building stones, historic information on local quarrying activity, and particularly in any known buildings which incorporate ships ballast.

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Back copies of
GeoSuffolk Times

are on our web site
www.geosuffolk.co.uk

News for Geodiversity Providers and Owners

Earth Heritage Suffolk

GeoSuffolk's handbook is now with the printers and will soon be available. Following a number of consultations and meetings with providers and owners of geodiversity services and sites, it will provide both academic and practical information, as requested. The six sections of this action pack are: Suffolk's Geology and Geomorphology; Protecting Our Geodiversity; Promoting Our Geodiversity; Inspiration; Geodiversity Providers; Gazetteer. RM

Ipswich Pocket Park Sarsens

Volunteers, Greenways Countryside staff and River Ranger Peter Scotcher have recently cleaned up the Sarsen Stones of the seating area near the skate park in Ipswich. The stones had been largely covered in weeds and an amount of litter, but now look splendid.

Rocks at Needham Lake

A large artificial boulder has appeared at Needham Lake, at the request of the children who use the park. The new boulder takes its inspiration from the erratic block (a RIGS) on the north bank of the lake and joins it as a favourite for climbing, scrambling and sitting on. Thanks to Mid Suffolk DC for asking and providing. CM

Ammonite Explorer Day at Ipswich Museum

Meet the Museum's ammonites – exotic fossil sea creatures with names to rival those of the dinosaurs. Most have travelled for over 100 million years to be with you for the day. Learn how they act as Jurassic clocks, what ate them, and how some arrived in Suffolk as Ice-Age stones. Take a field trip to Ipswich Museum, meet Museum and GeoSuffolk geologists, and get very, very close to ammonites. September 25th 2010. RM

Spa Gardens Felixstowe

This seafront water garden uses its geology (steep cliffs and springs emerging at the Red Crag – London Clay junction) to excellent effect, in a series of terraces, pools and grottoes linked by meandering paths. It is showing its age, and Suffolk Coastal DC has made a Heritage Lottery bid for refurbishment. GeoSuffolk provided input on geodiversity at the stakeholders' meeting in April. There is a public exhibition of the draft outline masterplan in Felixstowe Town Hall on July 16th and 17th. CM

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/felixstowe/futures/projects/seafrontgardens

GeoSuffolk NewsThe GeoSuffolk 10th Anniversary Volume

At the May AGM Roger Dixon launched the call for papers for this very special volume to mark the 10th anniversary of GeoSuffolk in 2012. 30 authors have already promised contributions, which will celebrate the geology of Suffolk. The eclectic range of papers will cover a wide range of geological themes, from current research to reviews, commentaries to reminiscences, industrial to historical. The volume should appeal to both the academic and amateur and broaden the appeal of earth science to the layman. R Dixon

The Pliocene Forest

From the Curry Fund Report of the Geologists' Association:

'£1692 was awarded to GeoSuffolk for erection of stock-proof fencing to protect current and future plantings in Sutton Knoll Pliocene Forest extension. The GeoSuffolk group has been very active at this site and the forest is already taking on an interesting profile. As the Pliocene plantings mature, it is anticipated that the site will become a focus for encouraging other groups to consider similar projects in other areas of the country.'

(If you wish to sponsor a tree please contact Barry Hall bj.hall2@mypostoffice.co.uk)

In the News

- United States Air Force aircraft at RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall were grounded for a few days from April 15th due to ash from the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland. Lack of other aircraft over Suffolk gave some splendid blue skies without vapour trails.
- Wantisden Coralline Crag church is star of a play! The church is the fixed point linking stories in the theatre company Eastern Angles play Bentwater Roads. Artistic Director Ivan Cutting stated (East Anglian Daily Times June 26th) 'you find that it has this crag stone tower, of which there are only two in the country and the other is two miles down the road'* The play is at the former Bentwaters airfield, near Woodbridge, from July 1st-18th.
* at Chillesford.
- New company C I Agent Solutions UK Limited of East Bergholt has been launched to act as the UK supplier of a polymer (developed by C I Agent Solutions in the USA) which 'turns liquid oil into a solid'; this product is being used to tackle the recent oil spill (as a result of the explosion on a BP oil rig) in the Gulf of Mexico. (from EADT May 21st).