

GeoSuffolk Times



Newsletter No.8

April 2011

Welcome to GeoSuffolk Times, with geodiversity news, achievements and activities in Suffolk. Please pass it on to anyone who may be interested. Caroline Markham 17.04.11
www.geosuffolk.co.uk

Nucula cobboldiae

A new display was opened in the Reg Driver Centre in Ipswich's Christchurch Park this month. Provided by the Cobbold Family History Trust it tells the story of Margaret Catchpole and the Cobbold family in Ipswich. An additional story may be told of Mrs Elizabeth Cobbold, who had a fossil bivalve shell, *Nucula cobboldiae*, named after her by James Sowerby in 1817 in his *Mineral Conchology*. Elizabeth, of whom "science and friendship were nearest to (her) heart", found this shell, characterised by its zig-zag pattern, in the Red Crag of her Ipswich estate at Holywells. Her son Richard later wrote:
*Hail Lady! Sacred to the Poet's eye
This Nucula Cobboldiae; but why?
Because it speaks what never spake another,
The praise and honor of a tender Mother!*
This fossil is now called *Acila cobboldiae*.
Bob Markham (RM)

The GeoSuffolk 10th Anniversary Volume

Work is progressing very well with contributions from the 40 authors (some already starting to come in to the editor) promising an innovative mix of research, review and interpretive articles celebrating Suffolk geology.

The task ahead is to continue the search for funding. Sponsorship from individuals is, naturally, very welcome. But are there any companies out there who would like to support this imaginative, impressive project, which is unique for a county in England? All corporate sponsors, with their logos, will of course be gratefully acknowledged in the volume. Further information about the volume can be obtained from the Editor, Dr Roger Dixon (dixon.1@btinternet.com).

Earth Heritage Suffolk

Earth Heritage Suffolk has been so popular it went out of print in March. 100 new copies have been printed by Tuddenham Press. They cost £5 (£6 including p&p) and are available from Ipswich Museum or from info@geosuffolk.co.uk

Have you visited Westleton?

'Westleton Gravel', part of the Norwich Crag Formation, underlies the tracts of heath land in this area, its grey flint cobbles forming an attractive backdrop to the heather and gorse. It is a marine deposit, formed in tidal channels about 2 million years ago.

Westleton Heath

The alternating beds of pebbles and sand are best seen at Westleton Heath pit (TM 457693), a disused gravel quarry on RSPB land. Park in one of the two designated places on the north side of the Westleton to Dunwich Road and follow the footpath which leaves the road at TM 457696. The pit is on open access land about 400m to the south of the road. Look for 'chattermarks' (lots of small curved fractures) on the pebbles indicating a marine depositional environment. Notice the shallow 'podsol' (acid soil) leached of its nutrients on the highly permeable pebble beds, and the reason for the species-poor flora of the heaths.

Westleton Common

Also a disused gravel quarry, this is an excellent example of a well run community site. Owned by the Parish Council and managed by the Westleton Common Group, it is best approached along Mill Street to the south of the village. Near to the green container at TM 444686 is an immediately accessible exposure of the pebble bed, also seen in the sides of the new easy access path up to 'the Noddle'. Walk south for the best gravel exposures on the common, south east of the building at TM 444685. See if you can find anything other than flint – on a recent GeoSuffolk visit with a Westleton/Dunwich WEA class, some 50+ people only came up with two brown quartzite cobbles and two small white quartz pebbles between them! CM

June 23rd An Evening
Cruise on the River Orwell
with Ipswich Park Rangers
(includes RM demonstrating
geology from the boat).
Phone 01473 433994 to
book.

News: Geodiversity Providers and Owners

Are you a member of the Suffolk Naturalists' Society? Don't miss the SNS field trip to Sutton on **16th June** 14.00hrs. This will be of interest to both geologists and botanists. Sutton Knoll (Rockhall Wood SSSI) shows fine exposures of Coralline Crag, a geological deposit unique to Suffolk and of Pliocene age, about 4 million years old. Its myriad fossil shells include some of the direct ancestors of our living fauna. Many times smaller than the smallest shells are examples of fossil pollen, and what a tale they tell, of *Sciadopytes* (Japanese Umbrella Pine), *Sequoia* (Redwood) and many more living here before they were decimated by the Ice Age. We can't show you the pollen, but we will show you GeoSuffolk's 'Pliocene Forest' - an interpretation project using living relatives of our extinct flora. Please book your place with RM.

County Geosites

GeoSuffolk has given maps for 13 public CGS to the Suffolk Biological Record Centre to be included in their GIS database. These sites are: Nacton Cliff, Nacton Bridge Wood, Newbourne Springs, Newbourne Great Pit, Spa Gardens Felixstowe, Butley Forest Pit, Thorpeness Cliff, Westleton Heath, Westleton Common, Sutton Church, Wantisden Church, Chillesford Church and Knettishall Heath. They are all important sites with public access, (details in *Earth Heritage Suffolk*) and well worth a visit. Where appropriate, the landowners have received a letter from RM with the map enclosed. The CGS have been mapped as a separate layer from the 8 RIGS already on the SBRC database. CM

Ipswich Museum

The Rockwatch event, *Fun with Rocks and Fossils* on January 22nd was a great success with 75+ visitors enjoying CM's story-telling - *The Dragon Bones of Old Beijing* to celebrate the approaching Chinese New Year, and *Lake Ipswich*, which inspired ice age dioramas created in the Lecture Room along with the ever popular fossil plaster casts. GeoSuffolk's 'bring your own specimen' table was well-used, with a beautiful polished flint axe-head from Walton-on-the-Naze and a rare pliosaur tooth from Kessingland amongst the items identified.

Science Day on March 19th included, at the Art School, displays of Victorian science illustrations from the Museum collection. GeoSuffolk members were in the activity room with a table of minerals showing a variety of reflection and refraction effects and delightfully messy finger painting inspired by ancient cave art. CM

Chalk in the East

This leaflet produced in 2008 for Geo-East by GeoSuffolk's RM and CM has won a *Highly Commended* in the ENI Challenge in *Down To Earth* February 2011. Blakenham Woodland Garden and Newmarket's Devil's Dyke and Rowley Mile Racecourse star for Suffolk. Copies of the leaflet (free) from Ipswich Museum or download from Geo-East's web site www.geo-east.org.uk/publications.htm

Art and Coastal Change in East Anglia

This publication from the Crown Estate is a result of research by Dr Robin McInnes and Hope Stubbings into art as a tool in support of the understanding of coastal change in East Anglia. It contains fine reproductions of many of our coastal landscape paintings, drawings and prints with excellent analytical text. Available on the Crown Estate web site. CM

Pathfinder

The East Anglian Daily Times 19.03.11 reported this government-funded scheme whereby Waveney District Council can permit homeowners on the coast at Easton Bavents and Corton whose property is at high risk from cliff erosion in the next 20 years to relocate further inland (transfer residential rights) and build similar properties under the same planning permission. RM and CM's representation to Defra in November 2007 included, "We..... feel that alternative ways of helping them (i.e. landowners) should be seriously considered". For background information, see 'Conflict at Easton Bavents' in *Earth Heritage Suffolk*. RM

Brickmakers and Potters

Our Ancestors Were Brickmakers and Potters by Adrian Corder-Birch is an excellent history of the Corder family and their brickworks at Geslingthorpe and Southe Green, Essex. I got my copy via the Sible-Hedingham Parish Council office in Swan Street, for £17.95. Braintree Museum and Sudbury bookshops may have copies. RM

Earthquakes

Ipswich Wolsey Theatre's online ticketing system, provided by PatronBase, a New Zealand company based in Christchurch, went offline for a while when February's earthquake knocked the New Zealand servers down. (Ipswich Evening Star 28.2.11).

An earlier EADT, 23.04.1884, reported on the previous day's 'Colchester' earthquake 'at East Mersea (Essex) the sea was said to have rushed with resistless force over the marshes, receding some time afterwards, leaving thick deposits of sand behind', i.e. a mini tsunami. RM