

# GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

The G.T.

Newsletter 49

April 2021

Buckanay Farm Pit SSSI

[www.geosuffolk.co.uk](http://www.geosuffolk.co.uk) Caroline Markham 02.04.21

## One Year Ago

By the end of March last year most countries had announced their first case of Covid-19. On April 3rd, the Falkland Islands made the announcement and on April 7th Artsakh (Ngorno-Karabakh). Sometimes it helps me in remembering places (and thinking of their people) by geological associations. The Carboniferous-age Fitzroy Tillite Formation in the Falklands shares a name with the young *Fitzroya* tree growing in the Pliocene Forest outreach in Christchurch Park, Ipswich. In Astghashen village in Artsakh it is said to 'rain star-stones'. These are the columnal plates of the Jurassic crinoid *Pentacrinites* which I have found in the boulder clay (a Victorian term but still useful) of Great Blakenham.

Meanwhile, at the age of 82, I look forward to my second vaccination in due course. Bob Markham (RM)

## Surveying SSSIs for the Geology Trusts

GeoSuffolk was fortunate to be able to finish this task (see GeoSuffolk Times 48) during January and February. Armed with our lockdown letter of permission from Natural England, RM, CM and GeoSuffolk member Howard Mottram (HM separately because of lockdown restrictions) spent many pleasant hours in several SSSIs, completing surveys of Beeches Pit and High Lodge Pit in Breckland Forest SSSI; Chillesford Church Pit; Hascot Hill Pit, Battisford; Stoke Tunnel Cutting, Ipswich; Great Blakenham Pit (Lowestoft Till on Campanian Chalk – photo below by HM). You can find the citations, maps, etc. at [Site Search \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](http://SiteSearch.naturalengland.org.uk).  
CM



## Crag Boxstone Distribution

The 'Suffolk Boxstones/Box-stones' sandstone cobbles are a characteristic component of the basal layers of the Red Crag. However as they occur in Essex as well as Suffolk, and as other types of nodules called 'boxstones' occur locally in other deposits of different ages, I use the term 'Crag Boxstone(s)' for these specific items and material. They also occur within a much wider area than the Foxhall-Falkenham-Trimley area where they were commonly recorded. They have been found at several sites within Ipswich, and I have found them at Hascot Hill Pit SSSI, Battisford (west of Needham Market) and Elsenham (east of Stansted) where CM found fossiliferous specimens. RM

## GeoSuffolk Leaflets

'The Suffolk Dragon', GeoSuffolk's latest addition (2020) to its leaflet library, is an ideal companion for outings as restrictions are eased this summer. It gives a variety of ideas for exploring the geology of our coast, covering localities from Corton to Bawdsey. Find it on our website at [GeoSuffolk Leaflets](http://GeoSuffolkLeaflets) – other leaflets with ideas for geological outings include:

- 'Suffolk's Crag Coprolites' – investigating the Victorian phosphate rush in the Ipswich-Felixstowe area.
- 'In Breckland with GeoSuffolk' – geodiversity locations in the Brecks area of west Suffolk-Norfolk.
- 'GeoSuffolk Looks at the London Clay'- a guide to exposures along our south Suffolk estuaries.
- 'Dunwich' – a look at the geology of Suffolk's city lost to the sea. CM

## Suffolk Natural History 56

The latest edition (2020) of the Suffolk Naturalists' Society's Transactions has two geological articles:

- Elizabeth Knipe Cobbold – Georgian Geologist, by C and R Markham
- A Geological Field Guide to Harkstead, Suffolk by W H George.

[TSNS56 | Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service \(suffolkbis.org.uk\)](http://TSNS56|SuffolkBiodiversityInformationService(suffolkbis.org.uk))

### Stoke Tunnel Cutting SSSI

Our visits to SSSIs this winter for the Geology Trusts were a pleasure - access to private, remote sites with some of the best geology in the county. However, there was one tricky site in an urban area which involved land ownership problems, a busy railway line (which splits the site in two) and access to a school (during lockdown?) - not to mention six inches of snow for a week! Stoke Tunnel Cutting SSSI in Ipswich has been designated to protect the interglacial lake bed deposits discovered when the tunnel was dug in the 1840s. These have been dated at approx. 210,000 years old and have yielded a variety of vertebrate fossils (lion, elephants, bear, deer) some of which are on display in Ipswich Museum. Monitoring it took ages. 'Light at the end of the Tunnel', the full story is written up in the Ipswich Society April 2021 Newsletter. [Newsletter, April 2021 \(Issue 225\) » The Ipswich Society](#)



Part of the SSSI adjacent to Worsdell Close, with GeoSuffolk's information panel, erected in 2010. (Hillside School in the background is in the SSSI, as is the railway cutting running in front of the school.) CM

### Joseph T Last

Joseph T Last (1849-1933) was born at Tuddenham near Ipswich. He lived in Africa for much of his life, for part of the time as a collector in Madagascar for the Rothschilds. One of his finds was a skull of the extinct giant lemur *Megaladapis madagascariensis* in the Amboulisatra marsh area in the south west of the island. He also wrote of 'The Hot Springs of Madagascar' in The Field, 26 May 1894. He was later appointed the Government Commissioner supervising the working of the 1897 Decree abolishing the legal status of slavery in Zanzibar. Following this in 1903 he presented Ipswich Museum with some (mainly moulds of) gastropods and bivalves from the Neogene(?) of Zanzibar. RM

### Freelance Palaeontology Documentation Assistant

An opportunity to research, document and digitise some of the Ipswich Museum palaeontology collection, focussing on type and figured specimens. See [Research | Colchester + Ipswich Museums \(cimuseums.org.uk\)](#) Applications by April 7th.

### Bexwell to Bury Pipeline: Broads Peat

GeoSuffolk attended the consultation (via Zoom) for this section of the Eastern Counties relief water main planned by Anglian Water, which will follow the Suffolk/Cambs border. [bexwell-to-bury-st-edmunds-virtual-exhibition-boards.pdf \(anglianwater.co.uk\)](#) Much of this section of the pipeline will be excavated into peat, so the new Broads Authority publication 'The Peat Development Guide' to help determine planning applications that may impact on peat could be useful. [Design guides \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](#) CM

### 'Drift Geology'

Local media of 8th February reported 8-foot drifts of snow on the Bawdsey road (B1083). Smaller drifts of blown sand are not uncommon in the area, especially along the road between Alderton and Ramsholt and particularly between Grange Farm and Heath Cottage. The field between the curve of the road and Mary's Grove often has drifts on its eastern side. I have even seen wind blowing sand onto the road at the same time as a machine on a lorry was blowing it back onto the fields. This area is part of the sheepwalks of older literature. RM

### David Horsley

David, who wrote the booklet 'Outcrops for Oldies' (2016) died 8th March 2020, aged 94. Some 35 years ago he lent us his flat on Mull. We collected Pleistocene-Holocene *Astarte* mollusc shells at the mouth of Allt Faoileann nan Cruban into Loch Spelve, and Eocene leaf material at Ardtun, as supportive material to local fossils in Ipswich Museum. RM

### Pliocene Forest (See GS Times 48)

Permission has been received for Barry Hall to visit and inspect the Pliocene Forest. RM

### Stop Press Thorpeness Cliff

This photo was taken March 30th by GeoSuffolk member Andrew Snelling. Note the gabions, broken in places, with erosion of the low cliff above them exposing Norwich Crag sands. There are SCC warning signs nearby. CM

