

GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

Newsletter 50

July 2021

Buckanay Farm Pit SSSI December 2020

www.geosuffolk.co.uk Caroline Markham 19.07.21

What wasn't Reported

Looking back at the previous 49 issues of GeoSuffolk Times, there were a few things I did not report, so, to catch up:

- The vertiginous inspection of the stones in the arches of Polstead Church (GeoSuffolk Times no.3) was achieved by balancing chairs on top of one another and climbing up them ('do not try...').
- The tree planted in Christchurch Park Ipswich to commemorate GeoSuffolk's 10th Anniversary (GeoSuffolk Times no. 13) was almost immediately mown down by grass-cutting machinery – we quickly planted a replacement which is thriving.
- Our conservation work party at the Orford Castle Coralline Crag pit (GeoSuffolk Times no. 23) had to be negotiated with English Heritage. Full of confidence I publicised a specific date (on a Thursday) to the groups who would attend. As that day approached, I held my nerve and permission arrived from the Secretary of State on the Tuesday with hours to spare!

Bob Markham (RM)

To Study Cuvier's Collection

Sara Wallis was born in Colchester on September 10th, 1791. In 1813 she married naturalist/traveller Thomas E Bowditch and they voyaged to Africa together. In 1839 they went to Paris to visit Baron 'Georges' Cuvier, French anatomist and 'founding father of palaeontology', and to study zoology prior to another trip to Africa. They stayed, studying his collection, until 1822. After Thomas died in 1824 Sara kept in touch with Baron Cuvier – did she see his crag shells collected in Ipswich by Elizabeth Cobbold? (See GeoSuffolk Notes no.70) – and upon Cuvier's death in 1832 she wrote (as Mrs R Lee) a memoir (1833) of his life. Sara died in 1856. RM

Suffolk's County Geodiversity Sites

Suffolk is most fortunate to have large areas of land with public access – a particular asset to its population during our months (years?) of pandemic. GeoSuffolk has designated 29 public County Geodiversity Sites (CGS) and recently we have started to re-monitor their condition and report back to Suffolk County Council and to the landowners. We have visited 7 CGS so far this year. Christchurch Park and the Pocket Park in Ipswich; Bridge Wood and Nacton Cliff in Nacton; Spa Gardens in Felixstowe; and the Cliff and Ness in Thorpeness. All except the Pocket Park retain their GOOD rating. The sarsen stones in the Pocket Park are GOOD DECLINING due to their graffiti – see the Ipswich Society website for RM's article on this CGS [Newsletter, July 2021 \(Issue 226\) » The Ipswich Society](#). With this exception, all are looking fabulous and all are well worth a visit - see [Geology and Sites \(geosuffolk.co.uk\)](#). CM



Thorpeness Cliff CGS this month, showing Norwich Crag sands (including clay beds), with cryoturbated till above.

The Moon: Meet our Nearest Neighbour

This touring exhibition will be at Ipswich Art Gallery, Upper High Street from July 31st to October 10th, 2021. It features a large inflatable Moon, Moon rock and more. The exhibition is free, but you need to book tickets – see [The Moon: Meet Our Nearest Neighbour | Ipswich Entertains](#) CM

Roger Dixon 1949-2021

The Dixon family moved to Suffolk (to near Hadleigh) in 1950, with Roger when aged 8 being sent to St Andrew's school in Eastbourne. In 1960 the family moved to Melton Hall near Woodbridge, with Roger attending Stowe School in Buckinghamshire. In 1968 Roger commenced reading Geology at Kingston Polytechnic (Kingston University, London). He also joined the Ipswich Geological Group and one of his undergraduate projects – Foraminifera from the Scrobicularia Crag at Chillesford - appeared in IGG Bulletin 12 (1975). In 1973 Roger was appointed Demonstrator at North London Polytechnic (North London University), enabling postgraduate research into the Red Crag. His thesis 'Studies of the Mollusca of the Red Crag....' was submitted for a University of London PhD in 1977 with the section on Neutral Farm, Butley also appearing in IGG Bulletin no 19 (1977). 1976 saw Roger move to Shoreham-by-Sea to take up teaching posts at Shoreham College and then at St Mary's Hall, Brighton. After being runner up in the Sussex Evening Argus-Segas Cookery Competition 1978, he edited (1986) the St Mary's Hall Cookbook. Soon after this a move to Saxlingham Thorpe near Norwich saw him running a B&B which won national accolades. He also (2000) edited the Geological Society of Norfolk's 50th Anniversary Jubilee Volume. In 2001 Roger moved to Woodbridge, helping to set up GeoSuffolk in 2002 and becoming its Treasurer. He also became Overseas Field Excursions Secretary for the Geologists' Association – he ran the 2002 GA trip to Gondwanaland of Southern Africa. He married Rosie in 2011 and, with her help, produced 'A Celebration of Suffolk Geology', GeoSuffolk's 10th Anniversary volume in 2012, engaging 40+ authors, obtaining sponsorship, and writing three articles himself – the Silurian borehole of Stutton; Building Stones; and a culinary trawl through the Red Crag. Roger and Rosie then moved to Eastbourne. Roger was a keen traveller and, only a few weeks ago, he published ('Kept me well-occupied during lockdown', said Roger) 'The Mabel Trail....', a Great Aunt's 1909-1910 world tour diary together with his own tour in her footsteps. Recently Roger and Rosie visited Suffolk to investigate property – the Red Crag was calling him. But it was not to be, for Roger died on June 22nd. RIP 'redcragrocdoc', good friend and fellow crag enthusiast for over 50 years. RM

A list of Roger's many publications is being prepared – see also [Ipswich Geological Group \(geosuffolk.co.uk\)](http://www.geosuffolk.co.uk)

Stony Dawn?

The fossil bones of early humans found at Dmanisi in Georgia have been dated to c.1.8 million years old. These people were part of an ecosystem which included the elephant *Mammuthus meridionalis* and the vole *Mimomys reidi*, both species also occurring in the Weybourne Crag of North Norfolk. Might a few of these people have reached East Anglia and chipped flints found at the base of the crag at West Runton? Three authors in *Cainozoic Research*, June 2021, suggest this ecological approach to the question of the earliest people here. So are our long-lost ancestors really hiding in the Crag after all? (See our article of the same title in GeoSuffolk Times no. 27.) RM

Geo Street Names in Needham Market

GeoSuffolk member Howard Mottram discovered this street and Belemnite Close named for fossils in the Needham Chalks pit -part of the housing development in the old quarry. CM



Snippets

- Polar Base in Harwich - the polar research vessel James Clark Ross (see GeoSuffolk Times no.42) departed Harwich on April 26th with her paying off pennant flying, on her way for breaking at Frederikshaven. (From Ipswich Transport Journal no.677.)
- Chelmsford on Mars -Mars Perseverance Rover, which landed in Jezera crater in February, has Teledyne e2v image sensors, developed in Chelmsford, Essex, which drive the Super-Cam used to examine rocks.
- Giants Causeway in Ipswich – in 1874 when on a tour of Scotland and Ireland, Ipswich Museum Curator, John Ellor Taylor arranged for basalt columns from the Giants Causeway to be sent back to Ipswich, where they arrived in November that year. Their original home is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, but these specimens may still be visited in Ipswich Museum.
- Dippy in Norwich – Dippy the Diplodocus is on the last leg of his national tour at Norwich Cathedral between July 13th and October 30th, 2021. Entry is free - for the programme of associated activities see [Dippy on Tour | Norwich Cathedral](#) RM