

GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

Newsletter 52

January 2022

Thorpeness Cliff July 2021

www.geosuffolk.co.uk Caroline Markham 31.01.22

First Fossil

I collected my first fossils in 1945 at Gusford Hall crag pit on the 'Government Fields' south of London Road, Ipswich. There were diggings on the lane by the side of the pit where people collected crag to use as chicken grit, and an uncle held me by my ankles as I delved partly underground to find fossil shells. (My father was in the Royal Navy during the War and was then at Manus Island, north of New Guinea, in the Pacific Ocean.) The crag pit was roughly where Atherton Close is now in the Chantry residential area. The fossils were displayed in our air-raid shelter in the garden, from where my mother and I would look up to see the V1s overhead. Bob Markham (RM)

County Geodiversity Sites

GeoSuffolk has condition monitored four more public CGS over the winter. Chillesford Church and Wantisden Church have towers constructed from Coralline Crag blocks and Butley Forest Pit is an excellent Red Crag exposure with public access. Orford Castle Pit is one of the very few (and by far the best) Coralline Crag exposures with public access. It has been much enhanced by the management work of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Work Party in 2014 and displays several exposures of the 'rock bed', some with good current bedding (photo below) – well worth a visit. All four CGS received a GOOD rating, and documentation has been sent to the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service and the landowners.



CM



An agate (1-2 cms) found on a Sizewell beachcomb by 12-year-old Barnaby, 24.08.21
© Image by Kate Osborne of Beach Bonkers

Elizabeth Cobbold

The Creating Constable Exhibition at Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich, runs until 24.04.22. Elizabeth Cobbold* features – see her portrait by George Frost and also five specimens of *Nucula cobboldiae* (these are from the Norwich Crag of Covehithe); genus now *Acila*. Also on show is The Mill Stream, c1814 by John Constable: note the human intervention on the natural watercourse at Flatford – a mill structure, a straightened channel, changes to the riverbank. RM
*RM's article on Elizabeth Cobbold in the Suffolk Naturalists Society Transactions 2021 is online now at [TSNS 56 | Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service \(suffolkbis.org.uk\)](https://www.suffolkbis.org.uk)

AONB Work Parties

Sudbourne Park Pit SSSI was cleared of vegetation and talus by the SCH AONB Work Party on 15.12.21. It was good to meet again after nearly two years - the last geological work party was in this pit in March 2020. Several small exposures in the Coralline Crag were cleared, some showing fossil molluscs in situ, and one with a solution pipe. Thank you to all who attended this and other work parties (↔see Orford Castle Pit) and special thanks to Ron Baker, who has been volunteering for SCH AONB for more than 12 years, for his perennial hard work. Catch up with Ron at [Volunteering – Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB](https://www.suffolkbis.org.uk), he's the one on the left in the photo, taken in a Butley crag pit. The next SCH AONB Work Party at a geosite is on 08.03.22 – see Volunteer Opportunities on the web page above. CM

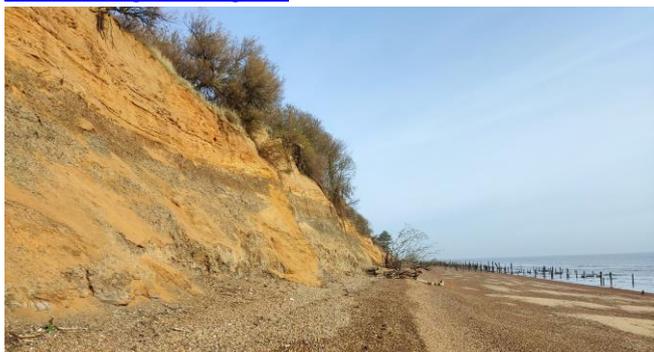
Ragstone and Stonemasons

Following the piece in GeoSuffolk Times 51, Tony Redman writes that Kentish Ragstone is nearly always a cladding.....with the exception of Iken church which is interesting in that the architect for the chancel also promoted the use of Kentish Ragstone to the Royal Institute of British Architects, and was known as the Kentish rector at the time.

Tony is also seeking illustrations of stonemasons' premises in Suffolk, for possible publication. I am happy to pass anything on to him. RM

Surveying SSSIs

The Geology Trust has again asked GeoSuffolk to monitor some SSSIs for Natural England this winter. So far RM, CM and Howard Mottram have visited five of these. Sandy Lane Pit, Barham is designated for its Pleistocene gravels. Sudbourne Park Pit, Red House Farm Pit and Valley Farm Pit are also under private ownership. Designated for their Coralline Crag exposures, we found them all in good condition. Bawdsey Cliff SSSI has 2km of Red Crag exposures, with public access (but make sure you know tide times). GeoSuffolk's visit on 28.01.22 was planned with low tide in the middle of the day and good weather (for January!). Erosion by the sea has created some good exposures this year. To see the maps and citations for these SSSIs go to [Site Search \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk). CM



Bawdsey Cliff SSSI January 2022, showing Red Crag at the top of the cliff with London Clay below.

Hung Tonga Volcano

A Bredford barometer featured in the East Anglian Daily Times following the recent Hung Tonga volcanic eruption. At 8.09pm on Saturday 21.01.22 it detected the pressure wave 14½ hours after the explosive event. It had travelled 10,200 miles across Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. A second smaller wave (which had travelled the globe in the opposite direction) wiggled barometers on Sunday. RM

Roger Dixon Bibliography

Roger's obituary was published in the July GeoSuffolk Times 2021 – he was a great friend to geology in East Anglia and particularly Suffolk. RM, with help from Rosie Dixon, has compiled a list of his publications which is on our web site as GeoSuffolk Note 72 – see [GeoSuffolk Notes](#). There are 63 on the list - so far! CM

Stour Estuary Geology

Essex geologist Bill George has recently produced two definitive field guides to the Harwich Formation and Pleistocene deposits of the north shore of the Stour estuary. The SNS 2021 Transactions is online now (see *Elizabeth Cobbold* on the first page for the link) and contains 'A Geological Field Guide to Harkstead, Suffolk'. The 2022 SNS Transactions has just landed on our doomat and contains 'A Geological Field Guide to Stutton, Suffolk'. CM

Suffolk Flint Pebbles

Also, in the 2022 SNS Transactions is 'The implications of "wear and tear" on flint pebbles in some local Pleistocene deposits' by Howard Mottram – a welcome discussion on the story of our flint pebbles from their origin in the Chalk to their latest deposition in our Pleistocene gravels. Also recently published by HM, in the Geological Society of Norfolk Bulletin 72, 'On the supply of flint clasts to the Norwich Crag: a review' – which deals specifically with the origins of flint pebbles in the Westleton Beds. CM

Essex Gem and Mineral Show

This is on Saturday 19.02.22 at North Romford Community Centre - a thoroughly enjoyable day out run by the ERMS. See [Shows & Events - Essex Rock & Mineral Society \(erms.org\)](#) for times and cost.

Ipswich Museum News

- Congratulations to Ipswich Museum which has been awarded a £4.3 million grant by the National Lottery Heritage Fund towards additional gallery space, a café and more.
- 'Ask the Expert' is back on Wednesday 23.02.22 and GeoSuffolk hopes to be there [Ask the Expert | Ipswich Museums \(cimuseums.org.uk\)](#).
- The Ipswich Ice Age Festival 12.04.22 will celebrate the Museum's internationally important collection, featuring: 'Ask the Expert' stalls (with GeoSuffolk), short curatorial collection talks, arts and crafts, and storytelling. 10 - 4 all ages welcome but recommended for 5+.