

GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

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Orfordness from Flybury Point June 2022

www.geosuffok.co.uk Caroline Markham 24.10.22



ORFORDNESS RESEARCH STATION

“With Every Good Wish for Christmas and the New Year” is the message inside this Orfordness Research Station (a military research establishment) Christmas card in 1954. The armorial crest (granted April 1954) is that of the Royal Aircraft Establishment and features a ‘pterodactyl displayed proper’. I do not know how many or for how long these cards were made.

Bob Markham (RM)

Plio-Pleistocene Palaeontology Collections

This virtual meeting is being run by Ipswich Museum and the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge on Saturday 26th November 2022. My presentation will include superposition stratigraphy, including Red Crag on Coralline Crag (at Tattingstone), Scrobicularia Crag on Red Crag (Chillesford) and Norwich Crag on Scrobicularia Crag (Sizewell). RM

Tickets are free and are going fast – details at <https://ipswich.cimuseums.org.uk/events/plio-pleistocene/>

Landscape Rebels

If you love rivers, this new free exhibition at Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich which runs until April 16th 2023 is a ‘must’. Depictions of fluvial landscapes abound, including the amazing ‘Flood Waters’ (the River Epte in France) by Monet and Turner’s River Thames at ‘Walton Bridges’. Constable’s ‘Lime Kiln between Dedham and Stratford St Mary’ is on the river Stour, of which there are several other paintings on display. There are also coastal scenes, including Walter Batley’s excellent depiction of the geology of ‘Minsmere Cliffs’ and his sketches of Dunwich. CM

Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Work Parties

GeoSuffolk has an article in Earth Heritage Magazine 57, ‘Working with our Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB’ celebrating the contribution of the Work Parties to the conservation of our Suffolk geosites – see www.earthheritage.org.uk

The next management day with SCH AONB is on November 15th 2022 at a Red Crag site in Alderton. We shall be removing vegetation and talus at this pit on private property. Anyone can join in - just register with the AONB at [Practical Conservation Tasks – Coast and Heaths AONB \(suffolkcoastandheaths.org\)](http://practicalconservationtasks-coastandheaths.aonb.suffolkcoastandheaths.org). As a bonus you might see one of the tiny sea urchins below! CM



How Big is a Sea Urchin?

‘A pretty little sea urchin, not quite as big as a threepenny piece, which we find not uncommonly fossilised in the Red Crag beds, is the *Echinocyamus*’, wrote John Taylor in his ‘Common British Fossils’, 1885. This 3d coin was joined and replaced by a larger 12-sided piece from 1937 until 1971 when, having no equivalent (1¼p) in decimal coinage, it was withdrawn. So how big is *Echinocyamus* (above)? Well, the 3d in 1885 was 15mm across. RM

Blues T-Rex

Looking for Christmas gifts? The Ipswich Town Football Club 24” T-Rex soft toy could be useful. It costs £18 - see the soft toys and games section of <https://itfcshop.com> The teeth are probably not the most realistic for that species! RM

Picnic in the Park

GeoSuffolk's stand at the Abbey 1000 event in the Cathedral gardens, Bury-St-Edmunds on July 16th featured our new leaflet 'God's Square Rocks' written by Tony Redman (who was Surveyor of the Fabric to St Edmundsbury Cathedral) and RM, with a variety of building stones for visitors to handle. One unusual (and popular) specimen was part of a borehole (for electric cables) core through the wall of Blythburgh Church showing the rubble interior. Flints cut through by the diamond drill show impressive, curved cut surfaces (see below). RM



Tony Redman will lecture on 'Suffolk building stone and the people who worked on it' at the Guildhall, Bury St Edmunds, at 7.30pm on January 9th 2023. This is a Bury Past & Present Society meeting - £5 for non-members. www.burypastandpresent.org.uk

Heritage Open Days 2022

Our building stones display was reprised at St Peters by the Waterfront for Ipswich Heritage Open Day on September 10th. St Peters had 400+ visitors on that day, so GeoSuffolk's Chris Chapman and RM were kept busy with geo-enquiries, the Blythburgh core (above) proving popular here too. CM

Almost Like Home

On a recent visit to Buckingham Museum one display in particular caught my eye. It featured specimens from the Jurassic Oxford Clay of Calvert – *Gryphaea*, ammonites, plesiosaur vertebrae and a septarian nodule. They could easily have been from the Pleistocene 'Chalky Boulder Clay' pit at Great Blakenham or many other areas of glacial till in Suffolk (see GeoSuffolk's leaflet 'Suffolk's Time Travellers: the Erratics' in our web site Archive). The ice has delivered many fine Jurassic specimens to us. RM

Orford Castle Conserved

Orford Castle is a predominantly limestone structure, with our local characteristic brown 'London Clay' septaria filling the walls between the limestone quoins. Septaria are in the running for the world's worst building stones and those in the castle, no exception to this, are badly cracked and crumbling. English Heritage has almost completed its repairs to the Castle walls, using lime mortar (a creamy colour with crushed shells for a mottled effect) to cover and stabilise the septaria, and replacing some of the Caen Stone and Barnack stone blocks (these last with Clipsham Stone). At the beginning of October members of GeoSuffolk ascended, with English Heritage guides, the scaffolding around Orford Castle to view this repair work. We were impressed with and commend English Heritage on the renovations but will miss our Suffolk/Essex septaria of which there will be little trace when the scaffolding comes down. CM



GeoAnglia

Joseph Howgego (New Scientist 16 July 2022) has been rock pooling at West Runton, Norfolk. He reported that the top predator, the dog whelk *Nucella lapillis* (which drills holes in other shells when hunting), seemed to be doing exceptionally well. This reminded me of a visit I made to West Runton in April 1963 when I found *Nucella lapillis* crawling on flints – with a lifespan of 5-10 years had I observed the (how many?) great-grandparents of today's animals? But perhaps more special on that visit I found flints in the Weybourne Crag with up to half a dozen fossil *Nucella lapillis* lying around the edges. It is unusual to find fossil gastropods approximately in their 'position of life'. (This was reported in Norfolk Research Committee Bulletin no 16 (1966), pp3-4). RM