

GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

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<https://geosuffolk.co.uk> Caroline Markham 10.04.23

Museum's Big Stones

With the Ipswich Museum redevelopment project rapidly pressing ahead this is a good time to visit the large stones in the open-access south courtyard. There is a plan of them in GeoSuffolk Notes no.13 <https://geosuffolk.co.uk/index.php/archive/geosuffolk-notes> (A few have been slightly moved since then.) The flint pebble puddingstone (conglomerate) from Tuddenham Road, Ipswich is easily recognised – and if you cannot visit is featured in GeoSuffolk Times no.42. There are a few sarsenstones – very hard and with rounded bulges on their surfaces. The photo below shows the specimen found in Myrtle Road, Ipswich, it is about 52 inches long and about 15 inches high; others were dredged from the River Orwell. There are two striated (?Ice Age) specimens from Ipswich Docks. Two sandstones dredged from Harwich Harbour have been bored (by molluscs?); they are both calcareous. Numerous such rocks have been obtained from Harwich Harbour – see GeoSuffolk Notes no.36. Similar calcite cemented sandstone from Lady Lane underground carpark, Ipswich is in the British Geological Survey collection. Bob Markham (RM)



Meet GeoSuffolk

June 2nd - Wild in the Stour Valley event at Friars Meadow, Sudbury. The GeoSuffolk stand 'Our Calyon is Flint' is supporting GeoWeek 2023. www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org

June 24th – Cobbold 300 event in Holywells Park Ipswich. GeoSuffolk hopes to have a stand showcasing the geology of the park. www.holywellspark.org.uk/events

Harwich Formation at Nacton Cliff CGS March 2023

Ferry Cliff SSSI, Sutton

A recent walk along the footpath at the base of Ferry Cliff (on the River Deben opposite Woodbridge) revealed recent cliff falls with the best exposures of the Red Crag seen for some time - photo below. CM



Coast & Heaths AONB

In March GeoSuffolk led two events for C&H AONB. First a Training Day at Nacton Cliff CGS - the Harwich Formation here showcases sedimentary lithologies and structures for geological study. The banner photo above shows some of the clay and mudstone, and thin pale bands of volcanic ash. The strata show gentle folds, with a normal fault downthrown towards the east (we found four faults in all).

Later, a Work Party at Broom Pit, Orford, on privately owned land where we had permission to clear one of the Coralline Crag exposures and dig an exploratory trench (afterwards infilled) in the floor of the quarry. AONB volunteers were pleased to see some of the characteristic mollusc fossils of this approx. 4 million years Pliocene deposit. CM

GeoAnglia

'The Ashdon Meteorite' by Gerald Lucy and Mike Howgate is a well-illustrated booklet produced to commemorate the centenary of the fall of the Ashdon (Essex) meteorite on March 9th 1923. £3 from local outlets, + p&p from www.therockgallery.co.uk

Geological Society of Norfolk and Dunwich Museum – 'The Stones of Dunwich' with Dr Ruth Siddall and Tim Holt-Wilson at Dunwich, June 3rd, see www.norfolkgeology.co.uk

Ipswich Museums Awarded Designated Status for Post-Cretaceous Geology Collection

Ipswich Museums' Post-Cretaceous Geology Collection, which includes our outstanding ice age collection, has been awarded Designated status by Arts Council England. The Designation scheme is administered by Arts Council England and identifies the pre-eminent collections of national importance held in England's non-national museums, libraries and archives, based on their quality and significance. This award is a mark of distinction that recognises collections of outstanding quality and which are essential research resources, making a significant contribution to the public understanding of the subject. Read more about the scheme here: [Designation Scheme | Arts Council England](#).

A bit more info about what's been Designated. The greatest strength of the Post-Cretaceous Geology Collection includes Suffolk Plio-Pleistocene fossils, the remains of animals which lived during the ice age, and the warmer Pliocene before it. Suffolk has an outstanding Plio-Pleistocene record, with the only exposures of the Coralline Crag (Middle Pliocene) and extensive exposures of the Red Crag (the only exposed British deposit to document the transition into the ice age). The county's deposits also document the dramatically changing environments of the ice age between warmer, wetter episodes (interglacials) and colder, drier episodes (glacials). With pre-eminent collections covering this period, the collections now attract international research. For example, recent research has included searching for ancient DNA in steppe mammoth teeth (led by the Centre for Palaeogenetics at the Stockholm University and Swedish Museum of Natural History and the NHM), investigating Middle Pliocene North Sea temperatures through studying Coralline Crag mollusc isotopes (University of Derby and University of Cambridge) and reconstructing ice age climates through measurements of mammal teeth and bones (University of Helsinki).

The success of this award would not have been possible without the support of GeoSuffolk and particularly former museum Geological Curator, Bob Markham who was consulted throughout the bid. The GeoSuffolk team have continued to support the Museum through various projects, such as the curation of "the Maidenhall Mammoth" last year, supporting the Museum's Virtual Plio-Pleistocene

Conference 2022 and most recently, supporting the Love Nature festival in February.

The news of the award is very timely indeed as we shape our new museum at Ipswich. It is the optimal opportunity to build in the international significance of this collection in the new displays, in a way that the public can be proud of this outstanding collection, which is on their doorstep. The displays could allow them to 'connect' to a rich, ancient past, beneath their feet and around them, offering an invaluable insight into the shaping of our modern world, in a period which was geologically "only yesterday".

Dr Simon Jackson AMA FGS, Collections and Learning Curator (Natural Sciences), Colchester and Ipswich Museums

Beachcombing

Beach Bonkers activities have started up again for the summer – try the one at Felixstowe on June 25th, see www.beachbonkers.org.uk

Pliocene Forests

From Sutton to Butley, slopes and cliffs show glimpses of red amongst the green foliage. This is the Red Crag, a nearly 3 million years old sea bed. In 1915 Clement and Mary Eleanor Read published their account of the Pliocene flora of the Dutch-Prussian border. The Reuver Clay of that area (dug for tile and pot making) is in part close to our Suffolk Red Crag in age and yielded a rich flora (it is a non-marine deposit).

Barry Hall, with other GeoSuffolk members has planted Pliocene representative trees on the Red Crag outcrop at a site between Wood Hall and Rockhall Wood SSSI at Sutton (this site is adjacent to a public footpath but some distance from car parking). A new information board, installed this month (photo below), features Reuver, Orford Coralline Crag and Laurel Forest trees. What may have been growing in Red Crag times? Look for the *Juglans regia* (walnut), *Pistacia chinensis* (Chinese pistachio) and more.

In Reuver, the recently premiered film 'Anna' tells the story of the town and its clay-cutters. RM

