

GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

Newsletter 58

July 2023

Caroline Markham 17.07.23 <https://geosuffolk.co.uk>
See the Archive on our website for GeoSuffolk Times, Notes and leaflets.

Fontani

Following our showing of chipped flints from the Crag at Ipswich Museum in 2015 (see GeoSuffolk Times no. 27) and of the interest shown in them by geologists, I penned a short tongue-in-cheek GeoSuffolk Notes (no.64 in 2016) in which the Crag flints were chipped by a Miocene ape, 'Fontani', some 12 million years ago (pax prehistorians!). Fontani was based on *Dryopithecus fontani*, a Miocene ape discovered by Alfred Fontan at Saint-Gaudens in SW France.

I was therefore interested recently when browsing literature to find out about 'worked flints' found in the Miocene at Thenay in Centre-Loire Valley in 1863 by the French prehistorian Louis-Alexis Bourgeois and that the French palaeontologist Albert Gaudry at one time suggested *D. fontani* as the maker. Priority lost!

Bob Markham (RM)

Meet GeoSuffolk

July 27th and August 2nd Family Fun Days at Christchurch Mansion. GeoSuffolk's fossil display will feature 'Jurassic Animals' on July 27th and 'Pliocene Animals' on August 2nd. For more information see [Events | Ipswich Museums \(cimuseums.org.uk\)](https://www.cimuseums.org.uk) .

July 30th Hooray for Heaths at Knettishall Heath – GeoSuffolk will feature flints on it's stand. See [HOORAY for Heaths | Suffolk Wildlife Trust](https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/hooray-for-heaths)

September 9th Heritage Open Days in Ipswich. GeoSuffolk will have a stand in St Peter's by the Waterfront showcasing Cardinal Wolsey's 'Harwich Stone' – London Clay septaria. See [2023 Heritage Open Days - Ipswich » The Ipswich Society](https://www.theipswichsociety.org.uk/2023-heritage-open-days-ipswich)

Please do visit us and bring your own geological treasures to show us.

Harwich Formation at Nacton Cliff CGS March 2023

Suffolk's Coralline Crag Rock-Bed

GeoSuffolk's new leaflet records an aspect of our earth heritage, the historical use of the Rock-Bed as a building stone before it passes from public memory. The Rock-Bed is a creamy-yellow limestone with fossils of marine shells. Those made of aragonite have been dissolved by acidic ground water, their calcium carbonate precipitated to harden part of the Coralline Crag into a Rock-Bed. The rock is quite soft when dug out but hardens after a few days as its contained moisture evaporates – ideal for Medieval stone masons! The leaflet documents some of the structures built using Rock-Bed including Chillesford Church, Greyfriars wall in Dunwich and Orford Castle interior, along with a selection of Rock-Bed exposures. Thank you to the Coralline Crag landowners for their help and interest and Coast and Heaths AONB for support through their Community and Conservation Fund. *Suffolk's Coralline Crag Rock-Bed* can be found at various outlets around Aldeburgh and Orford and downloaded from the Archive on our website. CM



A Rock-Bed block in Chillesford Church tower showing fossil bryozoans (corallines) from which the deposit derives its name.

Basil Brown

A blue plaque to Basil Brown, excavator of the Sutton Hoo ship burial, was unveiled on his former house in Rickingham in May 2023. Some fossils he found are noted in GeoSuffolk Times no. 48. RM

Conservation Documents

- The Historic England funded *Curating the Palaeolithic* project has been published (January 2023) as an online document. English Palaeolithic and Pleistocene records and best practice for protecting it is at [Curating the Palaeolithic | Historic England](#)
- Natural England's new (February 2023) publication *GeoConservation: Principles and practice (NE802)* is available to download from [Geoconservation: Principles and practice - NE802 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)

Coralline Crag SSSIs

GeoSuffolk surveyed Aldeburgh Hall Pit SSSI for NE on May 27th as part of the ongoing Geology Trusts SSSI project. We found the pit to be in very good condition for accessing the palaeontology for which it is designated. There is a photo of this SSSI on page 20 of the NE publication mentioned above.

In June Derby University investigated Sudbourne Park Pit SSSI as part of its climate change research studies. GeoSuffolk visited the excavation – it was good to see the improved access given by our two recent SC AONB Work Party visits.

Both of these SSSIs are on private ground – you can find more information about them on [Site Search \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](#)

CM

Crag Path and the Garretts

A (fairly) recent (2020) publication is *Margery Spring Rice: Pioneer of Women's Health in the Early Twentieth Century* by Lucy Pollard (Open Book Publishing). The cover image, by Christopher Ellis, is of 'Margery pushing a young friend along the Crag Path in Aldeburgh, New Year, 1968'. She lived in Aldeburgh in her later years (d.1970) and in Iken before that. She was born (1887) Margery Garrett, of the Leiston and Aldeburgh family (Elizabeth Garrett-Anderson and Millicent Garrett Fawcett were her aunts). Newson Garrett, her grandfather, decided (it is said) in 1860 that he was the only person with the right to take a horse and carriage along Crag Path. Crag Path is the name of the promenade along the sea front at Aldeburgh. It used to be surfaced with 'orange colour' crag until it was tarmacked in the 1950s. RM



Two Enjoyable Days

- Sudbury: Friday June 2nd 'Flint'

This was a GeoSuffolk contribution to GeoWeek 2023, held as part of Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project's Wild in the Stour Valley event at Friars Meadow. One visitor to our stand attended Pot Kiln Primary School, Great Cornard in 1980 and remembered when a crater appeared beside the swimming pool, leading to the discovery of caverns (old chalk excavations) beneath the school. For more information see page 20 in Chelsea Spelaeology Society's 'Caves and Tunnels in SE England', volume 11 1982, *Sudbury Pot Kiln School*. Also try *The Town of Sudbury* (and comments) in Facebook 05.09.21. RM

Countryside Project Officer Emma Black's reckoning was of 4-500 people visiting Friars Meadow – we were certainly kept busy most of the day!



Whilst in Sudbury a visit to the newly refurbished Gainsborough's House Museum revealed this wonderful external flint and brick wall – the bricks from the Eocene Clay at Bulmer Brickworks and the flints from Chalk at Caistor-by-Norwich. CM

- Holywells, Ipswich Saturday June 24th

Another day of welcoming people - to our stand at this 'Cobbold 300' event (300 years since they started brewing). We showcased fossils known to Elizabeth Cobbold including *Nucula cobboldiae* of 1817 and information on the geology of the park, including the CGS springs and the canal dug in Reading Clay. Anthony Cobbold, keeper of the family records visited our stand, and we learned that the Shropshire geologist Edgar Cobbold (known for his work on Cambrian strata) was a member of the family. RM

Corrigendum: 'Mary Eleanor Read' in GeoSuffolk Times no.57 should be Eleanor Mary Reid. RM