

# GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

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Caroline Markham 15.01.24. GeoSuffolk Notes, leaflets and back issues of GeoSuffolk Times are in the archive at <https://geosuffolk.co.uk>

## What use.....?

'So, does this Post-Cretaceous geology have any use?', may have been silently asked by a non-geologist at Ipswich Museum's Designation Celebration (see GeoSuffolk Times 59). Other than current research investigating Crag shells for clues to future climate, two episodes spring to mind, both of which helped to save Britain and also much of Europe. Firstly, the shortage of phosphatic manure for crops in the 'Hungry Forties'. The bad harvests of 1839, '40 and '41; the potato blight of 1845; and the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 provide the background for Dickens' 'Christmas Carol' in 1843 and Bronte's 'Jane Eyre' in 1847. A way out was provided by artificial manure (superphosphate) made by Leibig's method of dissolving ground-up bone in sulphuric acid. However, after raiding continental cemeteries for this purpose, all changed when John Stevens Henslow discovered phosphate-rich nodules, 'coprolites', in the Crag at Felixstowe. This led to our Suffolk fertiliser industry and to Ipswich's Coprolite Street (surely deserving of heritage status). For the second example, prior to 1914 Britain had depended on Germany for its optical glass industry, after which it became necessary to develop home resources to compensate for the cutting off of foreign supplies owing to the war. It was Percy Boswell (who spent many of his early years in Ipswich), as Scientific Advisor (Geological) to the Ministry of Munitions, who undertook a study of British sands suitable for glass making. Sandy Eocene deposits at Sroughton and Dales Road, Ipswich are two which he studied. Bob Markham (RM)

## Meet GeoSuffolk

On February 21st at the Love Bugs event at Christchurch Mansion [Love Bugs | Ipswich Museums \(cimuseums.org.uk\)](https://www.cimuseums.org.uk) GeoSuffolk's stand will be called 'Extinct before the Dinosaurs'. Meet Asa, R-rex and other trilobites. Also the latest dinosaur book from China.

Harwich Formation at Nacton Cliff CGS March 2023

## Cavenham Heath CGS

Cavenham Heath National Nature Reserve, between Icklingham and Tuddenham, lies on an extensive spread of river terrace material to the south of the River Lark. The post-Anglian terrace gravels are capped by a layer of Devensian silts and cover sand and the NNR is designated for its Breckland flora and fauna. Terraces 1 and 2 (after the BGS) are clearly visible as geomorphic features and GeoSuffolk has designated this ancient topography as a County Geodiversity Site. The break of slope between the two can be seen from the Icknield Way Path across the NNR, looking north-west from TM 756727.



This photo of the feature was taken by Andrew Fleming on October 24th 2023. He was condition monitoring the CGS for GeoSuffolk and reported it to be in GOOD condition. CM

## National Landscapes

AONBs (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) have been rebranded as National Landscapes to reflect their national importance following the Landscapes Review Report (Glover Review) 2019. Our two AONBs have been renamed - Dedham Vale National Landscape, and Coast & Heaths National Landscape. A GeoSuffolk site conservation day is being arranged with the Coast & Heaths Work Party on March 12th, location tbc (keep an eye on the events page of the GeoSuffolk web site). If you wish to take part, you must register with the Coast & Heaths NL.

[Practical Conservation Tasks – Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape \(coastandheaths-nl.org.uk\)](https://www.coastandheaths-nl.org.uk) CM

### The 'Brook' Flows Again



A walk in Christchurch Park in Ipswich on January 6th, after 24 hours+ of rain from Storm Henk, showed the 'brook' had abandoned its culvert and was flowing across the surface again past the Boer War Memorial towards the trees at the bottom of Fonnereau Road (and thus on down to Brook Street). CM

### Heritage at Risk

The Heritage at Risk Register 2023 included two examples of artificial stone work in Suffolk. [Search the Heritage at Risk Register | Historic England](#) The Umbrella at Great Saxham Hall is an early nineteenth century Coade stone folly. It is on private property and is to be repaired and relocated. The other 'at risk' structure is the Pulhamite feature at Bawdsey Manor. This photo was taken in 2021 for GeoSuffolk's 'Suffolk Dragon' leaflet – do be aware of tide times if you visit. RM



### Cardinal Wolsey's 'Harwich Stone'

GeoSuffolk's stand at St Peters by the Waterfront in Ipswich on September 10th 2023 for Heritage Open Days displayed a variety of Eocene, Harwich Formation 'septaria' – Cardinal Wolsey's 'Harwich Stone'. Heritage Open Days in Ipswich were themed around the town's Wolsey 550 celebrations (the 550th anniversary of his birth) and included a splendid temporary exhibition in the Hold (SCC Archive). On display was a letter from Elizabeth, Countess of Oxford, to Cardinal Wolsey, replying to his request for a supply of stone from her cliff at Harwich for building his college at Ipswich. This letter is in the collection at the Hold – item reference HD 248/2. CM

### Ballast and Flyash

A recent Ipswich Transport Society newsletter reported railway track ballast shipped from Norway and passing through Lowestoft. Further investigation found it is coming from Rekefjord, where both gabbro-norite and anorthosite are excavated (piles of fresh ballast seen near Norwich are light-coloured). Some track is supported on concrete slabs made using flyash (a by-product of coal-fired power stations) - much of the flyash produced in Ipswich was used as 'fill' at Hadleigh Road gravel pit and on marsh at Piper's Vale, both within the town. RM

### Snippets

- The PAB website [About Pathways to Ancient Britain – Pathways to Ancient Britain \(pabproject.org\)](#) has recent news and updates on their Barnham 2023 field season (July 19th); climate signals from Hoxne (July 15th); and excavations at Icklingham Brick Pit (Devereux's Pit) (September 15th).
- The anthropologist Ales Hrdlicka wrote about the Foxhall (Suffolk) human jaw in 1924 (see GeoSuffolk Notes no.57 The Foxhall Jaw). I often wondered how to pronounce his name and there it was in the *Washington Post* on August 15th 2023 (hurd-lich-kuh).
- 'University of Suffolk Goes Fossil Free' – press release April 6th 2021. It was actually about excluding fossil fuel investment! Note: their rear exit in Ipswich is on Coprolite Street. RM

### GeoAnglia

- The Essex Gem and Mineral Show, always a good day out, is at North Romford Community Centre on February 17th, Adults £2 – see [What's On – ERMSLIVESITE](#) for more information.
- Coastal processes at work - a visit to Cromer just before Christmas provided this spectacular view of waves generated by Storm Pia. (Yes, there were people on the pier!) CM

