

GEOSUFFOLK TIMES

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The cliff north of Benacre Broad, Oct 2025

Caroline Markham 11.04.26. Copies of GeoSuffolk Times are in the Archive on www.geosuffolk.co.uk

Geology at Jimmy's Farm

Jimmy's Farm and Wildlife Park at Wherstead near Ipswich advertises 'livestock and conservation'. But for a geologist there is more. The central area is based on a small valley running northwards towards Bobbitshole SSSI. The valley is floored by Harwich Formation clay (the local 'London Clay' of older literature), impermeable to groundwater in the overlying Red Crag sands, which issues as springs and collects as marshy ground and in ponds – useful for polar bears and other animals. The crag may be viewed as comminuted material just above pond level in the new tapir enclosure; it has also been used as ground material in the armadillo and meerkat enclosures. Very rarely, fossil tapir teeth have been found in the Red Crag, helping to fill the link between living forms in South America and South-East Asia. So, at Wherstead, tapirs are living on a deposit with (very rarely) ancestral relatives. Above the shelly crag are sands (partly decalcified crag, partly overlying Pleistocene sands). The 'sand cliff' for sand martins exposes some of these sands (on west side of site and best seen with binoculars). The higher ground is on sand and gravel, the lower part is Kesgrave Sand and Gravel (recorded on the east, Hill Covert, side) with noticeable quartz stones; the upper part is Anglian (glacial age) sand and gravel. Sand and gravel may be observed in various scrapes, burrows and in root systems of fallen trees in Hill Covert. Note: much is for observation rather than inspection except in part of Hill Covert. My observations re crag would benefit by detailed inspection.

Bob Markham (RM)

Meet GeoSuffolk

May 9th at Clifford Road Tunnels, Ipswich, IP4 1PJ
GeoSuffolk will have a stand at the VE Day Celebration Open Day 11am – 3pm. Admission to site free, entrance charge to tunnels, see [Clifford road tunnels - Clifford Road Tunnels](#)

Benacre Ness SSSI

Last Autumn GeoSuffolk member Howard Mottram surveyed Benacre Ness for Natural England. A depositional feature made from sand and shingle, this approx. 2 km long protrusion extends outwards from the coast, forming a 300m wide beach at Kessingland. Nesses are a feature of our Suffolk coast - Orford Ness, Thorpe Ness, Benacre Ness, Lowestoft Ness, with Winterton Ness in Norfolk. Benacre Ness is moving northward- it has left Benacre Broad behind and is progressing towards Pakefield, at a rate approaching 100m a year. Whilst the landform moves north, its sand/shingle moves generally southwards, as is the case along all of the Suffolk coast.



HM's photo above was taken at the north end of the ness, looking south. It shows a wide beach with ridges of sand and shingle up to 2m high, with the runnels (low areas between the ridges) containing vegetation, showing they are beyond the reach of the sea. These are aligned facing north-east suggesting the material has been deposited by waves travelling from a northerly direction. Clearly the landform is growing northwards. However, the attenuation of the ness at the southern end is less easy to explain. Research suggests that waves from a southerly direction, driven by winter storms, at times move material northwards leading to beach loss here. The south-easterly alignment of our coast, making waves from the south almost as effective at transportation as those from the north may be the reason nesses are such a distinctive Suffolk landform.

CM

Sutton Hoo Garnets

A number of garnets from the Sutton Hoo ship burial near Woodbridge were analysed for the British Museum 'Silk Roads' exhibition in 2024/25, their composition being ascertained by particle-induced x-ray emission (PIXE) at C2RMF in Paris. Preliminary results indicated their origins in Czechia and Sri Lanka (orange-red specimens) and India, particularly Rajasthan (purple-red specimens). See 'Silk Roads' by S Browning, et al 2024 (p.262) and 'Saxon' (Sutton Hoo Society no 82, January 2026). Thanks to CM and Rosemary Hoppitt for these references.

The Bohemian garnet (mined in the Czech republic) is a variety of pyrope garnet, originating in peridotites formed during the Variscan Orogeny, together with secondary deposits. The Sri Lankan garnet (often marketed as cinnamon-stone) includes hessonite (grossular) from high-grade metamorphic rocks such as granulite, also from alluvial gravel. The Indian garnet is rhodolite and almandine, from metamorphic rocks including Precambrian schist, and from alluvium. Alluvial garnet is crystals eroded from their original source and transported, usually by water. RM

Resting Dove in Weatherbed Limestone

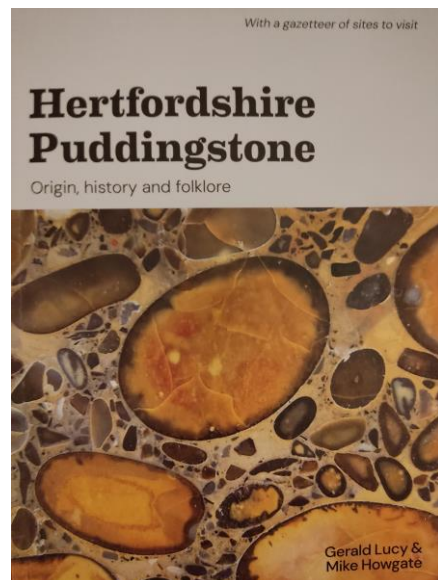


Antonia Hockton's sculpture 'Resting Dove' has been dedicated to those who suffered during the Covid 19 pandemic. Antonia informs us that it has been created in Ancaster Weatherbed limestone. This was chosen for its enduring qualities as the final location of the sculpture is to be on Tower Street, Ipswich - it resides in the Minster at present. Antonia's conceptual depiction of the dove, with its smooth, rounded form displays the soft grey and yellow mottled colours of the limestone to good advantage. Oolites and shell fragments are also clearly visible in this Jurassic limestone from Lincolnshire. CM

Newmarket Chalk Streams

More than 100 residents turned out for the Newmarket Chalk Streams Trust's 'Rivers of Light' parade on February 21st this year. This is an annual event to celebrate and raise awareness of the town's chalk streams, specifically the Newmarket Brook and Cheveley Brook. This year a 30-minute evening lantern walk was led by a local samba band and featured illuminated sections of the stream as a prelude to an evening of events. RM

Hertfordshire Puddingstone



Gerald Lucy and Mike Howgate have just published this engaging 96 page book on one of our favourite East Anglian rocks. They explain the origins of Puddingstone from its creation in the sands and gravels of the Upnor Formation; silicification during the Palaeocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum; to its scattering across Hertfordshire, Essex and further afield by the ancestral River Thames and the Anglian ice sheet. (A Suffolk Puddingstone outside Ipswich Museum, is documented in GeoSuffolk Times no. 42.) There is a comprehensive account of Puddingstone petrology, complete with beautiful illustrations, followed by a section on uses of the rock - functional, ornamental, and spiritual. This last leads to a discussion of folklore associated with these stones – their unexpected 'appearance' in our East Anglian landscape captures the imagination even to the present day. Lastly there is a gazetteer of large Puddingstones with grid references – just asking for a visit. ISBN 978-1-9194463-0-1 £12 from [The Rock Gallery About Us](#) CM