GeoSuffolk Times

Newsletter No.6 October 2010

Welcome to GeoSuffolk Times**,** keeping you up-to-date with geodiversity news, achievements and activities in Suffolk. Please pass it on to anyone who may be interested.
Caroline Markham
17.10.10 www.geosuffolk.co.uk

Crag Rhino Tooth from Bawdsey

Whilst assisting GeoSuffolk member Dr Roger Dixon to lead a Geologists' Association field trip on May 22nd I was shown a tooth by GA member David Bone which he found in the Red Crag being rapidly eroded from the cliff south of East Lane Bawdsey. It was immediately recognised as a left lower molar of a rhinoceros, a rare fossil in Crag deposits and about 3 million years old. Lower molars consist of two crescents at an angle, the outer branch of the hind crescent (the hypolophid) being connected to the posterior branch (metalophid) of the front crescent. Unfortunately, lower molars are of lesser use in species determination, but David has plumped for *Dicerorhinus megarhinus* in an illustrated report of the field trip in the September 2010 GA Magazine. A nice find.
Bob Markham (RM)

Brandon Heritage Centre

This has an excellent section on the economic geology of flint in the Brandon area. It includes a superb flint flushwork display with a modern example set into the museum wall and an instructive section on gunflints (mined at Lingheath pits). By 1800 Brandon was sole supplier for ordnance for the Napoleonic wars and a flintlock gun is exhibited with the flint in place and also the flintknappers block – an iron stake set in an oak tree trunk.
20th century flintknappers include William Spalding who died in 1943 (some of his work is on display – gunflints and Neolithic-type flint tools) and Fred Avery, last surviving master flintknapper in Brandon.
References:
Ben Ruhe (Smithsonian Washington), *Making Gunflints in Brandon England*, Chips (Flintknappers Guild International) V.7 no2 1995
John Stannard, *Brandon Blacks in the Breckland,* The Shooting Gazette 2003.
Ring 07882 891022 for opening times and look out for the new web site soon. CM

Have you visited Thorpeness?

The cliffs lie to the north of the town, with pedestrian access to the beach at the end of Old Homes Road. Walk north past the sea defence gabions (beach not accessible at high tide) to an excellent 200m long cliff section (TM 476602). The Norwich Crag sand at the base supports glacial chalky till and gravels above. This is the most southerly exposure of till in cliffs in the UK - proof that this area was covered by ice some 440 000 years ago.
The beach here has many small blocks of Coralline Crag amongst the flint pebbles – eroded from *Sizewell Rocks,* an outcrop of Coralline Crag to the north and offshore from the wide area of beach known as *Thorpe Ness*. This is one of the Suffolk *nesses* – large curved beaches extending above high water which protrude from the coast at intervals. It is well vegetated by sea kale at present.
Walking south into town through Aldringham Walks, keep a look out for Coralline Crag blocks from the beach used as building stones. Two good examples are in Beacon Hill Lane – an old Coralline Crag wall and one showing 20th century use as ornamentation. CM
(If you have enjoyed this coastal walk try the Dunwich one on GeoSuffolk's leaflet *Dunwich*: *the Geology of Suffolk's lost city*- on our web site.)
Footnote In May 2010 storms removed beach shingle and sand and partly exposed eroded gabions placed there some 34 years previously (to help prevent erosion of the cliff and properties in North End Avenue). New gabions, containing many large flints and Carboniferous Limestone, have been put in place. A new small cliff exposure at the southern end of the gabions now shows sand and gravel and chalky till on Norwich Crag sand; similar to the longer section exposed to the north. RM

Join us at the GA Festival of Geology at University College London on November 6th. GeoSuffolk's stand is showcasing *Earth Heritage Suffolk*. www.geologists.org.uk

News for Geodiversity Providers and Owners

Earth Heritage Suffolk

GeoSuffolk's new Handbook has been distributed free to many Suffolk geodiversity providers and to those who have taken part in our local consultations. Already a number of people have commented on how useful they have found it – please let us have your feedback, we like to hear from you! You haven't received a copy? – just ask, they are free if you are a provider or owner of Suffolk geodiversity, or £6 (including p&p) from GeoSuffolk, c/o Ipswich Museum, High Street, Ipswich, IP1 3QH. But hurry, they are going fast! RM

Ipswich Museum: Ammonite Explorer Day

Visitors to the Museum September 25th (about 70 children and adults in all) were given a real geo-treat, with 'hands on' ammonite specimens in the geology gallery and deliciously messy plaster casts in the lecture room. GeoSuffolk volunteers helped Ann Ainsworth with a series of activities which also included plasticine modelling (very popular) and an identification key for these exciting, varied, extremely useful and extinct fossils. Specimens from the research collection were brought out to show how the ammonites were used as time clocks for the Jurassic and Cretaceous Periods, ending, along with the dinosaurs, in the mass extinction about 65 million years ago. CM

Rockwatch, the Junior branch of the GA is visiting Ipswich Museum on January 22nd 2011 for more geo-activities and fun. You don't have to be a Rockwatch member to join in. Look out for details on the GeoSuffolk website.

'Mammoth job to clean museum exhibit' was a piece in the Ipswich Evening Star 11.10.10, about cleaning the museum's life-size reconstruction of a woolly mammoth. Just to give a little more information – there is an internal scaffolding framework with shaped wooden forms bolted on to give outline. Metal bands were stretched between these, covered with wire mesh and then with glass reinforced resin. Legs and head were carved from blocks of styrofoam, tusks were moulded (from real tusks) in fibreglass, and the artificial hair came from Natural Hair Technologies USA. RM

Geodiversity & Geoconservation Course

A one-day course for non-specialist audiences
Liverpool Hope University 17th November.
Lecturers (highly recommended by GeoSuffolk):
Professor Cynthia Burek, University of Chester
Dr. Murray Gray, Queen Mary College, London
Dr. Tom Hose, Rockhounds Welcome!
Dr. Kevin Crawford, Liverpool Hope University – contact for information crawfok@hope.ac.uk

Christmas Present Ideas

GeoSuffolk's 'Pliocene Forest'

This project at Rockhall Wood SSSI grows from strength to strength with new trees arriving. Most trees have been sponsored (thank you) but some newcomers are looking for you to adopt them – send your name or that of a loved one, or your group into the future, in many cases for hundreds, and for a few, thousands of years! A wonderful and unusual birthday or Christmas present. For details of trees waiting for you (at very reasonable prices) contact Barry Hall (bj.hall2@mypostoffice.co.uk) or any GeoSuffolk member. RM

The Pliocene Forest Grows by Roger Dixon is an illustrated report on the progress, in the Magazine of the GA, September 2010, page 21.

Hallam Ashley

Traditional Crafts and Industries in East Anglia: The photographic legacy of Hallam Ashley, edited by Andrew Sergeant, has recently been published by English Heritage. www.english-heritageshop.org.uk Hallam Ashley (1900-1987) was a photographer who lived in Norwich. His great interest in geology was recognised when he was invited to exhibit his geological work for the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in Norwich in 1935. A photograph on p14 of this new book shows BA members on an excursion to Bramford chalk pit, Suffolk in 1935. Hallam's published works include an article on *Cheirotherium* footprints in the Irish Naturalists' Journal 1946. My own memories of him include a field trip to Whitlingham chalk pit, Norfolk 1963 to photograph a paramoudra flint, and choosing many of his photographs to illustrate *Norfolk Scenery* which I co-authored with Ruth Barnes – published by Norwich Museums Committee 1963. RM

New Publications

- British Geological Survey's 1:50000 scale map: sheet 174 Thetford (it covers Brandon and Lakenheath). From www.ukge.co.uk or http://shop.bgs.ac.uk/Bookshop/
- *The Rocks of Hunstanton and its Neighbourhood* by Jas Frederick Jackson, first published 1910 has been republished 2010 by John R Smith, Hunnyjohn Productions. ISBN 978-0-9565393-0-4. Good to see this Norfolk classic reprinted.
- *Hertfordshire Geology and Landscape* (editor Professor John Catt), expected Dec 2010, £39. A pre-publication offer of £29 closes on Nov 15th. www.hertsgeolsoc.ology.org.uk also has details of contents and authors. Destined to be another classic. RM