

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 14.01.11

[www.geosuffolk.co.uk](http://www.geosuffolk.co.uk)

## Bob's New Year Message

A true tale.....'twas many years ago when I was Geologist at Norwich Castle Museum. Christmas was just past, the annual fair had gone from outside the castle gates, Santa had gone from the shops, and then it happened. Three (I think it was three from memory) fossil reindeer antlers were brought to me by different people. Was it coincidence or, well, might there have been a real Santa in the Devensian cold stage of the Ice Age? With best wishes for 2011 – RM.

## GeoSuffolk Leads Field Trips

GeoSuffolk has many requests to lead field trips to study Suffolk's geological heritage. Here is the tally for 2010.

The Bawdsey peninsula provides some excellent exposures of the Red and Coralline Craggs and in April we took Rockwatch youngsters to see church building stones and Red Crag localities there. We also led field trips to various sites in this area for the Friends of the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge (May), the GA and the Amateur Geology Society (both in June) and the Essex Rock and Mineral Society (July).

In July we led a field trip for the Westleton Common Committee to study the Norwich Crag gravels at Westleton Common. In September we took the East Anglian Open University Geology Society to study Coralline Crag exposures in the Orford area and in November a U3A architecture group was given a tour of building stones in Ipswich.

It is always a pleasure to showcase our geology and landscape, which is held in high regard by visitors to our county and those who live here. CM

## UK School Seismology Project

With simple, affordable seismometers from the British Geological Survey, schools can detect signals from large earthquakes happening anywhere in the world. This is part of the Science Enhancement Project – find out more at [www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)

## Have you visited ....

### Butley Forest pit in winter?

On the forest's edge near Butley lies a colourful surprise – a pit where the Red Crag is exposed against a backdrop of blue sky.

There are vertical 5m faces (at right angles) of horizontally bedded, iron-stained sand. Careful inspection reveals 'cross bedding' indicating sand banks on the 2.5 million year old sea bed. In the upper layers, tube-like trace fossils (perhaps of lug-worms) are clearly visible. Fossil molluscs from the Red Crag sea - *Neptunea contraria*, *Glycimeris*, *Chlamys opercularis* and *Macoma obliqua* and *praetenuis*, many of them fragile and broken, all occur in the talus of the quarry floor.

This Forestry Commission open access land may be reached by footpath from the road just to the south of Butley Corner (TM367494). Its warm, south-facing aspect nestled amongst pine, birch and alder woodland, makes it an ideal place for a winter visit. CM

## GeoSuffolk goes to London

The Festival of Geology on November 6th 2010 was run by the Geologists' Association at University College London. GeoSuffolk's stand showcased our recent publication *Earth Heritage Suffolk*. The beauty of Suffolk's coastal scenery, shown in our displayed photographs, received many compliments from regular visitors to resorts such as Southwold and Aldeburgh. Sales of *Earth Heritage Suffolk* were brisk and many of those we talked to will include a visit to a geodiversity site on their next holiday in our county.

The stand also included three potted tree specimens *Athrotaxis cupressoides*, *Pinus coulteri* and *Calocedrus decurrens*, destined to be planted in GeoSuffolk's 'Pliocene forest' at Rockhall Wood Sutton SSSI. This innovative scheme which aims to interpret the pollen record of the Pliocene received many offers of sponsorship for trees, most of which have now been acquired and planted. CM

Listen to an interview with GeoSuffolk's Bob and Caroline Markham on [www.debenradio.com](http://www.debenradio.com) in the *Natural History and Science* section.

## News: Geodiversity Providers and Owners

### Sarsen stone in Christchurch Park

GeoSuffolk would like to congratulate the Ipswich Society on its Golden Anniversary in 2010. To commemorate its 50 years of civic good works the Society refurbished 'the triangle' outside the Christchurch Mansion café with new surfacing and seating. The existing sarsen stone has been incorporated into the scheme, and, with its site enhanced considerably, makes an excellent additional 'seat' for children. CM

### Happy Anniversary Suffolk Wildlife Trust!

Another Golden Anniversary – the SWT has been a guardian of Suffolk's biodiversity for 50 years. GeoSuffolk would like to acknowledge also the good management of the geodiversity in its care, especially at Newbourne Springs, Carlton Marshes, Lackford Lakes, Redgrave and Lopham Fen and Wangford Warren. See [www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org). CM

### Ipswich Museum

#### Rockwatch Event

The Junior branch of the GA is visiting Ipswich Museum on January 22nd for *Fun with Rocks and Fossils*. With activities ranging from making plaster casts of fossils and storytelling to museum trails and fossil identification, there is something for everyone and you don't have to be a Rockwatch member to join in. 10.30-1 and 2-4 pm at the High Street Museum.

#### Early Days at the Museum 1846-1853

On February 26th Bob Markham is giving a talk on the inception of Ipswich Museum in the (purpose built) building in Museum Street which is now a Restaurant. Geology was prominent from the start.

Science Day at Ipswich Museum, March 19<sup>th</sup>. Victorian science, art, colour, geology – at the Art School. Sounds like good fun - watch out for details. CM

### Dr Nick Ashton Study Day

The Wuffing Education study day at Sutton Hoo on March 6th is by Dr Nick Ashton of the British Museum, titled *The north-west frontier: the early human colonisation of Britain*.

See [www.wuffings.co.uk](http://www.wuffings.co.uk) for more information.

### Earth Heritage Suffolk

GeoSuffolk's handbook was written for and has been widely distributed to geodiversity owners and providers in Suffolk. It has also received two excellent reviews in the geological press – the December 2010 GA Magazine and the October 2010 GeoConservationUK Newsletter.

### Don't be Fooled by Iron Pyrites

*Is debris from war-time action?* at Shingle Street was asked on page 3 of the East Anglian Daily Times 26.06.10. 'Blobs of melted iron', 'pieces of what looked like molten metal' and 'a large stretch of black charred beach' are mentioned, with photographs (of Bawdsey, not Shingle Street). The site is indeed Bawdsey (south of East Lane), many of the 'melted metal' items pictured are fossil wood from the London Clay and are preserved as iron pyrites. The 'black beach', if that in the photographs, is the London Clay wave-cut platform. RM

### A Mention for Lanthanides!

China's Ministry of Commerce has cut its export quotas for lanthanide ('rare earth') elements by 35% for the first 6 months of 2011. 97% of the world's supply in 2010 came from China. BT at Martlesham Heath has used lanthanides for research purposes, e.g. Erbium is used in a device to amplify pulses of light in a fibre-optic cable. MRI scanners in our hospitals use Holmium pole pieces for their magnets; as they are ultra-powerful even tiny fragments of metal must not be allowed near them. RM

### New Publications

- Another new 1:50000 scale map from the British Geological Survey – sheet 224/242 Colchester and Brightlingsea. For Suffolk, it includes the country between Shotley and Stoke-by-Nayland. From [www.ukge.co.uk](http://www.ukge.co.uk) or [www.geologyshop.com](http://www.geologyshop.com).
- The latest volume (46) of Suffolk Natural History (The Transactions of the Suffolk Naturalists' Society for 2010) contains two articles by Professor Richard West, on Lakenheath Warren and on the Brandon Beds.
- *Norfolk's Earth Heritage. Valuing our Geodiversity* was published by the Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership in November 2010. Text by T D Holt-Wilson, A4 format, 74 pages, 85 colour plates, (including cover photo of Trimmingham Chalk by Caroline Markham). See [www.geo-east.org.uk](http://www.geo-east.org.uk) publications.
- *The Geology of London* by Diana Clements was published as GA Guide No.68 in 2010. Over 170 pages, 80 figures, A5 size – see [www.geologistsassociation.org.uk](http://www.geologistsassociation.org.uk)

### Essex Gem and Mineral Show

This is well worth a visit – at North Romford Community Centre on February 19th – see [www.erms.org](http://www.erms.org) for details