

**IPSWICH GEOLOGICAL GROUP**

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## A POEM ON A CRAG FOSSIL.

There can be few fossils named after a woman and even fewer celebrated in a poem. Yet a Crag fossil has both distinctions. The relatively humble shell that has been accorded these marks of worth is the *Acila Cobboldiae* (Sowerby).

In 1827 the Ipswich printer E. Shalders produced a volume of bad poetry and even worse drawings entitled "Valentine Verses" by one Richard Cobbold MA, Rector of Wortham in Suffolk. Among the verses is one with the title '*Nucula Cobboldiae*' - a synonym for the *Acila Cobboldiae*. A note attached to the poem reads as follows? "Being desirous of commemorating MRS. COBBOLD, whose copious collection obtained with great industry, in company with several of the junior branches of her family, whom she delighted to inspire with a love for the works of Nature, from the Crag-pits of her own estate, evinces a degree of taste and zeal seldom met with; I have named this rare, and withal elegant shell, after her." (Vide Sowerby's *Mineral Conchology*, Vol.2, page 177, plate 180).

I do not intend to quote the whole poem as it is far too long but its quality can be gauged by the first few lines:

"Hail Lady! sacred to the Poet's eye  
This *Nucula Cobboldiae*: but why?  
Because it speaks what never spake another,  
The praise and honor of a tender Mother!"

I doubt if anyone else has written a poem about a Crag fossil but I would be interested to hear of another. Another poem in this volume is of interest as it is entitled "The Geologist" and begins:

"What deep afflictions entertain the mind  
Of curious Geologists, inclin'd  
To search midst nature's hidden store,  
For minerals, for specimens of ore;"

- perhaps the editor will print it at length later?

Richard Cobbold is a fascinating study in himself and interested readers should see the comments of Lord Cranbrook in his wonderful "Parnassian Molehill" which is a collection of Suffolk poetry and biographical notes on Suffolk poets.

PETER CHRISTIE

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## IPSWICH GEOLOGICAL GROUP WALK, SUNDAY 30 JANUARY 1977: 'IPSWICH BUILDING STONES'

The following were looked at during the course of the walk –

### Christchurch 'Mansion'

Caen Stone (Jurassic, from Normandy) - in walls.

Flint pebbles (border between pavement and grass).

(?)Purbeck 'Marble' (with gastropods) - paving stone at entrance.

Black fossiliferous limestone - in porch floor.

Coarse white granite (with large feldspars) - 'bollards' in front of house

### Northgate Street (Central Library)

Red Brick (from London Clay, Dales Road, Ipswich).

Jurassic limestones, - shelly, oolitic.

### Carr Street

'Abbey National' - white granite.

'Gift Shop' - pink granite.

'Conleys' - larvikite.

### Tavern Street '

'Great White Horse' - White Brick (from Woolpit).

S.E. corner - mica in igneous rock.

### St. Lawrence Church (north side)

flint. shelly limestone, weathered limestone.

Butter Market  
 'Youngsters' & 'Cowells' - Palaeozoic coralliferous limestone.  
 'William & Glyns' - oolitic limestone (unweathered).  
 'Alliance Insurance' - white granite.

Queen Street  
 'Britannia Building Society' - finer-grained white granite.  
 Kerb-stones, S.W. Queen St - granite.

Franciscan Way  
 Paving between carriageways - Flint cobbles

St. Nicholas Churchyard  
 Weathered oolitic limestone (gravestone with skeleton).

St. Nicholas Church  
 limestone (shelly; oolitic).  
 mudstone (with marine borings), from London Clay.  
 ? Red Crag (Cardium, etc.) in mortar.  
 flint.  
 quartz.  
 sarsen-type sandstone.

Riverside Walk (west of Stoke Bridge)  
 Sarsens (from Reading Sands at river level).

Old Custom House  
 sandstone: cross-bedded, weathered (in arch)  
 pink granite (drinking fountain).

R.M.

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R.A.D.M.

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R.M.

## THE IPSWICH SCENE THEN AND NOW

### The Weather and Other Lore.

The Summer of 1976 has been claimed to have been one of the finest, hottest and driest of the present century. How does it compare with other notable summers, 1911, 1921, 1947 and 1959?

While at the Museum I have been able to keep weather records for over forty years and consult the earlier records commenced in 1907 by Prank Woolnough then the Curator.

It has often been said that cold, snowy and frosty winters are followed by good summers. Records do not support this claim, except on a few occasions. The winter of 1975-76 was comparatively mild and dry with practically no snow and only a few frosts.

At quite an early age I commenced to study the weather; the changing seasons, the beauty of the sky, spring and summer sunshine and the magic effect of rain upon the flowers and grasses. On sunny days I remember that the sky seemed to be a more intense blue than is usual today. Perhaps this was because my eyes were younger.

Sometimes there would be a sequence of days with not a cloud or mark in the sky. The last occasion being in March 1933 when from the 22nd to 29th, there were eight completely cloudless days. Such a phenomenon is unlikely ever to occur again. Now it is unusual to have even one absolutely cloudless day in a year. Why is this? In 1933 the days of the high flying jets had not arrived to pollute the sky with their vapour trails. Now during summer especially, these vapour trails are forever present, criss-crossing the sky and fanning out. We cannot escape them anywhere in this country or indeed over much of the World. Sometimes they are so numerous as to form a complete haze. They have not the beauty of natural cloud formations, at least I think so. Only when the wind is blowing strongly from a northerly or easterly direction and it is cold and dry are the vapours more rapidly dispersed.

However, there were just two days in 1976 when the sky was a wonderful blue. They reminded me of those bygone days, the Mediterranean or the view from the top of a high mountain. During the early afternoon of Wednesday 30th June I noticed that the sky was becoming a more intense blue than usual. Distant buildings showed up very clearly. I tried to point this out to various people who only said "Yes", grunted or nothing, looking at me in a funny way! One person remarked that it was a sign that it was going to rain. I phoned Ken Blowers of the East Anglian Daily Times who got in touch with the Meteorological Station at Honington and they confirmed my observations. At 3 p.m. there was a difference of 18 degrees F in the readings between the Dry and Wet bulb thermometers in the Museum screen. The humidity at Honington was about 8%, the



driest day of the Century. It was so clear that pilots flying over Suffolk at 30,000 - 35,000 feet could see the coast of Ireland. A week later, again on a Wednesday afternoon, similar conditions developed, although the humidity at Honington was recorded as 15%, the same as over Cairo. However, in our screen at 3 p.m. there was a difference of 19 degrees F between the Dry and Wet bulbs.

In 1976 there were 55 days between May and the end of August with screen temperatures of 75F or over. On 20 days it was between 80F and 91.5F, recorded on Saturday 26th June. This is the highest temperature I have ever recorded, but it is not a record for this station, 93.5F was reached on Friday 21st July 1911.

The total rainfall for the first six months of 1976 was 5.22 inches. The dry summer weather was broken by a thunderstorm during the early hours of the 16th July when 0.68 inches was recorded. I got up and went into the garden and filled up the water-butt and buckets from the roof downpipe. On the afternoon of Tuesday 20th July a huge and thick storm cloud built up over the Ipswich area with a top at about 30,000 feet. There "was a severe thunderstorm and a very heavy downpour of 1.17 inches, of which I recorded 0.75 inches in 40 minutes At Belstead, said to have been the centre of the storm, 2.11 inches was measured, the heaviest rainfall for 60 years. At my home water poured into my front room, this was the worst for twenty years. Over the Bank Holiday period, 27th-30th August there were further storms and a total of 2.76 inches was recorded. From then on the fine weather collapsed and we had a very wet Autumn with 3.84 inches in September, 3.71 inches in October, but only 2.5 inches in November and a dry December with only 1.63 inches. The total for the year was 22.16 inches. The lowest night screen temperature of the year was 25F recorded on the morning of the 29th December.

The Summer of 1911 - I know very little about the summer of 1911, apart from the records and what I have been told. I was not yet around. The winter of 1910-1911 had been very mild indeed and this was followed by some exceptionally hot weather. There were 54 recorded days with temperature of 75F or over. 26 days with readings between 80F and 93.5F There were two other days with temperatures over 90F, 22nd July, 91F and the 9th August 91.5. 1911 was not a particularly dry year, the rainfall was about average.

The Summer of 1921 - Now the year 1921 I do remember quite well. The winter of 1920-21 had been mainly mild, except for one heavy fall of snow during the night of the 10th December 1920, between nine inches and a foot. I can recall the morning helping to shovel away the snow which had piled against the doors. Everybody seemed to be at work with shovels, spades and brushes clearing their fronts and pavements. Great banks of snow were piled up in the roads. There was little traffic then

no salting or sanding. If you did not clear away the snow quickly from your front, gangs of unemployed would soon be knocking at your door. On the following night there was an exceptionally severe frost, 20 degrees of frost recorded in the Museum screen. Water froze in the pipes and this was the only time we have ever had a burst pipe in our house. The year 1921 was a really exceptional year and the driest of this century with a total rainfall of only 12.95 inches. The total from January to end June was 5.90 inches. Summer weather commenced early in April and continued until autumn. There were 65 days with readings of 75F and over. 22 days between 80F and 90F (reached on the 11th July.)

On the morning of 8th April there was an eclipse of the sun. We were all told to bring a piece of smoked glass to school so we could watch the eclipse. The small piece of glass I took was made black over our coal fire. Sunglasses were not around and the only people one saw wearing dark glasses were the unfortunate blind, frequently the beggars sitting by the wayside. Their glasses were small, dark green, blue, brown or black and fitted into thin metal frames. At that time I was going to Prep. School in Burlington Road. The morning of the eclipse was bright, clear and fresh. We all went into the school garden. I remember standing near a lovely Horse Chestnut tree and the lilac bushes. Although it was not a total eclipse it became strangely dusk-like. The birds commenced to twitter alarmingly.

The school summer term of 1921 was very long, hot and tiring, lasting until almost the end of July, with only one day off for half-term at Whitsun. The summer holiday was spent at Felixstowe. We travelled down daily by train; a monthly return ticket costing only a few shillings. The beach we frequented was between Cobbold's Point and Reed Pond. There were then no huts and it was still beautiful and quiet and it was unusual to see more than about a dozen other visitors on any day, even on Sundays. A flock of sheep grazed on the cliff top pastures or on the golf links. Sometimes they would come down onto the beach at the dip, By Reed Pond, where there was a small pond with reeds and willow herbs. The pond was fed by a stream, rising from Red Crag springs in the little valley behind Old Felixstowe church. This area had once been occupied by a Roman Settlement, and they constructed a Fort (Walton Fort) on the low cliffs. The Fort was similar in design to Burgh Castle, near Breydon Water. Remains of this Fort can still be seen in the bay at some low tides. On one occasion, during an exceptionally low tide it was possible to walk among the ruins. Developments have spoilt the area since those days and the little stream no longer flows through the sand and shingle but is piped to the beach.

The Summer of 1947 - Many people can recall the good summer of 1947. The winter of 1946-47 was cruel with show and severe frosts persisting until the second week of March. It was a winter when there was a coal

shortage and other heating fuels. The hot weather came early in May. There were 49 days with temperatures of 75F and over, of which 19 days it was between 80F and 90.5F on the 3rd June. We were thankful for this w lovely summer after the sufferings of the War and that awful winter. However, the year was not particularly dry, with a total rainfall of 19.34 inches.

The Summer of 1959 - It was very sunny and dry, but no really high temperatures were recorded. The highest was only 85.5F. There were 46 days with temperatures of 75F or over, of which 16 days had maximums between 30F and 85.5F. The winter of 1958-59 had been mainly mild, except for several severe ground frosts in March. The total rainfall for the year was only 14.89 inches which makes 1959 the second driest year so far recorded at Ipswich this century. The month of September was the driest month I have ever recorded with only 0.01 inches.

Temperatures of 90F or above have also occurred on 27th July 1933, 90.5F, on 29th June 1957, also 90.5F and on 2nd July 1961 90F. Some weather prophets have forecasted another summer like 1976, or even hotter, however past records do not support such optimism.

F.W.Simpson.

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In an endeavour to 'catch up 1 with publications, this issue is for 1977-8(1), and the next issue, no. 21, will be for 1979.