GEOSUFFOLK TIMES



Newsletter 67
October 2025

Bryozoans and bivalves in Coralline Crag, Sudbourne

Caroline Markham 13.10.25. Copies of GeoSuffolk Times are in the Archive on www.geosuffolk.co.uk

Easy Recording

An easy way to record specimens, such as cockle shells, astartes and tellins, is to photocopy them. A large number may be copied together at once, the clear, 2D reproduction making it easy to compare details, or to trace them, and to take them elsewhere for study or comparative work. Lay the specimens on the glass copying surface (calcium carbonate shells are unlikely to scratch but take care with any adhering sand grains, etc.) than cover with, for example, a cloth or box to exclude extraneous light. You can experiment with a white or black cover and with black and white or colour photocopying. I originally came across this method in an article by Alex Comfort of Santa Barbara, California, in the Conchologists Newsletter no.61, June 1977. Bob Markham (RM)

Brickmakers Wood

On a recent visit to Brickmakers Wood in Ipswich I discovered shelly Red Crag in a fox digging and retrieved a couple of good turritellas and some phosphate nodules ('coprolites'). This site, privately owned by the Eden Rose Coppice Trust, is part of the slope behind Suffolk New College. It was the site of the former Back Hamlet Brick and Tile Works and of St Helen's Pottery. Both Reading Clay and London Clay were dug at these sites, and the Red Crag lies above these. It was good to see evidence of the geology in this lovely urban woodland retreat for people with life-limiting illness, and with workshops for young people with disabilities. CM

Meet GeoSuffolk

October 29th 10am-3pm Discovery Day at Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich. What will you discover at the GeoSuffolk stand? Coprolites (phosphate nodules); North Sea oil; flint implements; and we will be pleased to see your finds. Museum Discovery Day | Ipswich Museums

The Rattleseden River
A new County Geodiversity Site

The Rattlesden River rises in Bradfield Woods at a height of approx. 90m OD and flows eastwards to join the River Gipping at Stowmarket 15km downstream at approx. 60m. This low relief, reinforced by Suffolk's low rainfall and extensive vegetation cover, results in low energy levels and slow flow. The river flows over Anglian Till for its entire course, suggesting its origins are post-Anglian - the till providing a high suspended load. Gravel terraces along the valley sides have not been exploited and there is no evidence of alterations to its channel for navigation. It is therefore representative of the rivers of 'High Suffolk', initiated following the retreat of the Anglian ice sheet.

GeoSuffolk has designated a 350m section of the river and its floodplain within the Food Museum grounds in Stowmarket, as a CGS. It encompasses two meanders of approx. 130m wavelength and amplitude, within a 200m floodplain, typical landforms of a river in its middle course. It is accessible to the public with an easy access path along the north bank. We thank the Food Museum for conserving and giving access to this section of the river. CM



Looking upstream along one of the meanders

Cobbold's Point

A recent visit to Felixstowe included a walk northwards along the sea front to Cobbold's Point. It was good to see that the Red Crag on London Clay unconformity is still visible in the cliff at the northern end of the promenade. The Larvikite sea defences are an additional bonus for petrologists who visit this site. CM



A Message to the Future

One of the discussion points at the Ipswich workshop on radioactive waste management (see GeoSuffolk Times no. 26, October 2015) was how to send information on burial sites 300 years into the future - even in such a short time today's technology has difficulty dealing with storage formats from the last century. So, I suggested using the written word – after all, we have 300 year old books. Recently I have viewed a bible published in 1716 in Peterborough Cathedral (open at that geological quote in Proverbs, 'Who can find a good wife? For she is worth far more than rubies…'). Also, at Moyses Hall Museum in Bury St Edmunds, even older - a 13th century book 'A Trial of Witches'. Old technology for a new world. RM



Whilst at Moyses Hall we saw this splendid ammonite, found near Barrow Primary School. This, and other glacial erratic fossils formed an excellent display at the Museum. CM

From the East Anglian Daily Times

Following up a headline in the August 20th EADT, 'Almath Crucibles in Newmarket….'. Almath's (they are actually in Cambridgeshire) shop advertises alumina (aluminium oxide, Al_2O_3) ceramics but also alumina powders for sale. Some powder is obtained from the Sumitomo Company in Japan who obtain the raw material from a pit near Boddington, S.E. of Perth in Australia. The Bauxite (red aluminium oxide/hydroxide rich ore) is hosted within laterite (formed by tropical weathering and chemical alteration of the underlying Precambrian granite)- it is refined into white alumina powder. RM

Unusual Sarsen Stones



Little has been published about sarsens and silcretes from the early Eocene of the Belstead Brook valley at Washbrook. Here is a fine example of one of them by a village garden. It is quartzite as are those in Christchurch Park in Ipswich, but the patterned surface of this specimen is more irregular. Thank you to GeoSuffolk member Linda West for bringing these stones to our attention. RM

Snippets

- At the Ipswich Institute, December 19th, 13.30-15.30 £7.00. Talk - 'From Knuckle-Dragging Brutes to Kissing Cousins: Our Changing Vision of the Neanderthals', by Prof Tristan Carter.
- More London Clay birds – the potoos, nightjars and allied birds from the London Clay of Walton-on-the-Naze are featured in Palaeobiodiversity and Palaeoenvironments (2025) 105:773-793. s12549-024-00610-9.pdf Thank you to Alan Lord for this reference.