GEOSUFFOLK TIMES



Thorpe Ness CGS and Sizewell Cliff, April 2026

Caroline Markham 31.07.26. Copies of GeoSuffolk leaflets and GeoSuffolk Times are in the Archive on www.geosuffolk.co.uk

Meet GeoSuffolk

GeoSuffolk's leaflet *Suffolk's Crag Coprolites* invites you to 'discover our Victorian Phosphate Rush' with a wide variety of information and illustrations. Rather tucked away under 'Waldringfield Church' are the names of some of the 'men in red' – the coprolite workers stained by iron-rich Red Crag. Learn more about them on GeoSuffolk's Heritage Day stand at St Peters by the Waterfront on Saturday September 12th. Meet William Kemp of Waldringfield who started work in a coprolite pit in 1873 when he was 10 years old, and Bob Foster of Ramsholt who started work in a coprolite pit when seven years old and eventually retired to Palmerston Road in Ipswich. St Peter's by the Waterfront & The Ipswich Charter Hangings

Bob Markham (RM)

GeoSuffolk's Pliocene Forest

In 2009, GeoSuffolk used Professor Richard West's pollen analysis of the Coralline Crag to recreate a 'Pliocene forest' on the Rockhall Wood SSSI in Sutton. Seventeen years on this is approaching early maturity, with *Pterocarya, Pinus* and *Populus* visible from the footpath – but at a distance. In 2023, GeoSuffolk established a new 'Pliocene forest' (photo below June 2026) a short distance away and adjacent to the footpath. These 'Pliocene forests', established by Barry Hall, can be viewed from the footpath which follows the track to Wood Hall from the B1083. CM



Strata at Brockley Wood



Quarrying at Brockley Wood, adjacent to the A12 between Copdock and Capel St Mary, 2026 has revealed a section showing boulder clay on sands and gravels. With thanks to Anne and Dennis Kell for this image. RM

Bawdsey Finds

The East Anglian Daily Times June 8th 2026 reported (with photographs) a piece of large fossil 'mastodon' tooth found by a Sternfield family on East Lane beach. It was identified by Professor Adrian Lister, research palaeontologist of the Natural History Museum, London, as the upper left molar of the gomphothere *Anancus arvernensis*, eroded from the Red Crag. The crag rhinoceros tooth found by David Bone at this locality on May 22nd 2010 (see GeoSuffolk Times no. 6) has (in 2025) been donated to Ipswich Museum.

RM

Sizewell Railway Cutting



The recently constructed rail link from Leiston to the Sizewell C construction site is in a cutting where it crosses the B1122 road north of Leiston. Observation, looking west, from the footpath shows, on the right, cross-bedded crag sands. RM

Thorpeness Cliff CGS

In April, on one of our regular visits to check County Geodiversity Sites, I took the photo of Thorpeness Cliff below. Recent erosion has exposed the southern end of the channel of till which extends southwards from the Leiston area. Below it are Norwich Crag sands.



The lack of Coralline Crag blocks on the beach was noticeable. These are eroded offshore from an extension of the Coralline Crag outcrop under the Ness (see banner photograph) and are usually moved southwards and scattered along Thorpeness beach. Their absence in April suggests temporary northward movement of beach material over the winter. This is consistent with recent research on Benacre Ness – see GeoSuffolk Times no.69. CM

GeoAnglia

- A six-metre artwork of the Moon at Colchester Castle Museum (entry charge) until October 31st is impressive. With 1 cm of sculpture representing 6km of Moon it involves serious neck-bending to view much of it. The 3D curvature makes viewing of e.g. relationships of maria quite different from the 2D images we are used to.
- For the rest of this year, Hollytrees Museum in Colchester is hosting the skeleton, on public display for the first time, of a dinosaur from the late Jurassic Morrison Formation of Wyoming (photo below with curator Dr Simon Jackson). Booking essential - Discover: Museum Wonders | Colchester Museums



Barnham News

A recent report in the journal *Nature* December 10th 2025 presents evidence for fire-making at the Pleistocene site at Barnham some 400,000 years ago. Distinguishing natural wildfires from human-ignited fire requires evidence and Barnham has yielded fire-cracked flint hand-axes and two mineral fragments identified as iron pyrites (which can produce sparks when struck with flint). The flint could be local, but the pyrite was considered significant – not common in the area, suggesting it was deliberately brought to the site by early humans with the intention of making fire. A photograph appears to show a piece of the radiating fibrous 'marcasite' form as found from time to time in the Chalk and in the boulder clay of Suffolk, so it may not have come far. RM

https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-025-09855-6

Recent Publications

- 'The Chillesford Clay - muddying and unmuddying the waters' by Howard Mottram is online now. It discusses the relationship between the Chillesford Clay of the Sudbourne area and that at Easton Bavents – sometimes called the Baventian Clay. *Suffolk Natural History* vol. 60, 2024. Volume 60 (2024) | Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service CM
- 'An overview of the oldest and most comprehensive avifauna of the early Eocene British London Clay' by Gerald Mayr in *Papers in Palaeontology*, Vol.12, Part 3 (2026) concludes a major study on these Walton-on-the-Naze fossils; all articles are listed in the bibliography. Thank you to Professor Alan Lord for this information. RM
- *A Field Guide to Collecting British Cenozoic Fossils* by Steve Snowball and Alister Cruickshanks, 2026, paperback, 190 pages, full colour, is available through Amazon. The Cruickshanks family found some splendid Norwich Crag fossils when they lived near Southwold, and many are featured in this lavishly illustrated publication. The section of the cliff and beach (to extreme low tide) at Easton Wood is based on rare opportunities for recording and is very welcome. One oddment, page 149: if they are adults the *Admete* shell should be less than half the size of the *Buccinum*. The section on safety (p24) should be gainfully studied by all. RM