



Newsletter

Spring 2008 No. 2

Welcome to the second Mid Suffolk Discovery Project Newsletter

It's been a hectic and action packed time since we wrote our first newsletter in December 2007. We've been busy putting together our new Aggregates Trail, a walking trail through the Gipping Valley. We've researched, walked and photographed to bring you a well-rounded picture of the aggregates industry in the valley. It's amazing how interesting and diverse the topic becomes once you start investigating! We've discovered that Roman settlers dug the same gravel to build their roads and that Stowmarket sand was used in WWII for filling sand bags.



Left: © Mr Dennis Dyball

Read on to find out more. In between all that we've worked with the Countryside Team with school groups, our Junior Rangers and to run events.

There are many people to thank for their contributions to the Aggregates Trail, so a BIG THANK YOU to everyone involved, including those overseas.

INSIDE: Exciting events, Spring has sprung, find out what aggregates means to you and more...

AGGREGATES TRAIL

What are aggregates?

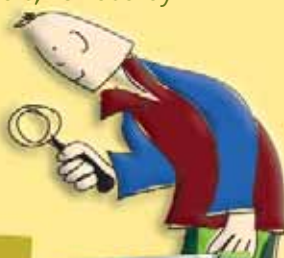
Aggregates is the word used to describe sands and gravels extracted from quarry sites. The sands and gravels in Suffolk were brought here during cold phases of the Ice Age. We are surrounded by aggregates in various forms... in buildings, roads and gardens to name a few. They are essential to our modern lives but we know very little about them, the process of extracting them and how they are used. Extracting aggregates can also reveal an area's amazing history.

The Aggregates Trail

To reveal more we have created an Aggregates Trail in the Gipping Valley. A trail leaflet is now available and five interpretation boards will soon be in place. The trail guides you through the valley between Needham Market and Barham and unravels the fascinating history and future of the area. Leaflets are available free of charge at Needham Lake, Barham Picnic Site and from Mid Suffolk District Council.



We have also created an education pack 'X Traction', with accompanying trail guides and a moveable display of four pop-up banners, for use by schools and groups.



Springtime thoughts from our Countryside Ranger

I hope you have started to clean your welly boots of mud and are enjoying the spring. As you explore this wonderful season try and look out for some of these amazing plants and animals found all around mid Suffolk.

Cowslips

Thought of as a high-rise Primrose. Folklore names include, 'bunch of keys' and 'freckled face' due to the orange spots on the petals. The name comes from cow-slop or cow-pat, and this hints at the places they like to grow.

Did you know?

The most flowers found on one plant was 87. How many can you find on one?

Lesser Celandines



One of the earliest Spring flowers and a favourite of the poet William Wordsworth. Modern herbalists prescribe the plant in treatments for haemorrhoids - hence the folk name "Pilewort".

Did you know?

An old name for this plant is 'Spring Messenger'

Lords and Ladies

In the woods and hedgerows you will see the leaves of this strange looking plant. It has many unusual names such as Jack in the pulpit, Red-hot-poker, and Willy lily. At night the pollen of the flower gives off a faint light and this led to the nick name Fairy Lamps.

Exciting events

We run events all year round for all ages in Mid Suffolk. You can download the events programme from our website, or call 01449 724633 to request a copy. Our Countryside Events Programme for 2008 has been a great success so far and our new 'Evening Inspiration' talks have proved very popular. **Don't miss out!**

Coming up soon

The South and Heart of Suffolk Walking Festival 2008.

For more information on all the walks taking place please contact Mid Suffolk TIC 01449 676800 or visit www.southandheartofsuffolk.org.uk

We are leading two walks in the Gipping Valley

Barking and Back Again

Tuesday 20th May 2-5pm

Meeting at Needham Lake car park (lakeside).

Adults £2.50 concessions £1.50.

Join a country walk between Needham Market and Barking, via some ancient woods and tracks. 5½ miles circular route.

Gipping Valley Walk

Saturday 24th May

10am - 4pm

Meeting at Needham Lake car park (lakeside).

Adults £2.50 concessions £1.50.

Booking essential.

Join us on a walk along this wonderful river from Needham Market to Ipswich searching for herons, kestrels and kingfishers. 12 miles long, returning via the train. Please bring money for the train.

Wild about Gardening

Tuesday 27th May

11am - 3pm

Mill Meadow, Needham Lake.

Discover how to make your garden or window box wildlife friendly. A few wildlife tips can make a huge difference. Get your green fingers

into compost, make insect homes and plant wildflowers in your decorated pots. **Children £2.50.**

Open Farm

Sunday 1st June

Manor Farm, Battisford, IP14 2HE.

Free event 11am - 5pm.

A chance to talk to local farmers about their crops and animals and the conservation work they carry out. Exhibits, stalls and farm walks. Enquiries: 01449 770932.

Family Pond Dipping

Sunday 29th June

11am - 3pm

Needham Lake. Find out what lurks in the water at the lake. You may be surprised by what you find!

Children £2.50.



Plus many more throughout the year!

Be Nice to Nettles

Welcome to the world of the stinging nettle. If you've ever been stung by one, you probably don't like them. Read on, discover its many uses and see if we can change your mind.

Green fingered?

Nettles can help rear an army of ladybirds to march on the aphids attacking crops in the summer. They support over 107 species of insect including many butterflies. They can prevent fungal attacks on nearby plants and, boiled up, make a nutritious liquid plant food. The leaves are great in compost heaps, adding nitrogen.

Suits you sir!

The nettle has been used for centuries to produce a cloth,

similar in texture to flax. It was used to make uniforms during WW1. Recently in Italy, jeans have been made from nettle fibres.

Time for tea

People have eaten nettles for many centuries. It was relished as a springtime treat, providing an excellent source of calcium, magnesium and iron. Try steaming the tops, like spinach, or make a pot of tea with a handful of leaves. Avoid picking near roads or where dogs have been.

Did you know?

- Roman soldiers posted in Britain were reputed to have brushed their limbs with nettles so the stings would warm them in the cold climate!
- Bunches of nettles were often hung in larders because of their fly repellent properties
- Nettle is used as a herbal remedy for arthritis

Zooming Swifts

Listen out for the screaming of swifts as they fly. The noise they make has given them the folk name of 'devil screamer'. They arrive in Spring and are often the first summer migrants to leave in August. Swifts spend their first two years on the wing catching insects, until making their nest the following year.

Barham Pits

Barham is a place with an interesting history. It is even thought that Charles Dickens based his novel 'Oliver Twist' on the Bosmere and Claydon Union Workhouse that was situated where the picnic site now is. The Barham aggregates pits were rich in fascinating finds and great places for discovering more about creatures of the past. The water filled pits are now important for wildlife, particularly waterfowl and are recognised as a County Wildlife Site because of this.

You can begin your journey along the aggregates trail from Barham.

There are various points of interest within a short walk of the picnic site and information room, including industrial archaeology, a remnant of gravel terrace untouched by aggregate extraction and an enjoyable walk along the Gipping River. You are also next door to an aggregates processing plant, dealing with primary and recycled material. Remember to stick to marked footpaths and don't enter private land.

You can read two of our new Aggregates Trail information boards at Barham and pick up a trail leaflet.



Portion of tusk from Woolly Mammoth
Courtesy of Colchester and Ipswich Museum

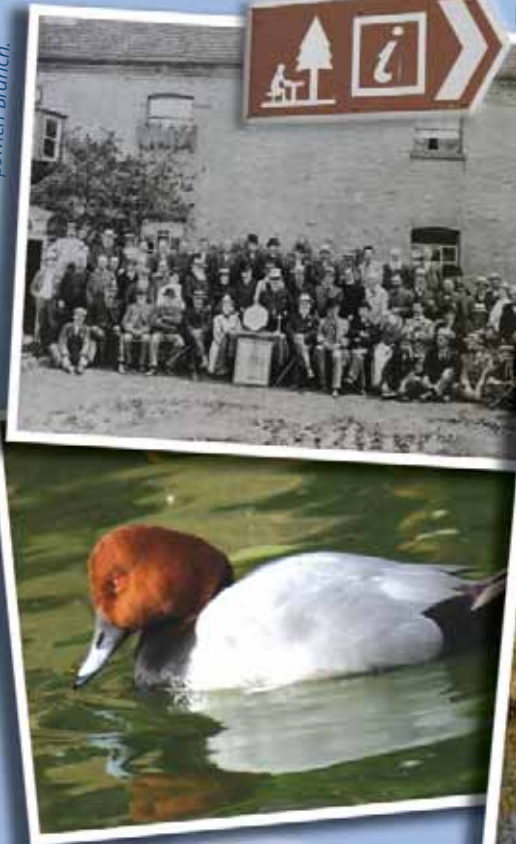
There is a play area and benches to relax on once you have explored.

We said we'd bring you more on the Blue Peter story in this issue. In 1987, a Woolly Rhino jawbone became famous when it appeared on BBC One's Blue Peter and in national newspapers. It was found by a seven year old at a quarry in Barham, helped by his neighbour, and taken to Ipswich Museum to find out what it was. It was identified as a Woolly Rhinoceros. When discovered it was covered in mud and had to be cleaned off, revealing four teeth, the condition of which indicated it was a young adult.

You can visit the jawbone and other amazing fossils and finds at Ipswich Museum.



Wolf, Incomplete femur
(thigh bone). From Barham.
Courtesy of Colchester and Ipswich Museum



If you
require this
newsletter in
an alternative
format please
contact
us ☎
0845 606 6067

GeoSuffolk has also created a Mammoth Trail. You can find one of their information boards at Needham Lake. Visit www.geosuffolk.co.uk to find out more.

Contact us

Please contact us if you have any questions or comments about the Aggregates Trail or Discovery Project.

Discovery Project Officer
Mid Suffolk District Council
131 High Street
Needham Market
Suffolk IP6 8DL

☎ 01449 724632

email: discoveryproject@midsuffolk.gov.uk

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