

County

Suffolk

Site name, parish

Holbrook Bay



Cliffs at Stutton Ness. Photo © Geo-East

Features of interest

Holbrook Bay is part of the Stour estuary. Fossils of Pleistocene age have been found in the cliffs and foreshore around the Bay. Stutton Ness is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its interglacial deposits and associated Palaeolithic evidence.

See the Suffolk Mammoth Trail panel at the Lower Holbrook car park. The artwork is by Beverly Curl and the panel was created by GeoSuffolk. Photo © Geo-East

Sticky, grey London Clay about 50 million years old underlies the Stour estuary. Above this are sandy silts and gravels of Pleistocene age, laid down by an early River Stour during a warm interglacial period about 200,000 years ago. The fossil remains come from these layers, exposed in the low cliffs and foreshore at Stutton and Harkstead.

Bones of big animals such as mammoth, straight-tusked elephant, rhinoceros and horse have been found here for over a century, as well as the tiny bones and teeth of mice, shrews and voles. Some are grassland, some are woodland species. Over 80 different species of mollusc have been recorded from Stutton, making it one of the richest sites from this period in Britain.

Early humans, probably Neanderthals, lived here at this time. Flint blades and scrapers have been found here; they were made using a 'Levalloisian' technique, which involved striking flakes from a carefully prepared core.

The Stour Estuary has been designated a SSSI for its wildlife as well as geological interest.



Fossil shell of *Corbicula fluminalis* from Stutton cliff. Today, this species is native of tropical & subtropical Asia and Africa.
Photo © Geo-East



A Palaeolithic flint blade from Harkstead, now in Ipswich Museum.
Photo © Geo-East

- Access** By footpath from Holbrook or Stutton. Car park at Lower Holbrook.
- Grid reference** TM 177351 (Lower Holbrook car park); TM150330 (Stutton Ness)
- Further information** Stour Estuary SSSI citation (including Stutton): http://www.english-nature.org.uk/citation/citation_photo/1004172.pdf
RSPB Stour Estuary reserve:
<http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/s/stourestuary/index.asp>
See Suffolk Mammoth Trail information at <http://www.geosuffolk.co.uk/>

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