

Fossils of the Fleet

Stephen Feist & John Dadds

The geology and fossil fauna of the Fleet shore are of international importance. The fossils that can be found are diverse and originate from marine-derived strata ranging from the Fuller's Earth in the northwest to Kimmeridge Clay in the south, these covering a time span of approximately 30 million years. Most fossils are small and many are fragmentary, but complete specimens can be found. Although the majority, such as the ammonites, ichthyosaur remains and molluscs, are of marine origin, occasional remains of terrestrial origin (plants, pterosaur teeth) are known.

The Fleet is a unique feature of our natural heritage. The best way to appreciate the wealth of fossils to be found is to join one of the occasional walks organised by the Chesil Beach Centre.

- 1 Oyster Bed made up almost entirely of fossil oysters
- 2 Flat coral (*Isastrea*) - 4.4cm
- 3 Brachiopod mollusc (*Avonothyris*) - 2cm
- 4 Brachiopod mollusc (*Goniorhynchia boueti*) - 2.5cm
- 5 Scapula (shoulder blade) of an ichthyosaur - 14cm
- 6 Vertebra of an ichthyosaur - 7cm
- 7 Ammonite (*Quenstedtoceras lamberti*) - 4.8cm
- 8 Belemnite (*Hibolithes hastata*) - 4.7cm
- 9 Leg of a lobster - 3.6cm
- 10 Mussel (*Modiolus*) - 7cm
- 11 Ammonite body chamber (*Cardioceras*) - 4.5cm
- 12 Jaw of a fish (*Gyrodus*) - 4cm
- 13 Vertebra of a fish - 1.3 cm
- 14 Scale of a fish - 2cm
- 15 Tooth of a crocodile - 2.4cm
- 16 Tooth of a shark - 1.4cm

