



MAYLANDSEA ESSEX



INTRODUCTION TO MAYLANDSEA

Thank you for enrolling on our fossil hunting event.

On the foreshore at Maylandsea, depending on the beach and tidal conditions, a diverse fauna of marine fossils can be collected from the London Clay. The fauna is particularly rich in shark teeth, fish bones and vertebrae and the site is also famed for its exceptional lobster specimens, preserved in light yellow phosphatic nodules. A variety of molluscs can also be picked up.

For those interested in micro-fossils, the beach shingle and grit is very productive. Samples can be taken, to sieve carefully at home. Just a small amount will usually yield forams, sea urchin spines, teeth, bone fragments, and ostracods.

Finding the fossils requires little skill. The fossils can be picked up and merely require washing! Larger and more fragile specimens can be left in the nodules, to be extracted or cleaned later, using a scalpel or dental tools.

Maylandsea can be muddy! Ensure that you bring wellies.



THE GEOLOGY

A warm, shallow London Clay ocean dominated Britain in the early Eocene. The London Clay Formation at Maylandsea was deposited c. 56-49 Ma. The fossils from the lower Eocene rocks indicate a moderately



warm climate, the tropical or subtropical flora. Though sea levels changed during the deposition of the clay, the habitat was generally a lush forest – perhaps like in Indonesia or East Africa today – bordering a warm, shallow ocean.



WHAT FOSSILS MIGHT YOU FIND?

At any fossil hunting event, you cannot be guaranteed to find fossils. The frequency of fossils depends on the rates of erosion, the weather and of course, if others have already scoured the site beforehand!

Below: Shark tooth on Maylandsea beach



Below: Lobsters in phosphatic nodules



Below: Rare fossil snake collected from the London Clay



Above: A selection of micro-fossils from Maylandsea beach gravel.

We hope you enjoy your day at Maylandsea. Please visit our website for further events which might be of interest to you at <https://ukafh.com/> Our book, with over 50 other sites across England & Wales, can be purchased at £16.95 here: http://www.ukge.com/en-GB/A-guide-to-fossil-collecting-in-England-and-Wales_p-3439.aspx

