

FRED THE ED

It is almost impossible for me to follow the articles that have been submitted to this newsletter, the heartfelt sentiments expressed here. Jim's passing has left a deep void in all the lives that he touched, especially his wife Linda, and his children Simon and Samantha. I am a relative newcomer to fossils, and, but for Jim may not have more than idly touched upon the subject, and then not really bothered. My first walks on Sheppey were remarkably fossil-less. A chance visit to the Minster gatehouse museum, and an incredible exhibition of Jim's Sheppey fossils led me to contacting him. Little did I realise the effect that this man would have on my life. The same effect that he has had upon many lives. He showed me what to look for, how to identify my finds, and how to preserve them. The rest is history.

Jim became a close friend, and I count him as my best friend and mentor. Much has already been said of his enthusiasm, and his generosity of spirit, but most of all I will miss a kindred soul whose influence on my life went far beyond fossils.

The world of palaeontology is now a poorer place, a hole now exists where once a learned and enthusiastic intellect spanned so many continents in his influence. His website will live on, and after me it will be taken over and run by the Natural History Museum, because it is such an important National resource. It's true, Brent Dunn from the USA is going to name a new species of Albian ranninid crab in his honour, and the new Gault book will be dedicated to his memory. His collection of Gault ammonites will be housed at the NHM as his collection and will be available to serious students to study. His Sheppey seeds will also go to the museum. His Sheppey insects have already been donated to the Maidstone museum. So, you can see he will live on in posterity for his work. He will also live on in the memories of all those who knew him.

If you have not yet visited Jim's website the URL address is www.ammonite.ws

This issue is not an obituary, it is a celebration of the man and his work. A man who will be remembered fondly, and with respect, because he touched so many lives and changed them in so many different ways. Too many to collect together here.

Jim loved Folkstone, he loved the ammonites found there, he loved shark teeth. He loved his family, but most of all he loved life, and lived it to the full. I will always be in awe of his courage as he faced up to his illness, and his sheer will to beat the cancer, his unfailing optimism and his endeavour not to give in. A man amongst men.

Goodbye Jim
We will miss you!
I'll miss you!
At peace now.