

Jim

The first time that we met Jim Craig was on the beach at Sheppey. It could have only been about 12 to 18 months prior to this that we had started collecting fossils. Our collecting had mainly been from the local chalk pits around Maidstone. On a visit to the children's library at Maistone, (Martin could only have been about 6 or 7 at the time) we found a book on fossil collecting which mentioned the Isle of Sheppey. After reading this we visited Warden Point at Sheppey and from this initial visit we used to go there at least once or twice a month. It was on one of these visits that we first met Jim.

We were busy searching on the beach when Jim appeared – I believe that he was carrying the digging tool (mattock) that he always used to carry. Jim in his usual polite way asked if we had found any fossils. After showing him the sharks teeth and other items that we had found we were suitably impressed when he gave us the Latin names of them all.

We cannot remember whether or not it was at this meeting that he told us about the Medway Society. We didn't visit it straight away but after seeing an advert for the Medway Gem Show at Hempstead we decided to visit the show. Once again we met Jim and it was after this that we went along to the MLMS at Green Street, Gillingham.

Once again we met Jim and it was he who taught us most of the names for the Sheppey fossils and what to look for when identifying the sharks teeth specimens. Jim had a great ability to be able to talk to beginners about fossils and make it easy for them to understand as well as being able to converse with the "experts". Another ability he had was to put people at ease while talking to them and to show interest in what they were saying.

Another time when I was on my own on the beach at Sheppey I again met Jim and, as with most people he met, he invited me along to his house to view his collection. I was very impressed and went home thinking that one-day I would like to have a set-up like Jims. He and his wife Linda made me very welcome and this was the first of a number of visits that Martin and I made.

A year or so after we joined the Medway Society Jim talked to me, Martin, Tony Mitchell and a number of other society members about forming some kind of Kent geological society. In order to discuss the subject a meeting was arranged in Maidstone. Quite a number of Medway Society members and other interested people turned up and from the outcome of this meeting the Kent Geological Group was formed. I do not know if Jim was the originator of the initial idea but he was certainly one of the driving forces behind it.

It goes without saying that Jim will be greatly missed by his wife Linda and his family and he will also be missed by a good many friends and colleagues. His enthusiasm for the subject of palaeontology and collecting was very strong and from this he was always ready to answer questions and give his opinion on the subject. His expertise on the London Clay of Sheppey and the Gault Clay of Folkestone will be missed a great deal – but not forgotten. Also the help he gave with information for various subjects contained in the Sheppey Book will not be forgotten.

There are many collectors and enthusiasts out there who, when the Isle of Sheppey is mentioned will think of **Jim Craig**. As we have said before – Jim will be greatly missed but never forgotten.

David and Martin Rayner

Jim

Soon after I joined the club, Mick kindly offered to take me collecting to Folkestone. We made our way along towards Copt Point and started searching, not having much luck on the beach Mick said we should make our way up the cliffs to dig in the correct beds. A short way up a head appeared from a gigantic hole, and shouted to Mick to come and look at the 'something hoplites' he had found. This was the first time I met Jim Craig. All three of us spent the afternoon merrily digging in the cliffs, and long after I had had enough, Jim (and Mick) were still hard at it searching for that elusive rare find, never giving up.

This enthusiasm and dedication to the hobby was so typical of Jim, and despite the heavy demands of his job, and his family responsibilities, was always working hard developing his knowledge and passing it on to others. On numerous occasions when I found myself out collecting with him he was always very willing to instruct me and show me what to look for. More than once when my own searching was less than fruitful he would give me specimens that he had found.

So, goodbye Jim, you'll be sorely missed.

Gary

Kent Geologists' Group

The committee and all members of the KGG would like to take this opportunity to express, how saddened they were to hear that Jim Craig had lost the battle against his long illness. Jim was a founder member of the group, and was much respected for the high standards he achieved in his work in Palaeontology. His enthusiasm, willingness to help others and friendly demeanor will be greatly missed by us all. Everybody at the society wishes to extend their sincere sympathy to Jim's wife Linda, and children, Samantha and Simon.