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## Provenance - The search for a source - using microfossils to track the origins of various items from paintings to murderers

Dr Haydon Bailey (University of Birmingham)

11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 | The Deritend Room, St Martin in the Bullring, Edgbaston Street, Birmingham, B5 5BB | Refreshments and networking from 6.00pm for a 6:30pm start

Once a fossil has been recovered, the first question we, as palaeontologists, get asked is “What is it?” This is followed shortly afterwards by the second question – “Where did it come from?”

It's this second question which frequently provides the more significant answers. No matter what the fossil material is, it will have a story or possibly several different potential stories. It is our role as biostratigraphers to look at all those possibilities and to arrive at what we consider to be the most likely explanation for why that particular fossil or assemblage of fossils was found where it was.

Such palaeontological investigations have a whole range of different applications and the current presentation will explore just a few of these, including East Anglian Mosasaurs and possible stone theft in Norman times, through to tracking down the Soham murderer, Ian Huntley.

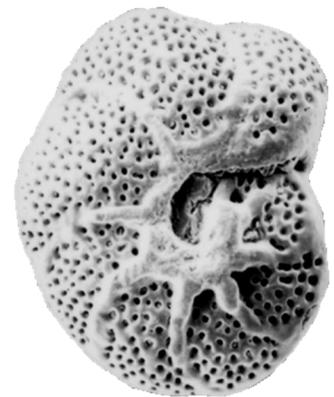
Alternatively, microfossils were used to help define the foundations of the Thames Barrier, to steer the tunnelling machines which cut the Channel Tunnel and more recently, they helped us understand subsurface structures along the Thames Tideway route.

There are bound to be other uses for microfossils which haven't occurred to us yet, some probably too ridiculous to have been considered as viable. Then again some of the examples I'll give you seemed pretty fanciful when they were first suggested.

**About the Speakers:** Haydon Bailey graduated in Geology a long time ago from the University of Sheffield; he has a PhD in Chalk micropalaeontology (from Plymouth), is a Chartered Geologist and has worked as a consultant stratigrapher in the oil and gas industry for over forty years. He still specialises in Upper Cretaceous Chalk stratigraphy, although his career has led to projects throughout much of the geological time scale around Europe, Africa and the Middle East. He recently retired for the position of co-Director of Network Stratigraphic Consulting Ltd., a company he co-founded some 25 years ago. He's a past Chairman and Industrial Liaison Officer of The Micropalaeontological Society and a past President of the Geologists' Association. He still serves on the GA Council as Chair of the Curry Fund and Chair of the Awards committee. Since 2012 he has been Honorary Lecturer on the M.Sc. in Applied & Petroleum Micropalaeontology at the University of Birmingham.

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