

GLA 1 Abbey Wood fossil bed, SSSI

London Borough of Bexley, TQ 480 786; What3Words: tunnel.fallen.twice
Ownership: Local Authority.

Abbey Wood contains some of the most fossiliferous deposits in the Greater London area providing remains of a diverse mammal assemblage of early Eocene age. The deposits are also important for studies in the evolution of bird faunas. The deposits, known as the 'Lessness Shell Bed', occur in the Blackheath Beds of the Harwich Formation and also contains a large number of marine and brackish molluscs and sharks' teeth.

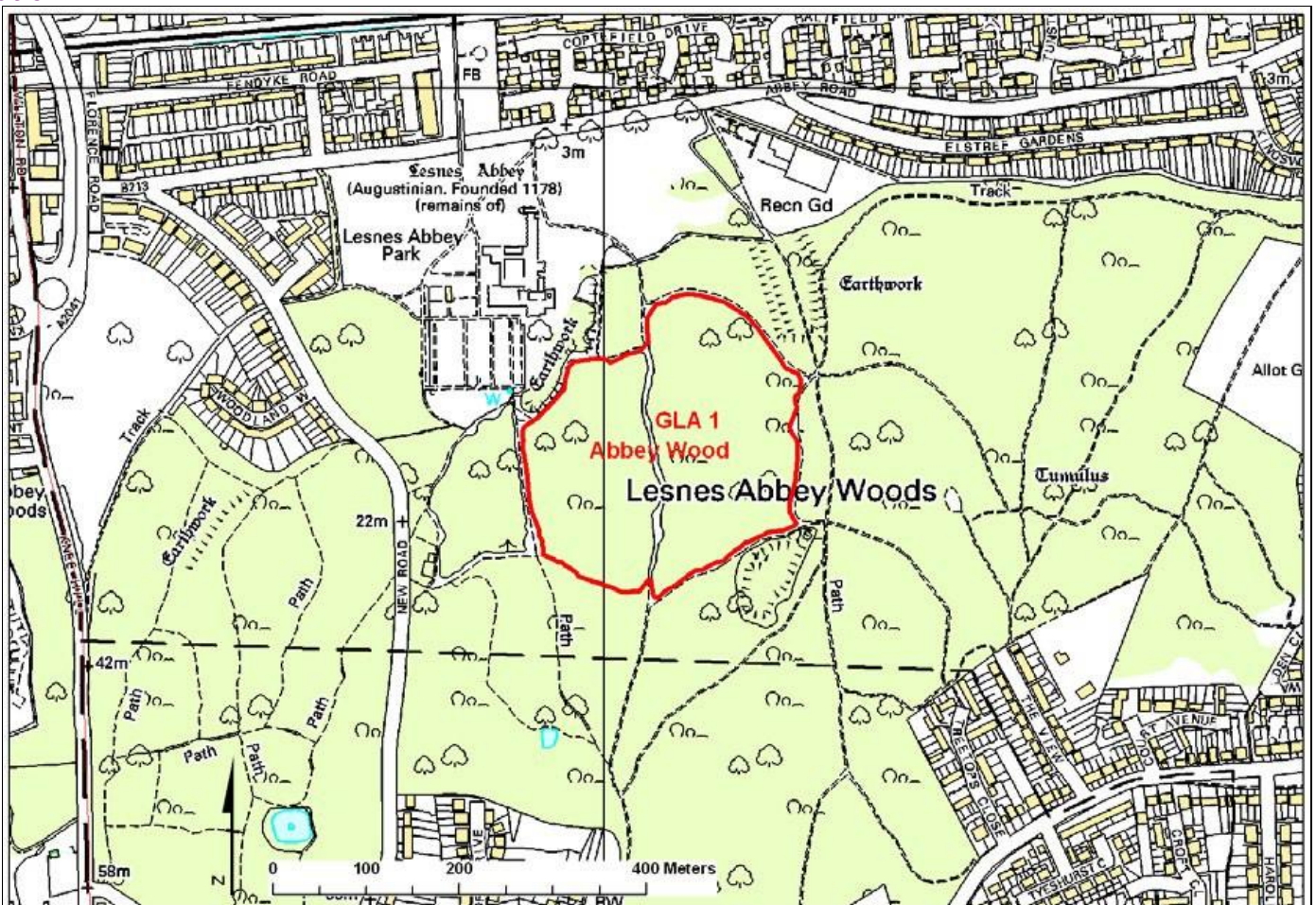
The Blackheath Beds are predominantly non-glaucinitic sandy pebble beds which in Abbey Wood contain lentils of shells that include fragmented remains of vertebrates. They were deposited in shallow coastal waters during the early Eocene period about 55 million years ago. At least 46 different species of early mammal have been identified including the extinct *Coryphodon* pictured.

The fossil enclosure is close to the route of the Green Chain Walk.

Access

Abbey Wood Station is close by with frequent trains from Luton, Blackfriars and London Bridge, and is the terminus for the Elizabeth Line.

Abbey Wood Station



Site Map

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Source: London's Foundations (2012), page 119

References

Included in the Green Chain Walk Geotrail: www.londongeopartnership.org.uk/geotrails

Featured in *Trail through Time* audio on 12 Green Chain walk sites:

www.londongeopartnership.org.uk/geotrails/#greenchain

Link to Natural England SSSI citation: 1003513.PDF (naturalengland.org.uk)

GA Guide No. 68, 2023 (Second edition). *Geology of London*, Geologists' Association, Itinerary 6.

Hooker, J.J. 2010. The mammal fauna of the Early Eocene Blackheath Formation of Abbey Wood, London. *Monograph of the Palaeontographical Society*. London, (Publ. No. 634, part of Vol. **165**), 1–162.

Tertiary Research Group (Abbey Wood Fossils): www.trg.org/links/fossilsofAbbeyWood.



The board at the entrance to the fossil bed within Lesnes Abbey Wood

Photo: L. Baker