

## **U3A GEOLOGY REPORT**

**Bob Tuddenham**

### **Meetings on Monday November 24<sup>th</sup> and December 15<sup>th</sup>**

In the last two months of 2025, we had two excellent and varied meetings at The Witham.

In November, Les Knight gave a most interesting talk entitled 'Snowball Earth - – when the Earth iced over completely'. This is a proposed state of the Earth in the neoproterozoic era some 1000 to 541 million years ago. The discovery of ancient glacial deposits at various 'unexpected' locations including at the equator was difficult to explain until the acceptance of plate tectonics in the 1960s gave an insight into the state of the planet at this time. There is now a better appreciation of the key factors that affect the climate and particularly the role of atmospheric carbon dioxide levels. A fascinating topic!

Andrew Lapworth then gave an overview of a great holiday he had had in the Assynt area of NW Scotland. Here are some of the oldest rocks in the UK and this Geopark provides some excellent information boards at key sites. The formation of the Moine Thrust was a major controversy in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and it was eventually resolved by the eminent geologist, Charles Lapworth - a distant relative of our speaker! As expected, we were shown some amazing photos taken by Andrew.

In December, David Saville continued his excellent 'Introduction to Geology' series of talks. This one was about the evolution of the tetrapod; a vertebrate animal that has four limbs. The process took place mainly in the Devonian period, 420 to 560 million years ago and was essentially the evolution of fish into land animals. This involved significant changes in anatomy and physiology and David outlined the external conditions necessary for this process to take place. He showed some remarkable pictures of animals found in the fossil record. A most helpful information summary sheet was sent out after the meeting.

To round off the year, Trevor Morse then gave a brief talk about his recent visit to Lanzarote and the geology of the Canaries. He showed some wonderful photos of the remarkable volcanic landscape which has geysers and the ground is still hot in places. We all enjoyed the mince pies at the end!

Our next meeting will be at The Witham on Monday morning Jan 26<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. All are welcome to join us. Please contact the convenor for details.