

What is it?



▲
Palaeoloxodon
antiquus.

An elephant's skull showing tusk position and location of our tooth in the jaw.



Where was it found?

This particular tooth was found by a family in Emsworth, Hampshire when they were digging up their garden to build an air raid shelter during World War II.

It doesn't look much like a tooth ...

Elephants have slightly different teeth to us. Apart from being a lot bigger (!), elephant teeth are replaced constantly - we replace ours once in our lifetime but elephants can grow as many as six sets of teeth.

Elephants, like other herbivores, need to replace their teeth constantly because they chew a lot of grass. Grass may feel soft to walk on but it is full of silica, one of the minerals that makes up sand. As an elephant chews grass the silica in it wears away its teeth, when you are an elephant eating two tonnes of grass a day the effects can be quite significant!