



DROPPINGS  
FROM THE  
GEOLOGICAL  
CURATORS  
GROUP

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## Retiring Chairman's Report

It has almost become tradition for every retiring Chairman of GCG to comment on the rapidity with which his three years have passed. I see this as a reflection of how active the Group is; it keeps its Chairman so busy that he no longer notices the passage of time. Or, it could just be age.

During this time, the Group celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and in the course of our celebrations, I was reminded that while GCG was formed through a concern for the standards of care of geological collections, it was most concerned at the time with the fate of geological *curators*. Then they were seen as an endangered species, and, as far as I can see, with a few notable exceptions, geological curators are still close to the brink of extinction in some habitats. Pressure of work and widening breadth of responsibility means that, increasingly, curators are spending more time away from collections; who is doing collections research these days? In addition, geology, along with other natural science collections, is still typecast as Cinderella, and we still have a long way to go to counteract the arts bias of so many of our museums' governing bodies and management, and to achieve the resources needed to care for our natural science collections. This year, Glenys Wass, our Recorder, has circulated a questionnaire to museums with geological collections so

that we can see whether or not things have improved for geology in museums since Phil Doughty's ground-breaking survey of 20 years ago. We should see the results of this new survey early in 2002. But my gut feeling is that we have gone backwards, and not forwards. Phil's survey highlighted the large number of geological collections not in the care of a geological curator; I doubt that the situation has improved. I hope I will be proved wrong when Glenys publishes the results of her survey.

As ever, GCG Committee has discussed, and been in correspondence with, institutions where we believe geological collections deserve better treatment. A case in point is the plan by Nottingham City Council to remove their natural history collections from Wollaton Hall. We have expressed reservations about the outline strategic plan for the museum and we now await a view of the final project plan. We have also expressed our concern for the future of the collections at the Cornwall Geological Museum in Penzance. The museum has now closed to the public and is looking to vacate the present building and for a new home for the collections.

There have been some steps in the right direction, however. In my report last year I referred to our concerns that Peterborough Museum was without a geologist to care for the important palaeontological collections there. They are now in safe hands; our Recorder, Glenys Wass, took up the post of Collections Manager at Peterborough in February. We now have Philip Doughty on the British Geological Survey Collections Advisory Committee, and I hope that through Phil, GCG can help give BGS the curatorial advice it requires. I hope that we will hear more about the progress of BGS's ambitious plans to have a public access database for all their collections ready within the next year or two. We have been invited to nominate a representative to sit on a new advisory panel for natural history collections which is being established by Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, and I am delighted that Paul Smith from the Lapworth Museum has agreed to act on our behalf. We have also written in support of plans to establish a local museum in Jarim in Brazil to house fossils of the Santana Formation from that region.

There are still many challenges ahead for the Group, amongst which are several important issues arising from the very successful meeting on ethics held in Manchester earlier this year. These are being followed up, and I hope that we shall be in a position to take soundings from the membership early in the New Year. There is also a move for the merger of the natural science specialist groups. BCG and NSCG are starting to look at how they might combine as one organisation and there has been some suggestion that GCG should join with them in this merger. This was discussed at our last Committee meeting, and the feeling was that GCG should remain a separate organisation, at least for the time being, but that we would sit in on the discussions between BCG and NSCG so that we are fully aware of the issues. Your Committee will keep a close eye on progress and report back to the membership at an appropriate stage. GCG maintains close links and enjoys a good relationship with BCG. We are fortunate that we have Steve Thompson who sits on both Committees as our common link.

GCG has always been lucky to have Officers and Committee Members who are committed to the Group and who put in a lot of their spare time to keep the Group running smoothly; this year is no exception. I would like to express my thanks to all of my colleagues on Committee for all they have done on behalf of the Group during my Chairmanship and for putting up with ever lengthening committee meetings.

Mandy Edwards, as Secretary, keeps us organised, and Andy Newman, our Treasurer, keeps us in cash. Both are retiring at this meeting, having served the Group for 8 years and 12 years respectively. I would like to thank them for all they have done on behalf of GCG over the years. Steve McLean, our Programme Secretary, provides us with a full and busy programme of seminars, workshops and study visits. This year has taken us to Manchester for a very (perhaps too) lively meeting on ethics and the trade organised by John Nudds; to the Natural History Museum for a workshop on identifying bivalves with Jonathan Todd and for a joint meeting with HOGG on 150 years of the Geological Museum; and of course, here to Oxford for our AGM. I am grateful to Steve for all his hard work, often late at night, to all the local coordinators who have helped to put the programme together and to all our speakers. Our now annual overseas study tour this year went further afield, to the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Ten members (8 from the UK, 1 from Ireland, and 1 from the USA) had a very enjoyable and informative tour of the museum, its facilities and its magnificent collections. We are especially grateful to Chris Collins, now Director of Collections at the AMNH, for arranging our visit and to all of his colleagues for making our New York trip such a success. A special vote of thanks is due to Ros Gourgey, who organises all our overseas study visits, for arranging our travel under the difficult circumstances following the events of 11 September.

Patrick Wyse Jackson continues to produce and distribute regularly *The Geological Curator*, a quality journal of which the Group can be proud. To the membership I say: remember that it is there for publishing on all aspects of geology in museums, from full papers to short notes, so please consider using it to publish on your curatorial work and collections research (if you get the time to do any). And don't forget the exceptionally useful *Lost and Found* column which has proved its value over the years in locating and publicising collections.

As I mentioned earlier, our Recorder, Glenys Wass, has been busy this year with the questionnaire which by now, I hope, all of your museums will have returned, and she is now turning to the task of interpreting the results. Tony Morgan, our Minutes Secretary, somehow manages to keep a true and accurate record of our meetings and represents GCG on the Geoconservation Commission. We have been looking at ways to improve our website, currently hosted at Manchester University, and Camilla Nichol has been, and will continue to be, busy with that in the coming year. Thanks, too, to Committee and Coopted Members Giles Miller, Helen Fothergill, John Nudds, Steve Thompson, Susan Cooke and Ros Gourgey all of whom have contributed to the full and busy meetings we have had this year. We continue to look at our membership base, and a new membership leaflet prepared by Susan

Cooke is close to completion. Thanks are due to Susan for the work that she has put into this, and for manning our stand at the Museums Association Conference. GCG is the sum of its membership, and I would like to thank you, the members, for your support and help during my tenure as Chairman. Your attendance at our meetings and your contributions to our newsletter and journal (and of course, your subscriptions) all contribute to the success of the Group. It has been a pleasure to serve as your Chairman for the last three years, and I know that under our first overseas Chairman, GCG will go from strength to strength.

Tom Sharpe, GCG Chairman,  
Cardiff 30 November 2001

### **Award of the A G Brighton Medal**

Every three years, it is the privilege of the retiring Chairman to make the award of the AG Brighton Medal, and at the AGM in Oxford it was most appropriately awarded to H Philip Powell, Assistant Curator of the Geological Collections at Oxford University Museum of Natural History, in recognition of his work on the geological collections there over a period of nearly 40 years. The full citation will appear in a forthcoming issue of *The Geological Curator*.

### **GCG Committee 2002**

**Chairman:** Patrick Wyse Jackson, Department of Geology, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland tel +353 1 608 1477, fax +353 1 671 1199, e-mail wysjcknp@tcd.ie

Patrick Wyse Jackson MA, PhD, HdipEd, Curator of the Geological Museum at Trinity College, Dublin, was elected Chairman of the Group for the next three years at the AGM held in Oxford on 5 December 2001. Patrick has spent all of his career at Trinity College, Dublin. He graduated in geology in 1985 and then spent a year training as a secondary school teacher. He spent two years teaching in Dublin before the lure of research pulled him back to Trinity where he completed a PhD on Carboniferous bryozoans in 1991. He succeeded John Nudds (a previous Chairman of the Group) as Curator in 1988. He has edited the Group's journal *The Geological Curator* since 1994. His research interests are varied: he continues to work on Palaeozoic bryozoans for the *Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology* revision; he has carried out extensive research on the history of Irish geology; and he is the author of a book on the building stones of Dublin.

**Secretary:** Giles Miller, Department of Palaeontology, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD tel 0207 942 5415, fax 0207 942 5546 email G.Miller@nhm.ac.uk

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**Minutes Secretary:** Tony Morgan, Natural History Centre, Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool L3 8EN tel 0151 478 4286, fax 0151 478 4390, e-mail tonym@nmgmnhc.demon.co.uk

**Committee Members:** Helen Fothergill, Keeper of Natural History, Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery, Drake Circus, Plymouth, Devon tel 01752 304774, fax 01752 304775, email helen.fothergill@plymouth.gov.uk; Camilla Nichol, Hunterian Museum, The University, Glasgow G12 8QQ tel 0141 226 5498 fax 0141 226 5498 e-mail cnichol@cqm.co.uk; Sara Chambers, Curator of Natural Sciences, Royal Cornwall Museum, River Street, Truro, Cornwall TR1 2SJ tel 01872 272205, fax 01872 240514, email s.chambers@royal-cornwall-museum.freemove.co.uk; Mark Evans, Deputy Curator (Geology), New Walk Museum, Leicester LE1 7EA tel 0116 247 3081, fax 0116 247 3084, email evanm003@leicester.gov.uk

**Coopted members:** Steve Thompson, Museum of North Lincolnshire, Oswald Road, Scunthorpe DN15 7BD tel 01724 843533 fax 01724 270474; John Nudds, The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL tel 0161 275 2660 fax 0161 275 2676 e-mail john.nudds@man.ac.uk; Ros Gourgey, 32 Durham Close, Great Bardfield, Essex CM7 4UA tel 01371 811429 email rosgourgey@hotmail.com

### **Subscriptions 2002**

Subscriptions were due on 1 January 2002. Rates remain the same as last year, ie £10.00 for UK Personal Members and £12.00 for Overseas Personal Members. A subscription renewal form was included with the last issue of *Coprolite*. Subscriptions unpaid by 30 April 2002 will be deemed to have lapsed. Please return the subscription form promptly, with your payment, to Giles Miller, Department of Palaeontology, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.

### **GCG website**

GCG's website has migrated yet again; this time it's gone back to Glasgow where it was born. GCG Committee Member Camilla Nichol at the Hunterian Museum has started work on updating the site. The website can now be found at <http://www.geocurator.org>. Please update your bookmarks. We want to hear from you, so if you have any news, information or gossip of interest please send it to [webmaster@geocurator.org](mailto:webmaster@geocurator.org).

### **Musical curators**

**Alec Coles**, formerly Chief Executive of Northumberland Wildlife Trust (and previously Principal Keeper of Natural Sciences at the Hancock Museum) has been appointed Director of Tyne and Wear Museums.

### **Geodiversity Consulting – people, conservation and collections**

Mick Stanley, a museum professional with 30 years experience of management, Heritage NVQ's, Registration, collections, storage, security, exhibitions and interpretation can give you a different perspective on your project or problem, finding opportunities and new approaches, using surveys, reports, feasibilities, strategies and action plans. Mick also provides a service for developers and planners to give help, advice, surveys, maps and reports recording the use of traditional building materials in cities, towns and villages. The cost of the work is based on the size and population of the city, town, village or area. Geodiversity mapping is a new tool for development control, enabling politicians and planners to maintain local geodiversity and distinctiveness to keep towns and villages unique; Geodiversity links people, landscapes and their culture.

### **New members**

GCG is pleased to welcome the following new members: **Sarah Long, Sally Young** and **David Smith**, Natural History Museum; and **Nigel Larkin**, Norfolk.

### **Exhibitions 2002**

*Walking with dinosaurs* National Museum of Wales, Cardiff 23 March – 30 June.

### **Newish publications**

*A manual of practical laboratory and field techniques in palaeobiology* by Owen R Green, 2001. Dordrecht: Kluwer, xiv + 538pp. ISBN 0 412 58980 X.

*Earth science and the natural heritage: interactions and integrated management* edited by JE Gordon and KF Leys, 2001. Edinburgh: The Stationery Office. ISBN 0 11 497283 4, £35.00.

*Beneath our feet – the caves and limestone scenery of the north of Ireland* by Pamela and Tim Fogg, 2001. Belfast: Environment and Heritage Service. ISBN 1 084 123347 1

*The age of the Earth from 4004BC to AD 2002* edited by CLE Lewis and SJ Knell, 2001. Geological Society Special Publication No 190, 304pp. ISBN 1 86239 093 2, £70.00.

*The geology of Ireland* edited by Charles H Holland, 2001. Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press. ISBN 1 903765 04 8 (hardback), £85.00; 1 903765 07 2 (paperback), £55.00.

*Walking with beasts. A prehistoric safari* by Tim Haines, 2001. London: BBC, 264pp. ISBN 0 563 53763 9, £19.99.

*Aeons: the search for the beginning of time* by Martin Gorst, 2001. Fourth Estate, 314pp. ISBN 1 84115 117 3, £14.99

*The rock men: pioneers of Lakeland geology* edited by Alan Smith, 2001. Keswick: Cumberland Geological Society, 187pp. ISBN 0 9541102 0 X, £8.99.

### **New Ten Mile maps**

The British Geological Survey will this month be publishing the fourth edition of the Ten Mile (1:625 000) Solid Geological Map of the UK North and South sheets. The

third edition dates from 1977, and BGS promises that the new edition will look very different from previous maps. Each sheet will cost £9.95.

### **Cornwall Geological Museum, Penzance**

On 1 October 2001 the Directors of The Cornwall Geological Museum Ltd, the museum-operating body wholly owned by the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall, decided to close the museum's doors to the public forthwith and for an indefinite period. In February 2001 C.G.M. Ltd. applied to the District Council for its usual annual grant to assist keeping the museum open to the public during the period from April to October. We were informed that we should have to wait whilst a Museums Officer was appointed to the district. The decision to close was made on 1 October on receipt of a letter informing us that we should have to continue to wait. The Company was now in the position that to continue to operate would run it into debt and would therefore be in conflict with the law. The immediate closure has left the Company with sufficient funds to cover the costs of dissolving (now set in motion), culminating in neither debts nor assets.

The Society, being the freeholders of its building and the sole owners of the collections, has decided to work towards the disposal of the building. Talks are underway with view to re-housing the collections elsewhere in Cornwall. Permanent relocating is unlikely to occur for some three years. In the meantime plans are being made to place on loan appropriately themed material, mostly minerals, in the Camborne School of Mines Museum, and Geevor Tin Mine Museum at Pendeen. The rest of the collections will have to go into storage, but hopefully will still be accessible to Society Members by arrangement with the Honorary Curator.

David Freeman, Honorary Curator to the R.G.S.C., & Chairman of Cornwall Geological Museum Ltd.

### **Isle of Man**

BGS has produced two publications summarising the results of its recent mapping of the Isle of Man. One, *The geology of the Isle of Man and its offshore area* (ISBN 0852723954 (RR/01/06), £30), is a special report published in conjunction with TotalFinaElf, Manx National Heritage and the Isle of Man Government to accompany the 1:50 000 map. This gives a detailed account of the geology of the Isle of Man itself and the associated offshore region. The other, *Isle of Man: foundations of a landscape* (ISBN 0852723962, £5), is visitor's guide to the Isle of Man, and provides a clear and comprehensive description of the island's geological evolution, geomorphology, history and archaeology.

### **New email @ National Museum of Ireland**

Staff of the National Museum of Ireland have new email addresses. The addresses earthscience@museum.ie and natmusmr@indigo.ie should be replaced with nmonaghan@museum.ie for Nigel Monaghan and iharkin@museum.ie for Ivor Harkin.

## **Ethical fossils**

The ethical acquisition of fossil material was the subject of a lively GCG seminar in Manchester last year. This complex issue is currently under discussion within GCG Committee and we hope shortly to solicit views across the breadth of our membership in the formulation of a policy. Papers presented at the Manchester meeting will be published in a forthcoming part of *The Geological Curator*. In the meantime, the issue is making the news.

*Nature* [Vol 415, 10 January 2002, p.108] reports that the Chinese Society of Vertebrate Paleontology has approached the Senckenberg Museum in Frankfurt requesting the return of a psittacosaurid specimen. Unlike other psittacosaur specimens, this one has quill-like spines on its tail. It is claimed that the fossil, which had been purchased last year from a German dealer for US\$ 200,000, was illegally removed from China.

And in the latest issue of *Earth Heritage* (Issue 17, Winter 2002), Colin MacFadyen of Scottish Natural Heritage provides an update on the attempts by SNH to persuade the Humboldt Museum in Berlin to return fossils purchased from a German amateur collector who had taken them illegally from Birk Knowles SSSI.

That same issue of *Earth Heritage* also carries an article by Tristram Besterman, Director of the Manchester Museum and Convenor of the Museums Association Ethics Committee from 1995 to 2001. This provides a clear summary of the position of UK museum curators within the context of the Museums Association Code of Ethics, and the UNESCO 1970 Convention.

## **Where are Sir Walter Raleigh's samples of ore from Guiana?**

In connection with current research I am doing on Sir Walter Raleigh's movements through the Orinoco delta and the Lower Orinoco in 1595, I would like to locate samples of ore from Guiana which he supposedly brought back to England. I am curious what comparison might yield of samples of the disputed ore that Raleigh brought back, with rocks from a couple of sites on the Guiana shield along this part of the river (ie downstream eastwards from Puerto Ordaz/San Felix). Do any of his samples still exist and where they might be located? Has anyone ever attempted to make a comparison of his material with that of the Guiana shield, and have the results been published, and if so, where?

This query comes as a result of a discovery I made a few years ago in the Riksarkiv Stockholm, and I traveled to Venezuela last March to read the terrain against the new documents. Any information would be gratefully received.

Paul R. Sellin, Oud-hoogleraar, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Professor Emeritus, University of California, Los Angeles psellin@ucla.edu

## **Free job ads**

The Geological Society's website ([www.geolsoc.org.uk](http://www.geolsoc.org.uk)) now offers a free job vacancy listing service. If your institution is looking for a geologist, send your



advertisement to [ian.dawes@geolsoc.org.uk](mailto:ian.dawes@geolsoc.org.uk). You can include your organisation's logo and any hot links you require.

### **Surplus cabinets for disposal**

The Sedgwick Museum has a number of wooden table cases excess to requirements with separate display case tops. These tops are in various sizes, either single or double sided, available free. The storage parts could be lured away by contributions to the Sedgwick Museum's punting fund. Offers to Steve Laurie, Sedgwick Museum, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3EQ; telephone 01223 333495; email [sal11@esc.cam.ac.uk](mailto:sal11@esc.cam.ac.uk)

### **Isle of Wight or beer?**

For those unable to attend the *Isle of Wight seminar (8-9 March)*, there is an alternative event taking place. GCG members are assured of a warm welcome at the Wigan Beer Festival at the Mill at the Pier, Wigan (7 - 9 March 2002). Come and see a committee member (Tony Morgan) pretending to be a barperson (but don't expect any freebies). Website <http://camrawigan.org.uk/adframe.asp>

### **BGS activities for Science Week**

The British Geological Survey will be holding its annual National Science Week event for schools at its headquarters in Keyworth from 13-15 March. This is aimed at 8-12 year old pupils who are able to take part in activities such as panning for gold, creating fossil rubbings, and 'baffling a boffin' with their own rock and fossil finds. Scientists will also give talks on subjects such as 'Rocks for Breakfast', 'Inside the Earth' and 'The Life and Times of Planet Earth'. There will also be hands-on opportunities to examine rocks, fossils and minerals from the National Collections. For further information contact: Dr DE Bailey, British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham NG12 5GG, email [deba@bgs.ac.uk](mailto:deba@bgs.ac.uk)

### **Waterloo monolith**

A large monolith of 1.2 billion year old gneiss has been installed in the foundation of the new Center for Environmental and Information Technology on the University of Waterloo campus, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. The slab of gneiss will be a major feature of the exhibit atrium of the building. It is 28' x 5' x 21", or, for those who prefer metric measurements, 8.5 x 1.52 x 0.53m. The volume of the rock is about 6.84 cubic metres.

At 11:00 a.m. on 1 December 2001, as the television cameras rolled from at least five different camera crews, the WATRock finally rested in its niche. Reaching upward, the slender column of gneiss will become a focal point outside the basement doorway to a major lecture theatre.

The monolith was lowered ever so gently to a special concrete slot in the basement where it was epoxied into place. The final act (at least for this phase) was the covering of the rock with a large blue shroud. This will remain in place as the building is completed around it. In 2003 when the building finally opens, rock benches will provide matching seating around the base.

Peter Russell, curator of the Earth Sciences Museum, chose the gneiss for the exhibit atrium after seeing a piece from the quarry displayed at the 1993 Royal Winter Fair in Toronto. The gneiss monolith makes a big statement about the building being the home of the Earth Sciences department. The rock was also chosen because it could be extracted in one piece, large enough to rise from the basement to the second floor without support, other than the foundation. To view some pictures of the installation visit: [www.science.uwaterloo.ca/earth/rock.html](http://www.science.uwaterloo.ca/earth/rock.html)  
Peter Russell, Department of Earth Sciences, University of Waterloo, Ontario

### **RSNC and Earth Science**

Since 1991, the Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC) has promoted Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and Rockwatch, and an holistic approach to Earth science, outlined in RSNC's Earth Science Strategy published in May 2000. At its meeting in February 2001, the RSNC Council agreed to continue "to undertake Earth Science work until the establishment of a suitable new body to undertake the work proposed in the Earth Science Strategy and to continue to give financial support until the new body is established". RSNC Council agreed to work towards the formation of a partnership organisation, Earthtrust, to help to deliver the Earth Science Strategy. Council felt that, because of the far reaching objectives in the Strategy, and as there was no existing organisation with the remit to present a coherent and inclusive view of Earth science and its importance to everyday life, that it must act to promote an holistic approach to Earth science. It therefore agreed to spearhead the formation of the separate trust.

However, in October 2001, that Council resolution was dismissed out of hand. Despite 37 out of 46 Wildlife Trusts owning or managing geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (and an equal number are likely to have RIGS and other geological local sites in their ownership or control), the RSNC's 10 point Conservation Plan, *Protecting Wildlife for the future*, excludes Earth science conservation.

So why this change? A critical report from the Charity Commission and cash flow problems solicited a knee-jerk decision to drop all activities that were not covered in the 10-point Conservation Plan, and that Earth science should not be undertaken by RSNC unless someone else pays for it. What an indictment for an organisation with a royal charter for nature conservation!

It could be argued that the writing has been on the wall for Earth science since the push to change the names of trusts from Nature Conservation to Wildlife. But the marginalisation of geoconservation within RSNC became clear when it was suggested that bids for geoconservation funding would have to be channelled through the Director of Development for the Wildlife Trusts to ensure that these did not compromise bids from the Wildlife Trusts. More recently, a bid to the Environment Action Fund to secure funding for Earthtrust was vetoed for the same reason. Not only have the Trusts excluded and isolated Earth science from their Conservation Plan, they seem to have been positively obstructive to its independent development.

It is plain that the Wildlife Trusts do not appreciate the importance of Earth science to nature conservation. Presumably through ignorance, the Wildlife Trusts Partnership Management Board seems to see Earth science as a threat. However, there are many Trusts which embrace nature conservation as a whole and see Earth science as an integral part of their work. Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Cornwall, Staffordshire, and Shropshire immediately spring to mind. Those Wildlife Trusts that embrace Earth science as part of nature conservation must be supported and Earth scientists should join Trusts to try to encourage a broad-based view of our environment. Hopefully, Earthtrust will offer Trusts a way forward to promote themselves and the work they do at the local level in nature conservation.

Mick Stanley, Geodiversity Consulting

### **The Dorset and East Devon Coast, England's first natural World Heritage Site**

The coast between Exmouth in East Devon and Studland Bay in Dorset has gained World Heritage Site status because of the spectacular cliffs and foreshore display of 185 million years of the Earth's history in just 95 miles of coast. The rocks are Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous in age and although there are thousands of places around the globe where such rocks are found, this is the best place to see them exposed in a near complete and accessible sequence. There are also nine internationally important fossil sites including the Lower Jurassic rocks around Lyme Regis and the Fossil Forest near Lulworth. Furthermore, the coast contains superb examples of coastal processes including the landslides of East Devon and West Dorset, Chesil Beach and the Fleet and the 'classic' Lulworth coast.

The completeness of the geology, the fossil sites and the geomorphology fulfil the UNESCO criteria for designation as a natural World Heritage Site but there are other unique and important aspects to the case. This coast has, and continues to provide vital evidence for the development of the Earth sciences. The history reads like a 'who's who' of geological science while today, important research and fossil discoveries continue to be made. Finally, the coast is clearly of huge educational importance and lies within a landscape that owes its great beauty and diversity to the underlying geology.

Dorset and Devon County Councils and the Dorset Coast Forum developed the case for the World Heritage Site. World Heritage will support the existing conservation designations through a Scientific Advisory Group made up of organisations responsible for, or with an interest in the Site and supported by a network of experts. The designation will also be used to help people to further enjoy the coast and promote out of season and special interest tourism.

To find out more, visit the web site at [www.jurassiccoast.com](http://www.jurassiccoast.com), which includes sections on the case, exploring the interests, events and educational resources about modern coastal management. If you would like to receive regular updates on developments, events and special interest breaks, please supply your name and address to: Sally King, Visitor Manager, Environmental Services Directorate, Dorset County Council, County Hall, Dorchester DT1 1XJ or e-mail [s.a.king@dorset-](mailto:s.a.king@dorset-)

cc.gov.uk. In West Dorset, the Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre maintains the Record of Key Scientifically Important Fossils collected under the West Dorset Fossil Collecting Code of Conduct. To find out more about the Code visit the Centre's web site at [www.charmouth.org](http://www.charmouth.org) where there is a facility to receive regular e-mails on new fossil records.

Richard Edmonds, Earth sciences Co-ordinator, Dorset County Council.

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### **GCG Study Tour to the AMNH 8 – 12 November 2001**

The first GCG study tour of the new Millennium, to the AMNH in New York, aroused considerable interest amongst GCG members; interest that was in no way quashed by the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. At approximately £500 per person, the tour was more expensive than previous visits, but the packed itinerary and the prospect of viewing some of the most impressive collections and exhibitions in the world was very enticing. Needless to say, the 'scrimping & saving' and 'beg, borrow & stealing' that was undertaken to fund the delegates who made the trip, was well worth it.

Most members of the group flew out en mass from London Heathrow on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>, arriving Newark New Jersey later the same evening. Transfers were seamlessly arranged to our Hotels in Manhattan, the somewhat euphemistically named 'Comfort Inn' on Central Park and the Hotel Pennsylvania on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Having slept the sleep of the travel weary, everyone was up and about early the following morning. Brilliant autumnal sunshine made the short walk (alongside Central Park) to the AMNH a real pleasure. Once there, we were greeted by Chris Collins (now Director of Collections in the Division of Paleontology at the AMNH) and other members of the group who had already arrived in New York.

#### **Of NASA, Disney and things more familiar...**

The flimsy paper name badges, with which we were supplied, belied the awesome security procedures in place at the AMNH. Andrew Turk, Deputy Head of Security guided us through a bewildering array of monitoring, communication, surveillance and fire protection systems, which guard the museum and its collections, and the further security and access control systems which monitor and control the movements of individual staff members. The banks of monitors and intercoms present in the central control room were more reminiscent of ground control at Houston than any museum we knew. We were none of us surprised to learn that the security systems employed were customized versions of systems used at NASA and Disneyworld; an interesting combination.

Once behind the impressive front of house scenes, we entered a world of corridors, stores and labs that felt much more familiar to most members of the group. Chris Collins and Ben Burger (Director of IT for the Division of Paleontology) described the structure of the division and its collections. Chris and Ben outlined the problems and projects facing staff at the AMNH, which again felt reassuringly familiar. If anything the approach to databasing and collections management in place up until

quite recently, seemed to have been quite disparate and only now has a more unified approach to documentation been adopted.

### **Of cockroaches, fossil fish and shopping trolleys...**

We rapidly moved on to the practicalities of collections management with a visit to the Fossil Fish store. En route we passed through a range of spacious, newly refurbished but surprisingly empty preparation labs. On reaching the basement corridors the disturbing crunch underfoot of numerous dead cockroaches put me in mind of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, clearly a small (?) insect problem. Having successfully negotiated this test of self-control, we arrived at the spotless and thankfully insect free store. Ivy Rutzky, (Senior Scientific Assistant (Fossil Fish), Division of Paleontology) was waiting for us. Again, we could have been in any store in any well run and well-funded museum, even down to the obligatory sliding storage units. The presence of shopping trolleys caused momentary confusion, with the majority of group members experiencing visions of a 'supermarket sweep' type approach to specimen selection. However these disturbing thoughts were quickly eliminated as Ivy explained her ethos of 'benevolent organization' with respect to collections management. Ivy operated her store on a trust-based system with visitors allowed to select specimens for themselves. However, her approach was tempered with controls on the number and type of specimens allowed out, dictated on a very individual basis.

Lunch beckoned and the group retired to a handy local Irish theme pub to mull over the morning's experiences.

### **Of research, Hutton and crumbling black smokers...**

Post lunch, we returned to the AMNH and a change of discipline. We were greeted by Jim Webster (Chairman of the Earth and Planetary Sciences Department and Curator of Mineral Deposits Collections), Ed Mathez (Curator of Petrologic Collections) and George Harlow (Curator of Mineral and Gem Collections). An introduction to the department and its structure was followed by a brief tour of the collections. The mineral deposits and petrologic collections were clearly research driven, with much overlap between the two subject areas. The UK fascination with the architectural use of natural stone, has clearly not yet permeated the US psyche, so a building stone collection was noticeable by its absence. Limited time prohibited a detailed tour of the mineral and gem collections, however we were given a brief overview of the database systems in place, which included a well thumbed card index system.

We returned to the front of house with Jim Webster on hand to guide us around the 'Hall of Planet Earth' part of the ground-breaking 'Rose Center for Earth and Space' development at the AMNH which opened in February 2000. The open-plan, earth-science gallery explored earth evolution, tectonics, the rock record, climate and life on earth. Full-scale re-constructions of significant outcrops, and a rich selection of impressive open display specimens combined well with excellent audio visual displays and interactives. Hutton's unconformity at Siccar Point, which had

been lovingly recreated using a mould taken directly from site, brought memories of wet Scottish field classes flooding back. Clearly there had been logistical problems with gallery in the form of an ice core freezer that didn't quite get down to temperature and a freshly harvested black smoker that was rapidly disintegrating as a result of pyrite decay.

### **Of Luddites, *Velociraptors* and bottles of 'Bud'...**

Returning once more behind the scenes we visited another palaeo' store, where we were greeted by Rick Edwards (Photographer, Division of Paleontology) and a *Velociraptor*, **the** *Velociraptor* in fact; the type specimen from the Gobi Desert. Rick's enviable job was to digitally image the entire fossil reptile collection. To this end he was surrounded by a dazzling array of photographic and computing equipment. To the Luddites amongst us his descriptions of the various pieces of equipment could have been (and probably were) delivered in a foreign language. At least we were able to appreciate the phenomenal visual results he was able to achieve.

At this point in our itinerary we were due to attend '...a reception with Mark Norrell – Chair of the Division of Paleontology'. Happily such a formal description could not have been further from the truth. The office of 'the Chair of the Division of Paleontology' occupied the top floor of one of the corner turrets of the AMNH, and commanded priceless views over Central Park and Midtown Manhattan. The circular room, though in need of some renovation, felt as welcoming and comfortable as an old slipper. Inside, staff members were 'hanging out' (to use the colloquial) and drinking bottles of Bud, which were stored in crates on the window ledges outside. We were made welcome and proceeded to spend most of our time exclaiming at the views from the windows or marvelling at the contents of cabinets which were opened to display (variously) numerous Mongolian raptor specimens, a stunning feathered dinosaur specimen (part and counterpart) and a beaked ornithomimosaur. We didn't know where to look.

Even this late in the day there were takers for a look round yet another palaeo' store with more mastodons, glyptodonts and other early mammals than you could shake a geological hammer at.

At last, leg weary and jaw sore (having spent most of the day with our mouths wide open) we wandered homeward stopping en route for sustenance.

### **Of kettles, beetles and 'Rappunsal' the Rhino**

Saturday also dawned bright and clear, and once again we all met up at the AMNH for a further foray into the museum's inner workings.

First stop was the Quaternary Mammal Collections in the Division of Vertebrate Zoology, where Chris Norris (Research Associate, Department of Mammalogy) was our guide. There was much interested discussion and comparison of database use and storage options before moving on to the business end of the preparation labs.

For many of us this part of the visit hovered somewhere between the educational and the macabre. Thankfully all the preparation labs were not in use, however the huge digesting kettles, macerating kettles and degreasing machines left little to the imagination. Chris left us in no doubt as to the fate of 'Rappunsal' the 30 year old rhino currently whiling away her last days at the Bronx Zoo. Moving swiftly on, we visited the dermestid beetle tanks and the walk-in freezer before seeing the osteological and skin storage areas. All too quickly our slightly gruesome brush with zoology came to an end and we were once more bound towards the galleries.

### **Of cladistics, *Tyrannosaurs* and fossil explainers...**

For our tour of the fourth floor galleries which constitute the fossil halls, we were lucky to have the services of Paul Szczepanski, one of many volunteer explainers trained and used by the AMNH. The fossil halls, which were completely refurbished between 1994 and 1996, linked in a continuous loop around the fourth floor. The starting point was an orientation centre, where Meryl Streep's voice explained the origins of vertebrate life. From there we walked forward on a cladistic journey through vertebrate evolution. After the hall of vertebrate origins, we passed first through the Halls of Saurischian and then Ornithischian dinosaurs, chalking up *Apatosaurus*, *Tyrannosaurus rex* (the holotype), *Triceratops* and *Stegosaurus* en route. The Halls of Primitive and Advanced Mammals came next, with (amongst others) glyptodonts, sabre toothed cats and mammoths and excellent displays on the evolution of the horse. The architectural splendour of the galleries offset the excellent displays, which were clean, clear and free from clutter. Our 'fossil explainer' proved to be enthusiastic and well informed, knowing exactly when to assist people with information and when to stand back and let people wonder on their own.

### **Of infinite reality, Tom Hanks and the size of the universe...**

Following lunch in the museum food halls, we ventured into the Hayden Sphere, a massive 87 ft diameter sphere, which dominated the Rose Center and housed the Hayden Planetarium Space Theatre in the upper half, and the Big Bang Theatre beneath. Our timed entry tickets took us into the massive 429 seater, circular Hayden Planetarium. Once inside we were transported on a ½ hour virtual reality journey from our home planet through our galaxy and on, to the edge of the visible universe. The experience was delivered, we were told, by the massive 2 terabyte 'Infinite Reality Onyx-2 super computer'; "any connection with the 'Infinite Improbability Drive?', the Douglas Adams fans amongst us queried. Appropriately guided by the voice of *Apollo 13's* Tom Hanks, we experienced the most accurate representation of the observable universe, currently available. It was 'edge of the seat' stuff.

Emerging light-headed into the daylight we wandered, along the 'Scales of the Universe' walkway, a 400 ft long path that hugs the outer wall of the Rose Center whilst encircling the Hayden Sphere. At regular intervals along the walkway, we were invited to compare the relative sizes of electrons, atoms, planets, stars and galaxies by direct reference to the Hayden Sphere. From centimeter sized models of

atoms to massive representations of the planets suspended overhead, the 'sizes in the cosmos' journey was mind expanding.

### **Of pearls, paths and a hair's breadth...**

Providing a mental break from the immensity of the universe, we moved on to view the new temporary exhibition at the AMNH, 'Pearls'. The subtly lit and classically displayed exhibition focussed our minds back on the tangible reality of the natural history, and cultural importance of pearls. Using a balanced mix of specimen pearls, cultural objects, text, models and audio visuals, the exhibition successfully interwove the strands science, art, history and culture that form the complex story of pearls. As a geologist and gemmologist, I was impressed with the depth in which the subject was covered. As a museum curator I was felt relief to find an exhibition that had turned away from the ultra-modern style which, to my mind, is often ill-suited to the display of this type of material.

Another timed entry ticket allowed us into the Big Bang Theatre that occupied the lower portion of the Hayden Sphere. Maya Angelou voiced us through the creation of the universe, illustrated in an explosive audiovisual display, which was at times sensorially quite painful. We emerged, a little dazed, onto a spiralling 'Cosmic Pathway' that guided us through 13 billion years of cosmic evolution. As with the 'Scales of the Universe Walkway' points along the path were used to denote progress on a journey, this time a temporal one. 13 'stations' described the status of the universe at given points. Samples of the Allende meteorite, Acasta gneiss and a BIF were amongst the specimens used to track the progress of the universe's development, which culminated in the presence of a single human hair, the width of which illustrated the relative length of human history. The walkway took the time line idea to new heights as perhaps only the Americans know how.

### **Going solo**

At this somewhat humbling point, our Cosmic Pathway and also our schedule of visits came to an end. From here on until close of the museum (at 8.45pm) our time was our own to wander off and explore some of the remaining galleries and museum shopping opportunities. The choice of galleries felt almost endless and we each wandered off in search of Biodiversity, Ocean Life, Cultural Life, Minerals or Meteorites according to our individual tastes. A few hours later we re-grouped and went off in search of food. We lighted upon a Tex-Mex restaurant and discussed the day's events over beers and tortillas.

The group split up for the remainder of the visit, with some members staying on in the US to complete other business or pleasure. For most of us the return flights were not scheduled until the either Monday or Tuesday evening so there was plenty of time to bag other sites in New York. Some of the sites (Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty etc.) were closed as a precaution against the perceived terrorist threat. However, the Staten Island Ferry was fully operational and the attractions of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum proved irresistible. The Brooklyn Children's Museum and the Tenement Museum were also bagged, in a binge of museum madness. Shopping opportunities were also



investigated with 'Tiffany's' high on the agenda (window-shopping only I hasten to add) along with 'FAO Schwarz' to satisfy the child in your life.

If the schedule sounds exhausting, that's because it was. Full use was made of our time at the AMNH and indeed in NY itself. We came away very impressed with what had been done, and on such a grand scale, but also reassured that the issues and problems of management and care of collections are the same the world over; its just a question of scale.

A huge vote of thanks must surely go to Steve McLean, Ros Gourgey, Tom Sharpe and of course Chris Collins and his colleagues at the AMNH, who all made this visit *such* a success.

Sara Chambers, Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro

### **GCG Seminar, AGM and Field Trip: Geology, Art and Architecture Oxford University Museum of Natural History, 5-6 December 2001**

After a *splendid* start with coffee and buns, approximately 40 members were welcomed by the seminar convenor, Phil Powell, Assistant Curator of Geology at Oxford University Museum of Natural History (OUM). Phil outlined the programme for the day and then introduced the first speaker, Mick Stanley whose talk was entitled - *Carved in bright stone - the influence of geology on architecture*.

Mick took us on a tour of building stones and their use in vernacular architecture and pointed out the links between the local geology and building materials. Mick also made reference to a number of well-known historical buildings and country houses, with particular reference to Derbyshire. They included Prior Overton's brick built tower at Repton Public School, the school being established on the site of an Augustinian Priory built in 1172. Wingfield Manor above the village of South Wingfield, built by Ralph Lord Cromwell in 1439 on the site of a 12<sup>th</sup> Century castle showed excellent ashlar blocks to the outside with a rubble infill. Mick then discussed the New Hall at Hardwick, built by Elizabeth Shrewsbury, and reminded us of the well known saying "Hardwick Hall more glass than wall" when discussing the unusual architecture of this building.

Mick also took us on tours of Chatsworth House, Sudbury Hall (where stone was brought 16 miles), Melbourne Hall (built with Namurian Sandstone), Weston Hall and Tissington Church made from a variety of local stones (to name but a few).

The second talk, by Monica Price, entitled *Marbles the ultimate interdisciplinary collection* began with a light-hearted change in title. Monica noted, especially since her university tutor was in the room, that she should have been more precise and called the talk "*Ornamental stones.....*", although in her defence the trade use of the term "marble" was often extended to include other polished stones such as granites, serpentines and jaspers etc and so of course would her talk.

Monica began by explaining that she felt that marble collections in museums were really an undervalued resource. They were a perfect bridge between geology and the arts. Most marble collections consist of small square polished slabs, many of

which have their origins in the collecting pursuits of travellers on the "Grand Tour" who purchased them from stonecutters in Rome, Florence and Venice etc. The Romans of course imported huge quantities of marble from all their conquered lands. Some of these slabs in museums may have a number or a label, but many have no information at all.

Monica then discussed the Faustino Corsi collection of approximately 1000 decorative rocks in the OUM collections acquired by the Museum in 1827. Corsi had a fascination for Roman marbles and attempted to acquire a comprehensive collection of marbles used by the ancient Romans, which he later extended to include other decorative rocks from around the world. He attempted to record the names and provinces of all the stones and was the first to arrange ornamental stones according to geological principles, as well as citing the works of contemporary geologists. Even today his work still remains an important tool for the classification and organisation of decorative stones. Corsi's samples were larger than the typical small thin squares found in most museum collections, since he was anxious to show variation in each quarry. Monica is currently working on a full illustrated and translated catalogue. The OUM has approximately 850 other samples of ornamental stones as well as the well known "collection" of 127 pillars around the Museum court composed of British and Irish decorative stones.

Monica concluded her talk by examining the interdisciplinary use of decorative stones, in particular their use in archaeology and architectural history, and noted that collections in museums are also an excellent resource for teaching, showing numerous geological features. Monica appealed to anyone with marble collections in their museum to let her know about them.

The last speaker of the morning was Patrick Wyse Jackson on *The Museum Building, Trinity College Dublin: Dean and Woodward's precursor to the University Museum, Oxford*. An appropriate subject, given the location of the seminar of course! Trinity College Dublin was erected between 1853 and 1857 and designed by architects Thomas Deane and Benjamin Woodward, the same architects who designed OUM. With its range of limestones and marbles, the building is a joy for a geologist, in much the same way that OUM holds such a fascination. Patrick described the exterior and interior of the building noting the wonderful animal and plant carvings (squirrels, nuts, cats and mice) most of which were carved in-situ, especially around the archways. There are heavy marble inlays, staircases of Portland Stone and Yorkshire Flags, with black slates and limestones and purple Welsh slate. The two-domed roof with enamelled red, blue and yellow bricks and stained sandstones gives a wonderful alternating effect.

There are 32 columns of Irish Marble within the building as well as marble (some actually polished limestones) banisters and balconies. Insets of marble were also used on wall decorations and the only non-native stone used was a dark red serpentinite from Lizard, Cornwall. Patrick concluded his talk with a brief overview of the history of the Geology Museum at Trinity College.

After lunch at the Museum, the seminar continued with the fourth speaker of the day, Trevor Ford on *Derbyshire Inlaid Black Marble*. Trevor first pointed out the two magnificent White-Watson tablets on display in the lecture theatre from the OUM collections. He then began to describe the history of Ashford Black Marble (ABM) such as its use in 16th Century fireplaces at Hardwick Hall and indeed fireplaces at the 17<sup>th</sup> century Bolsover Hall.

It was Henry Watson who established the Marble works in the 1740's at Ashford-in-the-Water, Derbyshire. The Arrock and Rookery mines became the focal points for the production of Ashford Black Marble. The Rookery mine was more extensive and included three water wheels. The mines were never inherited by Henry Watson's nephew, White Watson, who worked elsewhere making tombs and geological tablets.

Trevor then described the two main types of marble products: large articles such as fireplaces and windowsills etc, and more portable decorative objects.

From the 1740's to the 1830's most inlaid marble work was geometric in design and it was only after this that true floral designs became fashionable. Trevor went into some details about the inlaying techniques and the use of imported coloured stones from other localities by Watson's marble works and Tomlinson's marble works. Many of the stones are from Derbyshire and can be used as "markers" to show Derbyshire origin. It was White Watson who produced a catalogue of the different types of stones used such as Rosewood Marble (looking very like wood grain), Banded Marble (calcite and dolomite) and stalactitic barite.

Whilst discussing the cementing techniques used in inlay work, Trevor described the origin of inlaid marble patchwork tables dating from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century and also made reference to the use of Blue John and even blue ironworks slag.

Trevor then concluded his talk with a series of slides showing some splendid examples of ABM work. These included, of course, several of White Watson's geological cross sections (he made around 100 of these in total), moonlight sketches by Ebenezer Bird (engravings on black marble which were whitening with chalk), some beautiful 18<sup>th</sup> century floral inlays, and late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century vases, clockcases, crosses, cigarette boxes, and candlesticks. Finally, Trevor described two particularly fine pieces, an inlaid table in Ashford Church (1884) and the Grape Table now held at Buxton Museum.

Our fifth speaker of the day was John Cooper on *Ammonite motifs in architecture*. After showing some recent advertising use of ammonite images (such as a Benson and Hedges advert), John began his story by discussing Gideon Mantell who, despite his dinosaur fame, was interested in fossils in general as his publications proved (eg: *Medals of Creation* (1844) and *The Fossils of the South Downs* (1822)) and often collected ammonites. Indeed, if one studies the top of the columns on Mantell's house there are clearly ammonite spirals. This, the ammonite capital, has its origins in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. For example, columns in Pall Mall, London have

ammonite spirals, and John Nash used them in Regent Street in London in 1817. Brighton has, in particular, good, typical ammonite capitals.

John then described how Mantell commissioned architect Amon Wilde to re-model his house (Wilde was the original architect). Wilde appears to have liked the ammonite link to his name. Amon Wilde and Amon Henry Wilde (his son) moved to Brighton in 1815. They went on to work on the expansion of Brighton and Hove. The ammonite capital is used extensively.

In 1833 Amon Wilde died and Mantell moved from Lewes to Brighton to establish a medical practise but spent most of his time running his Mantellian Museum. He eventually sold his collection to the BM(NH) for £4000. Finally, John described some other examples of ammonite motifs outside Brighton, in Islington and Tunbridge Wells.

Our final speaker of the day was Peter Crowther on *Illustrators of the Palaeontographical Society (Pal. Soc.) Monographs*. Peter confounded the projectionists by using two slide projectors at once, necessitating several minutes of emergency maintenance, so GCG chairman Tom Sharpe, took the opportunity to present the GCG A.G. Brighton Medal to Philip Powell for his contributions to palaeontological documentation (see Brighton medal report in *Geological Curator*).

After repairs to the projector, Peter began by outlining the history of the Pal. Soc. which began publishing monographs in 1847. Peter explained that his interest is really in the illustrators before the use of photography, in effect the period between 1847 and World War 1. On each plate there is a credit line so it is a relatively simple matter to work out which illustrators worked with which scientists. Printing was done in the early days using engraving, but the great majority were high quality lithographs. So who were the illustrators? Peter explained that they were sometimes the scientific workers themselves eg: Thomas Davidson (1851 and 1855 : Silurian Monographs). These were drawn and lithographed by Davidson himself who was also a trained illustrator. Sometimes one person did the drawing and another did the lithographic drawing. Authors even drew upon their own families. Ramsay Traquair worked with his wife Phoebe Traquair (P.A.T) and Woodward worked with several members of his family.

Peter went on to describe the works of some of the more prolific illustrators. These included Bill Bailey, J. Dinkel (who originally worked with Agassiz) produced some 200 plates for the monographs (150 for Richard Owen), Alfred Hollick, A.H. Searle and A. Gawan who produced 250 plates over 30 years from 1864 – 1893. Peter described the cost of producing the monographs (about three quarters of total subscription revenue for each year at the beginning), and illustration cost about one third of this total, so it was an expensive venture.

Peter concluded his talk by describing an interesting account of the discovery of several plates of extant crinoids which were never published in the monographs but

which later appeared in a volume of Cambridge Natural History.

After the GCG AGM, the formal part of the day's programme concluded with a tour of the geology collections by Philip Powell. Then the informal part began in a pub in Jericho where great efforts were made to persuade the Retiring Chairman to remove his tie. These were resisted, mainly because he wears a tie so rarely that he was determined to make the most of it.

The following day, a motley crew with rucksacks and wellies gathered outside the museum for a day in the field led by Phil Powell. A short drive north of Oxford took us to Ardley Quarry where the Bathonian White Limestone Formation was worked. This is a series of micritic, in part oolitic, shallow-water near-shore limestones with beds packed with bivalve moulds and high-spired gastropods. But it is the floor of the quarry which commands attention. The limestone on the quarry floor preserves the most superb dinosaur trackways - not just of theropods, but of sauropods as well. Some of the trackways extend for 200 m and individual theropod footprints are up to 80 cm long. These are likely to have been made by *Megalosaurus* which occurs in the Stonesfield Slate nearby. The sauropod trackways, too, are magnificent, showing how they tracked up with the hind feet stepping in or close to the prints left by the forelimbs. A large sauropod, *Cetiosaurus*, is known from this formation a short distance away.

The solid rock of the quarry floor is covered by a fine, soft, white mud, through which the footprints can still be seen, giving the remarkable impression that the beasts walked (or even ran) through here only moments before. This must be one of, if not *the* best dinosaur trackway locality in the UK. But, fast approaching it is the accumulated waste of Oxford, for this is now mainly a landfill site. These amazing trackways are soon to be submerged in a stratum of 21<sup>st</sup> century garbage. It's almost criminal.

After lunch, pre-arranged by Phil at a suitable hostelry, we moved west to a gravel pit at Cassington. Here the youngest of the Pleistocene gravel terraces of the Thames is being worked. The gravels, which range in age from about 40,000 to about 10,000 years, contain bones of bison, mammoth, horse, reindeer and red deer. A couple of bones were found by our group, but large mammoth teeth proved elusive.

Beneath the gravel is Middle Jurassic Oxford Clay with pyrite nodules containing fine examples of uncrushed ammonites like *Kosmoceras* and perisphinctids. The OUM houses a 5 m long pliosaur which came from a series of such nodules at this locality, but like the mammoth teeth, these too proved elusive to our group.

This was an excellent two days, and grateful thanks are extended to all the speakers and especially to Philip Powell and staff at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, who took great pains to organise such a splendid session. Steve McLean, Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne

## **Forthcoming GCG seminars and workshops**

### **8-9 March 2002 Dinosaur Isle Museum, Sandown, Isle of Wight. GCG seminar and field trip, and viewing of new museum.**

For nearly a century the Museum of Isle of Wight Geology, above Sandown Library, housed the island's geology and fossil collections. On 10 August 2001 this changed with the opening of the new £2.7 million *Dinosaur Isle*, a purpose-built attraction replacing the old museum, which now provides the space and facilities to display the geological collections. This meeting will include a tour of these new facilities and will also provide insights into the BBC TV series "Live from Dinosaur Island" which was screened last year.

#### **Friday 8 March 2002 : Dinosaur Isle Education Room**

- 1000 Registration and coffee and biscuits.
  - 1030 Welcome – Dr Mike Bishop, Museums Officer.
  - 1045 Dave Martill: Live from Dinosaur Island - the academic perspective.
  - 1115 Steve Hutt: Live from Dinosaur Island - the museum's perspective.
  - 1145 Martin Munt: Live from Dinosaur Island - the Dinosaur Isle Project.
  - 1215 Lunch at Browns Golf Course (very short walk)
  - 1345 Talks to be confirmed
  - 1530 Tea/coffee and biscuits.
  - 1600 Talks to be confirmed.
  - 1730 Tour of Dinosaur Isle – Martin Munt Curator.
- Evening to be arranged and will include dinner / drinks at local restaurant/pub

#### **Saturday 9 March 2002**

- 1000 Meet at Dinosaur Isle
  - 1030 Depart for field trip to Yaverland to see the Cretaceous sequence.
  - 1500 Meeting Ends.
- Meeting Fee £5.00. Please pay on the day. Fee does not cover lunch or evening meal.
- Please complete the booking form on the centre pages and send it to Martin Munt (Curator), Dinosaur Isle, Culver Parade, Sandown, Isle of Wight, tel 01983 404344, fax 01983 402748, email [Martin.Munt@iow.gov.uk](mailto:Martin.Munt@iow.gov.uk)

### **15 May 2002 British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham Joint Meeting: GCG and Geoscience Information Group: Geological Collections Databases, GIS and the WWW**

- 1000 Coffee and setting up of demonstrations.
- 1100 Patrick Bell, British Geological Survey, Keyworth: BGS's Geoscience Data Index - a web-based spatial index to our data holdings
- 1130 Adrian Rissoné, Natural History Museum: The Palaeontology Department specimen cataloguing system.
- 1200 John Faithfull, Hunterian Museum, Glasgow: 9 Years of INCA: evolution of a museum catalogue
- 1245 Buffet lunch, with demonstrations.
- 1400 Tim McCormick, British Geological Survey, Keyworth: Palaeosaurus

Paul Britton, Stratadata: Biostratigraphic information management in the oil and gas industry and links to the www

Jana Horak, National Museum of Wales: NMW geological database: accountability for collections vs public access  
Mandy Edwards, University of Manchester: BASELINE - Keeping track of space and time.

Kevin Walsh, Oxford University Museum: Collections Online at the Oxford University Museum - turning our collections management databases into a web resource.

Suzanne Miller, National Museum of Scotland: NMS Petrology & Mineralogy Database - a custom-built Adlib system

1545 Tea

Tours of the collections available until 1800

Meeting fee: £10 to cover tea, coffee and a buffet lunch.

For full abstracts, consult the GCG website or the GIG website (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/gig/default.html>). For details about how to get to the BGS or on local accommodation see the BGS website <http://www.bgs.ac.uk>.

Please complete the booking form on the centre pages and send it with payment to Dr Mike Howe, British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5GG **by Wednesday 1 May 2002.**

### **29 May 2002 National Museum of Wales, Cardiff**

#### **GCG Workshop: Identifying fossils 2: Ammonites**

This workshop, led by Dr John Cope of Cardiff University, will give participants an opportunity to get to grips with the fundamentals in ammonite identification as well as reviewing the major ammonite groups, their biology and biostratigraphy.

1015 Coffee

1045 Ammonite biology, sexual dimorphism and biostratigraphy

1245 Lunch

1345 Ammonite taxonomy and practical ammonite identification

1600 finish

Course fee: £10.00

Please complete the booking form on the centre pages and send it, with payment to: Tom Sharpe, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP tel 029 20 573265, fax 029 20 667332, email [Tom.Sharpe@nmgw.ac.uk](mailto:Tom.Sharpe@nmgw.ac.uk) **by Friday 17 May 2002**

### **24-28 October 2002 Natural History Museum, Prague**

#### **GCG Study Visit**

For this year's study visit we plan to visit the Natural History Museum in Prague (part of the National Museum). The museum houses a magnificent collection of palaeontological and mineralogical material and has several permanent geology displays. Check the Museum's website to see for yourself! (<http://www.nm.cz/english>).

Contact: Ros Gourgey, tel 01371 810832, email [rosgourgey@hotmail.com](mailto:rosgourgey@hotmail.com)

**27 November 2002 The Manchester Museum, Manchester  
GCG Workshop: Identifying fossils 3: Corals**

A workshop led by Dr John Nudds on the identification of fossil corals.

Contact: John Nudds, The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL tel 0161 275 2660 fax 0161 275 2676 e-mail john.nudds@man.ac.uk

**10-11 December 2002 Sedgwick Museum, Downing Street, Cambridge  
GCG Seminar, AGM and study visit**

This visit will include an opportunity to view the new gallery redevelopment at the Sedgwick scheduled to open in summer 2002 and to view the collections.

Contact: Dr Liz Hide, Sedgwick Museum, Department of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge, Downing Street, Cambridge, CB2 3EQ tel 01223 766969, email eah17@esc.cam.ac.uk

**Other meetings**

**14-15 March 2002 Geological Society, Burlington House, London  
History of Geology Group: The amateur in British geology**

**Thursday 14 March**

1000 Registration and coffee

1025 Welcome Stuart Baldwin (HOGG)

SESSION 1 Chair: Susan Brown (GA)

1030 Stuart Baldwin, Witham: Little and Large, or the amateur in science from microscopy to astronomy.

1100 Eric Robinson, Watchet: The amateur and the Geologists' Association.

1130 Stephen Donovan, Leiden: C.T. Trechmann, D.Sc, and the development of Caribbean geology between the Wars.

1200 Jake Hancock, Shaftesbury: Denis Curry - a modest polymath.

1230 Lunch

SESSION 2 Chair: Hugh Torrens (HOGG)

1330 Caroline Buttler and Tom Sharpe, Cardiff, Patrick Wyse Jackson, Dublin: George Robert Vine (1825-1893), stayermaker, bryozoologist and fossil dealer.

1400 Cynthia Burek, Chester: Women in Geology - are they amateurs or professionals?

1430 Geoff Tresise, Merseyside: George Morton, Henry Beasley and Triassic footprint classification.

1500 Tea

1530 Andrew Smith, London: C.W. Wright and the palaeontology of the Chalk.

1600 Martina Kohl-Ebert, Munich: G.B. Greenough and "elevation" - private background of a geological debate.

1630 Ralph O'Connor, Cambridge: Thomas Hawkins, the Glastonbury eccentric-collector-writer-lunatic.

**Friday 15 March**

SESSION 3 Chair: John Martin (HOGG & GA)

1000 Anne O'Connor, Durham: S H. Warren: The contribution of an amateur



geologist towards palaeolithic archaeology.

- 1030 David Bone, Chichester: E.M. Venables (1901-1990), Bognor Regis geologist  
1100 Coffee  
1130 Alan Smith, Keswick: The amateur in Lake District geology.  
1200 Stuart Baldwin, Witham: W.S. Bisat FRS: Civil Engineer, Carboniferous palaeontologist and stratigrapher.  
1230 Patrick J Boylan, Leicester: W.S. Bisat FRS and Quaternary geology.  
1300 Lunch

SESSION 4 Chair: Richard Howarth (HOGG and GA)

- 1400 Hugh Torrens, Keele: A chemist on the rocks: the work of John Hannes Callomon.  
1430 David Freeman, Helston: The contribution of amateur members of the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall.  
1500 Peter Tandy, London: William Barlow, FRS, speculative builder, man of leisure & crystallographic genius.  
1530 Tea  
1600 Bob Davidson, Aberdeen: James Powrie, 19<sup>th</sup> century chronicler of the Scottish Lower Devonian.  
1610 Wendy Simkiss & Alan Bowden, Liverpool: H.H. Higgins and F.P. Marrat and amateur palaeobotany in the North West.  
1620 Richard Wilding, Twickenham: Osmond Fisher (1817-1914), parson geologist; pioneer geophysicist.  
1630 Summary and discussion Hugh Torrens, Keele.

Meting fee: £10.00. Cheques should be made payable to HOGG and sent in advance to the convenor at the address below.

Contact: Stuart Baldwin, Fossil Hall, Boars Tye Road, Silver End, Witham, Essex CM8 3QA tel 01376 583502, fax 01376 585960, email sbaldwin@fossilbooks.co.uk

### **3-5 April 2002 National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff Stone in Wales: materials, heritage and conservation**

This conference, sponsored by the National Museum & Galleries of Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales, and CADW will provide a forum for all those who are involved in the past, present and future use of natural building materials, particularly building stones in Wales. It is aimed at quarry workers, archaeologists, historians, planners, stone-masons, architects, conservation geologists, monumental masons, geographers and many others both professional and amateur. Conference themes include: the resource; the property of the materials; the historical use of stone; planning considerations of the vernacular use of building materials; and the future management of ancient stone quarries

Conference fee: £40 (includes tea/coffee/buffet lunches)

Contact: Dr J. Davies, Y Gelli, Stryd Fawr, Llandysul, Ceredigion SA44 4DP tel 01559 362429, fax 01559 362429, email sion\_cwm\_hir@hotmail.com

### **8-13 May 2002 Redpath Museum, McGill University, Montreal, Canada SPNHC 2002: Collections hazards and mitigations**

Contact: Ingrid Birker, Redpath Museum, McGill University, 859 Sherbrooke St

West, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2K6 tel 514 398 4086 ext 4094, fax 514 398 3185, email [ibirke1@po-box.mcgill.ca](mailto:ibirke1@po-box.mcgill.ca)

**23-26 August 2002 The Spa Centre, Scarborough, Yorkshire  
Geologists' Association: Earth Alert 2. A festival of geology**

Contact: Dr W French, Geologists Association Office, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 9AG

**1-6 September 2002 Edinburgh International Conference Centre  
18<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Meeting of the International Mineralogical Association**

For further information: email [ima2002@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ima2002@ed.ac.uk) or [info@minersoc.org](mailto:info@minersoc.org) or see [www.minersoc.org/IMA2002](http://www.minersoc.org/IMA2002)

**9-10 September 2002 Sedgwick Museum and Department of Earth  
Sciences, University of Cambridge**

**11<sup>th</sup> Symposium of palaeontological preparation and conservation.**

Contact: Leslie Noè, email [Inoe01@esc.cam.ac.uk](mailto:Inoe01@esc.cam.ac.uk)

**11-14 September 2002 Sedgwick Museum and Department of Earth  
Sciences, University of Cambridge**

**50<sup>th</sup> Symposium of vertebrate palaeontology and comparative anatomy**

Contact: Alison Allen (SVPCA), Department of Earth Sciences, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3EQ, fax 01223 333450, email [alison@esc.cam.ac.uk](mailto:alison@esc.cam.ac.uk)

**11-13 October 2002 Victoria Hall, Cromarty**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Miller in Context conference, celebrating the bicentenary of the birth  
of Hugh Miller**

For further information see [www.hughmiller.org](http://www.hughmiller.org)



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**GCG Seminar and field trip, Dinosaur Isle, Isle of Wight  
8-9 March 2002  
BOOKING FORM**

Title.....Name.....  
Address.....  
.....Postcode.....  
Telephone..... e-mail.....

- I will be attending the seminar on 8 March
- I will be attending the fieldtrip on 9 March
- I would like details of local accommodation, ferry times etc.
- I can provide transport for the field trip

Please return this booking form **immediately** to Martin Munt (Curator),  
Dinosaur Isle, Culver Parade, Sandown, Isle of Wight.

✂ -----

**GCG/GIG Seminar, British Geological Survey, Keyworth  
15 May 2002  
BOOKING FORM**

Title.....Name.....  
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.....Postcode.....  
Telephone..... e-mail.....

- I will be attending the seminar on 15 May
- I enclose a cheque for £10.00

Please return this booking form, with payment (cheques payable to "The Geological Curators Group"), to Dr Mike Howe, British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5GG **by Wednesday 1 May 2002.**

**GCG ammonites workshop, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff**  
**29 May 2002**  
**BOOKING FORM**

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