



OPROLITE

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DROPPINGS
FROM THE
GEOLOGICAL
CURATORS
GROUP

Coprolite is compiled and produced by Helen Kerbey, Department of Natural Sciences, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP (e-mail Helen.Kerbey@museumwales.ac.uk, tel +44 (0)29 20 573250). It is published three times a year in March, June and November. Any material for inclusion should be sent to Helen Kerbey by the first of the previous month, i.e. by 1 February, 1 May or 1 October.

Chairman: Giles Miller, Senior Curator, Micropalaeontology, Department of Earth Science Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD. Email: g.miller@nhm.ac.uk

Secretary: Sarah King, York Museums Trust, Yorkshire Museum, Museum Gardens, York, YO1 7FR. Email: Sarah.King@ymt.org.uk

Treasurer: John Nudds, School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL Tel 0161 275 7861 Email: john.nudds@manchester.ac.uk

Membership 2015

Subscriptions:

Please note that subscriptions for 2015 are now due. Please send cheques to me at the address below, unless you already pay by Standing Order. I will also be sending out reminders. If you would prefer to pay by Standing Order please get in touch for details. Please note that it was decided at the AGM to increase subscriptions for 2016. Details of the rates will be circulated soon. This is the first increase in over 8 years.

Cindy Howells, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, CF10 3NP. Email: Cindy.howells@museumwales.ac.uk

New members:

Lisa Coombes, Plymouth City Museum; **Lukas Large**, Thinktank; **Catherine Goodwin De Sousa**, Volunteer at Derby Museum; **Powys Museum Service** at Brecknock Museum.

New Committee 2015

Chairman: Giles Miller, The Natural History Museum, London.

Secretary: Sarah King, York Museums Trust.

Treasurer: John Nudds, University of Manchester.

Editor-Journal: Matthew Parkes, Natural History Museum, Dublin.

Editor-Coprolite: Helen Kerbey, Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales.

Web Officer: Hannah Chalk, University of Manchester.

Programme Secretary: Kathryn Riddington, Lapworth Museum of Geology.

Minutes Secretary: Tony Morgan, World Museum Liverpool.

Collection Officer: Mike Howe, British Geological Survey.

Committee Members:

Tim Ewin: The Natural History Museum, London.

Isla Gladstone: Bristol Museum & Art Gallery.

Luanne Meehitiya: Birmingham Museums.

Co-opted Members:

Emma Bernard: GCG/NatSCA rep. The Natural History Museum, London.

Chairman's Report

GCG AGM, Birmingham, December 2014.

My first year as Chairman has gone past very quickly but has been full of interesting and exciting activities. I'd like to highlight five areas that we have engaged in recently.

Survey 2014 – what do people want and where are we headed?

Following our first committee meeting we developed a questionnaire to gauge the thoughts and feelings of our membership and the wider museum population who care for collections including geological material. A big thank you to everyone who replied and sent the comments that have helped us to develop a strategy for the GCG over the next three years or so. There were important questions we wanted to ask about how to deliver our workshops, training sessions and our publications over the next few years. One of the key outcomes is that we are going to deliver *Coprolite* electronically next year unless members specifically request paper copy. A move to deliver Geological Curator electronically may be delayed until the following year as many members expressed concern over our current ability to archive past and future copies electronically. Another outcome from the survey was a list of subjects that can act as a basis for planning future programmes and skills sharing networks. More worrying was the relatively low percentage of replies (64%) that said they see GCG as the first port of a call to answer questions on the management and use of geological collections. 'A louder voice for advocating geological collections' was considered the most important future role for the GCG. It was interesting to discover which organisations our membership also belong to and that over 91% welcomed closer collaborations with other collections related membership organisations. Finally we summarised 12 action points to illustrate our proposed direction over the next three years. These, along with the results of the survey, were published in the latest edition of *Geological Curator*.

Collaboration – MoU and SSN grant application

At the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC) meeting held jointly with the Natural Sciences Collections Association (NatSCA) and ourselves at Cardiff in June, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding between our three organisations agreeing to collaborate more closely in future. A big 'thank you' to committee members Helen Kerbey and Cindy Howells for playing a major part in the organization committee for this conference. Initially this collaboration will be taken forward by a small group of 6 "emerging professionals" including Emma Bernard and Sarah King from our own committee. The strategy document resulting from our survey has partly been written to help Emma and Sarah to identify ways in which we can collaborate but also as a result of discussions with Arts Council England (ACE) towards preparation for a major grant application joint with NatSCA to develop a more resilient and diverse subject specialist network. I have also been contributing to discussions at several meetings of a consortium of Natural History Museums in the UK about how our network will be shaped in the future, how we advocate and share skills. In early November we submitted a joint application with NatSCA to the ACE SSN Resilience Fund for 150K. Most of this funding will be allocated to hiring a part time administrator for three years to oversee many of the initiatives that we wish to push forward. Initially for the GCG this will entail a revamp of our existing web infrastructure to deliver a more resilient platform to deliver our journal, deliver information from past publications via a searchable portal and finally to develop an on-line directory of expertise. Subsequent years funding will help develop our network beyond the traditional membership by contacting professionals and institutions on the periphery of our network who may not have the specialist skills required for managing geological and other natural science collections. On-line videos and other skills sharing advice documents will be developed in the following year. In the final year of the funding we will award small grants for visits from expert curators to institutions where there is a perceived lack of support and subject specialism and use the on-line resources we have developed to best match the skill providers with those that require support. We should be informed very soon of the outcome of this application.

English Geodiversity Charter launch – Houses of Parliament

Collaborations have also been ongoing this year with the Earth Science Education Forum (ESEF) and the English Geodiversity Forum (EDF). I was invited to present a talk about the GCG at the October ESEF committee meeting at the Geological Society and committee member Kate Riddington has been representing us on the EDF committee. I presented a short talk, illustrated by museum specimens, at the Houses of Parliament at the launch of the English Geodiversity Charter. It was a great opportunity to show the importance of museum specimens in inspiring and teaching the geoscientists of the future, illustrating issues of local importance, our heritage and most importantly that geodiversity affects us all. This has hopefully opened the door for future interactions with MPs and other people of influence that can make a difference to our community by supporting museums and museum collections. It is great to see that former GCG Chair Mick Stanley

presented the after dinner speech at our 40th Anniversary Dinner as he was instrumental in organizing the Charter Launch at the Houses of Parliament.

Collections and posts at risk

Sadly over the last few months there have been several examples in the press of museums under threat of closure or at risk from proposed cuts in staffing. We have been following closely the situation at Torquay, Ludlow Museum and Resource Centre, Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Royal Cornwall Museum and Snibston Discovery Centre. I wrote to Shropshire Council and spoke at a local meeting regarding the future of the Ludlow Museum and Resource Centre. Former GCG Chair, Brighton Medal Winner and Honorary GCG Member Hugh Torrens also spoke passionately about the importance of Ludlow and the importance of the collections in the museum to the local, national and international communities. The council seem to have altered their initial plans slightly but we await further news on their proposal to reduce staffing levels at the Resource Centre. If anyone has news of any collections or posts at risk and would like us to write or provide other support then please let us know.

Future Geological Curators – Public outreach

In September I helped with a GCG-BGS Yorkshire Fossil Festival stall outside the Rotunda in Scarborough. During the festival I was thinking about how we as a group are reaching out to our younger audiences at festivals like these. Quite rightly the 3-D Fossil printer grabbed all the attention and I believe that we should continue to publicise the 3D-fossils project as it is a great tool for inspiring young and old alike. I asked the younger visitors to our stall if they had collections of rocks and fossils at home and where they kept them? Many of them answered that they kept them on the windowsill, mantelpiece or in their garden sheds. One child even replied that they kept their collection in their mother's pockets! It struck me that as one of our remits is to encourage better standards of curation, that we should perhaps be running exercises at these festivals that encourage young geological collectors and the curators of the future, to curate their collections to the best standard possible. The GCG are planning a stall at the forthcoming Lyme Regis Fossil Festival and we have just heard that the hugely successful Yorkshire Fossil Festival at Scarborough is to be run again in 2015. We hope to finalise plans with RockWatch to offer an annual prize for a Young Geological Curator and to publicise his at Lyme Regis. If any of our members are planning on visiting either of these events and could offer help with staffing our stands then we would be very happy to hear from you.

Giles Miller, Chairman.

Publications and resources of interest

M. A. Taylor and H. S. Torrens 2014a. History & Mystery. Sequels and solutions 4. S4.1 History and Mystery: were Nonconformist divines the source for the maxim? *Society for the History of Natural History newsletter* **106**: 6-9. Available on <http://repository.nms.ac.uk/1187/>

M. A. Taylor and H. S. Torrens 2014b. An anonymous account of Mary Anning (1799-1847), fossil collector of Lyme Regis, England, published in *Chambers's Journal* in 1857, and its attribution to Frank Buckland (1826-1880), George Roberts (c.1804-1860), and William Buckland (1784-1856). *Archives of Natural History* **41**, 309-325. **Abstract only on** <http://www.eupublishing.com/doi/abs/10.3366/anh.2014.0250>

M. A. Taylor and H. S. Torrens 2014c. An account of Mary Anning (1799-1847), fossil collector of Lyme Regis, Dorset, England, published by Henry Rowland Brown (1837-1921) in the second edition (1859) of *Beauties of Lyme Regis. Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* **135**, 62-70. **Available on** <http://repository.nms.ac.uk/1259/>

M. A. Taylor and H. S. Torrens 2014d. An anonymous account of Mary Anning (1799-1847), fossil collector of Lyme Regis, Dorset, England, published in *All the year round* in 1865, and its attribution to Henry Stuart Fagan (1827-1890), schoolmaster, parson and author. *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* **135**: 71-85. **Available on** <http://repository.nms.ac.uk/1258/>

M. A. Taylor 2014. The Reverend Henry Stuart Fagan (1827-1890), Church of England parson, Headmaster of Bath Grammar School, literary man, and Irish Home Ruler. Unpublished report, with supplementary notes, **available on** <http://repository.nms.ac.uk/1185/>

Taylor, M. A. 2015. Rediscovery of an *Ichthyosaurus breviceps* Owen, 1881 sold by Mary Anning (1799-1847) to the surgeon Astley Cooper (1768-1841) and published by William Buckland (1784-1856) in his Bridgewater Treatise. *Geoscience in South-West England*, **13**, 321-327.

Introducing Mineralogy by John Mason

Published by Dunedin Academic Press. ISBN: 9781780460284

Introducing Geology: A Guide to the World of Rocks, 2nd edition, by Graham Park

Published by Dunedin Academic Press. ISBN: 9781906716219

Introducing Palaeontology: A Guide to Ancient Life by Patrick Wyse Jackson

Published by Dunedin Academic Press, ISBN: 9781906716158

The Making of Europe: A geological journey by Graham Park

Published by Dunedin. ISBN: 9781780460239

Heteromorph, The Rarest Fossil Ammonites: Nature at its most bizarre by Wolfgang Grulke

Published by At One Communications. ISBN: 9780992974008

Geological Map of Great Britain, Bicentennial edition in the style of William Smith (folded). Published by BGS/NERC. ISBN: 9780751837902

Exhibitions

Shaped By Nature: Ceramics and Geology from the Swindon Collection, Swindon Museum and Art Gallery, 09 March 2015 - 27 June 2015

Shaped by nature looks at the way rocks, minerals and fossils inspire contemporary ceramics. Pottery is created by exposing raw materials like clay and minerals to heat and pressure through the processes of firing and hand-building.

Many ceramicists are inspired by the natural world; in the colours, patterns, textures and shapes seen in rock formations, semi-precious stones, and in the fossilised remains of ancient plants and animals.

This exciting new exhibition presents our fascinating geological collections alongside beautiful works by famous ceramicists like Lucie Rie, David Leach, Robin Welch and Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie.

William Smith Bicentenary

A series of talks, exhibitions and events around the country celebrating the life and work of the map maker William Smith.

Churchill and Sarsden Heritage Centre, Oxfordshire: March 2015 - September 2015. Commemorative Exhibition on William Smith's Life and Work

The Yorkshire Museum, York: map display and exhibition from 22 May 2015. The story of the rocks: William 'Strata' Smith's geological map at the Yorkshire Museum

The Natural History Museum, London: mid-June to mid-October 2015
William Smith: his maps, rocks and fossils

National Museum Wales, Cardiff: September 2015 - January 2016.
William Smith & His Maps

University of Bristol: Events beginning 7 October 2015
Visualising Landscapes & Geology, Past, Present & Future

Oxford University Museum of Natural History: October 2015 - January 2016
Handwritten in Stone: the life and legacy of William Smith

See <http://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Events/William-Smith-Bicentenary/Exhibitions> for a summary of all the events.

Fossil, mineral and gem shows 2015

21 - 23 March. Rock, Gem 'n' Bead Show, Brighton Racecourse

11-12 April. Rock, Gem 'n' Bead Show, Newton Abbot Racecourse

25- 26 April. Rock, Gem 'n' Bead Show, Newark Showground

10 May Oxford Mineral Fossil Show, Exeter Hall, Kidlington, north Oxford

30 -31 May. Somerset Rock, Gem 'n' Bead Show, Wincanton Racecourse

6-7 June. Rock, Gem 'n' Bead Show, Kempton Park Racecourse
12 July Oxford Mineral Fossil Show, Exeter Hall, Kidlington, north Oxford

Find further information on Rock & Gem shows at www.rockngem.co.uk email info@rockngem.co.uk. Find further information on Oxford Mineral Fossil Shows at www.oxfordshow.co.uk, email oxfordshow@gmail.com.

Forthcoming seminars and workshops

Check our website www.geocurator.org for updates to our seminar programme or Contact the Programme Secretary **Kate Riddington** with any questions, thoughts or ideas for workshops and meetings. (k.j.riddington@bham.ac.uk)

Moray Geology: Past, Present, Future 21st-22nd March

Elgin Museum, Scotland's oldest independent museum, and the Moray Society, its management organisation, will be hosting the 'Moray Geology: Past, Present, Future' conference on Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd March. The conference will cover the history of Elgin Museum, its Recognised Collection of fossils and explore the geology of the Moray area.

The talk session (Sat 21st) will begin 10am at the Alexander Graham Bell Centre, Moray College (University of the Highlands and Islands), Elgin. A welcome reception for delegates will be held Saturday evening at the Museum with a temporary display exhibiting locally collected fossils, some not normally on view, casts produced and used for research purposes, and models of the ancient creatures that once inhabited Moray.

Registration for the talk session is £5 and includes entry to the welcome reception at Elgin Museum. Lunch is available for a further £5. The fieldtrip is currently fully booked. For further details or to register, contact **Dr Sue Beardmore** at moraygeology2015@hotmail.com

Antarctic Survey at the Lyme Regis Fossil Festival 1st-3rd May

A small but dedicated group from the British Antarctic Survey will be displaying some of the amazing material from our Antarctic fossil and biological collections at the Lyme Regis Fossil Festival – Mapping the Earth 1st – 3rd May (<http://www.fossilfestival.co.uk/>). Ranging from giant sea spiders and isopods to ammonites, molluscs and fossil trees, the diversity of life on and around Antarctica can be seen. Also on display will be maps of the continent including (hopefully) a 3D version of Bedmap2.

MEASURE YOURSELF AGAINST A PENGUIN! How do you compare to the height of living and fossil penguins? Are you as tall as a *Eudyptula minor*, an *Anthropornis nordenskjoeldi* or somewhere in between? Visit our stand in the Grand Marquee and find out.

Hilary Blagbrough – British Antarctic Survey

HOGG - History of Geology Group Meetings - open to GCG

Details on events may be found at www.historyofgeologygroup.co.uk.

23-25 April 2015 -William Smith Conference on William Smith's Map

18th June 2015 -an 'open meeting' on no particular theme other than the history of geology.

November 2015 - a celebration of HOGG's 21st anniversary.

Drop ins

Stroud Museum - Meet the geologist,
1st April 2-4pm.

Manchester Museum - Rock Drop: Geology Identification Sessions
19 March 2-3pm.

Penarth Pavillion - Geology of Penarth Talk: 11am.
Walk along the beach: 1-3pm.

Talks

Dinosaurs of Crystal Palace Park by Professor Joe Cain.

Thursday 16th April at 2.30pm in Woodmead Hall, Lyme Regis
Thirty statues were created by Benjamin Hawkins for the 1854 park. We'll explore the struggle to design and create these first ever life-sized models and their conservation today.

Tuesday 28th April at 2.30pm in Woodmead Hall, Lyme Regis.

Lyme Regis Philpot Museum – Then, now and future by the Museum Director, David Tucker.

News

News from the GB/3D Type Fossils Online Project

It may be 18 months since the official Jisc funding for the GB/3D Type Fossils Online Project ended, but work continues apace. The GCG is one of the original partners in the project. The website (<http://www.3d-fossils.ac.uk/>) maintains a steady stream of visitors (between two and three thousand per month) intent on checking out type specimens, viewing high resolution images and stereo-anaglyphs, or maybe downloading 3d digital models to study, or display on iPhones, iPads, tablets and smartphones. Most of the images and models have been loaded, just a few problem ones remain.

During January 2015, the most popular types viewed were BGS By8678 (*Trinucleus bicallis* Rushton & Hughes - <http://www.3d-fossils.ac.uk/fossilType.cfm?typSampleId=2374>) and BRSUG 212 (*Coroniceras hyatti* Donovan - <http://www.3d-fossils.ac.uk/fossilType.cfm?typSampleId=25000573>), both with 43 views. BRSUG 212 was also the most popular downloaded model, with 13 downloads.

Outreach events continue. The team joined the GCG for the Yorkshire Geology Festival in Scarborough in September 2014, and a joint presence is planned at the Lyme Regis Fossil Festival in May 2015. I gave talks on various aspects of the project to the Symposium of Palaeontological Preparation & Conservation (York, September 2014), Digital Specimen 2014 (conference in Berlin, September 2014), the Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group (September 2014) and the GCG Workshop (Birmingham, December 2014), and a poster was presented at the Palaeontological Association Christmas Meeting (Leeds, December 2014).



The most downloaded 3d digital model in January 2015: *Coroniceras hyatti* Donovan
University of Bristol Geology Collection, BRSUG 212

We are pleased to receive further information about British type macrofossils for inclusion in the database. Both edits and updates to existing entries, or completely new entries are welcome. Select the "Contact Us" tab on the home page and follow the link to "Dr Mike Howe". For new entries, we will supply a blank spreadsheet template. The data and images may then be uploaded to BGS for checking and then adding to the database.

Mike P.A. Howe

Items in the news

Dippy displaced by blue whale

The Natural History Museum was in the news recently due to the removal of its iconic diplodocus cast from the main hall. In the internet world this created huge numbers of comments from those who thought that it would be better to have an

example of a living animal (a few who called the dinosaur imaginary - enough said) to those who recall nothing else from their trip to the NHM but the diplodocus. Interestingly, the news article on the BBC shows some of the previous exhibits in that space. Dippy hasn't been there since the beginning, both elephants and whales have also had the prize position. The Natural History Museum itself wishes to change the exhibit to something that conveys its new "three great narratives". These cover the origins and evolution of life, the diversity of life on Earth today, and the long-term sustainability of humans' custodianship of the planet.

In the mean time the diplodocus is still one of the 'star attractions' on the kids only section of their website. While there are now some very happy whale curators out there will the kids enjoy the whale quite so much?

See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-31025229>

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/natureplus/blogs/behind-the-scenes/2014/10/15/seeing-double-dippy?fromGateway=true>

<http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/jan/29/dippy-diplodocus-displaced-natural-history-museum>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2932331/Dippy-v-Bluey-Battle-BIG-beasts-Natural-History-Museum-s-beloved-diplodocus-dinosaur-faces-replaced-blue-whale-awesome.html>

Funding available from the Palaeontographical Society

"The Palaeontographical Society invites applications for the newly instituted Edward Forbes Prize*, which aims to recognise outstanding contributions by early career researchers in the field of taxonomic and systematic palaeontology (encompassing invertebrates, vertebrates, palaeobotany and microfossils). The Prize, which is to be awarded for publication excellence, comprises £250 and a one-year membership of the Society. The Prize will be awarded at the Society's Annual General Meeting each year."

<http://www.palaeosoc.org/site/page/funding/funding-details/>

New Jurassic Museum proposed

The plans have been revealed for an £80m museum called Jurassicato be built in a quarry on the Isle of Portland. The reconstructed Jurassic cove won't be a theme park but will feature galleries of fossils, sea caves, a salt water lagoon, and, if all goes to plan robotic pleisosaurs. It is supposed to have a lid-like roof about a third the size of the millennium dome. The Jurassic coast in Dorset has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2001 due to its world class exposures of Jurassic rocks. David Attenborough is a Patron for the project that hopes to be complete by 2020.

<http://www.radiotimes.com/news/2015-02-28/first-look-at-the-real-jurassic-park-david-attenborough-unveils-80m-dinosaur-attraction>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-dorset-30910933>

Plaster Cast is an Ichthyosaur

One of those 'found in a Museum' news stories that probably don't get enough press, a specimen labelled as a cast has been examined more closely and found to be a new species of Ichthyosaur. The new species has been named *Ichthyosaurus anningae* after Dorset's greatest fossil hunter Mary Anning. This unique fossil dates back 189 million years to the Jurassic period. Tiny hook-shaped features can be seen in the stomach cavity that were actually the hooks from the tentacles of squid proving what its last meal was. I hope that the Natural History Museum have examined their Diplodocus cast closely.

See more at: <http://www.thedinosaurmuseum.com/news/detail/plaster-cast-is-an-ichthyosaur-2#sthash.b0FXotOA.dpuf>

International Chronostratigraphic chart

The International Chronostratigraphic chart v2014/10 can be obtained from the International Commission on Stratigraphy web site at: <http://www.stratigraphy.org/index.php/ics-chart-timescale>

The rock cycle

A nice colour poster available for download via this site:

http://www.geologycafe.com/erosion/rock_cycle_illustrated.html

Request for information



A member has asked for assistance with an enquiry. A stone was brought in for examination with unusual surface markings. It was found at Kariong (near Gosford, Australia) in 1994. The owner has shown this stone to hundreds of geologists and archaeologists asking have they seen anything else closely similar to this and so far nobody asked had ever seen anything like it. The location of the stone is one associated with many myths and legends and there is a possibility that the stone may be some sort of fake. If any of our readers can help please contact John Byrnes at john.mail@ozemail.com.au

Editorial note - electronic Coprolite

This is the first edition of Coprolite produced as an electronic 'first' edition. It will be made available on our website at geocurator.org and distributed to members via email. Please keep your emails up to date with the membership secretary. For the time being those who wish to continue have a hard copy may contact me at helen.kerbey@museumwales.ac.uk, or tel: 02920 513901.

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GCG Personal Subscription 2015

- UK Personal Subscription £15 per annum
- UK Institutional Subscription £20 per annum
- Overseas Personal Subscription £18 / US\$32 / €25 per annum
- Overseas institutional Subscription £22 / US\$40 / €32 per annum

I enclose a cheque for £15.00/£18.00* payable to "Geological Curators Group"

Title.....Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone.....E-mail.....

* delete as applicable.

Please return this form with payment to the Membership Secretary: Cindy Howells, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP

Keep in contact
 Web site: Geocurator.org
 Facebook: Geological Curators' Group.
 Twitter: OriginalGCG and hashtag #GCG.



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