

Annual Report for 2018

as at AGM December 2018



www.geocurator.org

The Geological Curators' Group is a UK-based membership organisation and charity (no. 296050), founded in 1974 to improve the state and status of geological collections and curation. The group is run for its members, by volunteers elected from the membership. It is affiliated to the Geological Society of London as a Specialist Group, and recognised as a Subject Specialist Network by Arts Council England. Our constitution is available here <https://www.geocurator.org/13-qcq-committee/27-qcq-constitution>

1. View from the Chair	Matthew Parkes
2. Accounts	Rachel Walcott
3. Membership and networks	
3.1 Membership and reach	Cindy Howells
3.2 Correspondence and networks	Sarah King
4. Events and participation	Zoë Hughes
5. Publications	
5.1. The Geological Curator	Matthew Parkes
5.2. Coprolite newsletter	Emma Nicholls
6. Collections support	
6.1. Collections monitoring	Sarah King
6.2. Care of collections	Nigel Larkin
7. Online activity	
7.1. Website	Simon Harris
7.2. Blog	Emma Nicholls
7.3 Social Media	Emma Bernard
7.3.1. Facebook	
7.3.2. Twitter	
7.4. JISCmail	Sarah King
8. Outreach and profile	Sarah King

GCG information

Committee for 2018 (from AGM 2017-AGM 2018)

This is the second year of reporting in this format, and we encourage interested members to refer to the 2017 report (found at <https://www.geocurator.org/committee/management-documents/60-annual-reports-and-accounts/300-44th-annual-general-meeting>) for a roundup of affairs to that point. This report builds upon the 2017 report and focusses on events since the 2017 AGM.

1. View from the Chair

Being Chair of an organisation is both easier and a pleasure when you have a great committee. I want to pay tribute to all of the GCG Committee, all of whom are highly motivated and efficient and who just get on with numerous tasks and projects without any drama. This year's AGM date has reverted to our more traditional early December date, based on availability of our host venue. Being flexible, whilst giving as much notice of meeting dates is what we are striving for.

Website

The advances of last year with the website have been further consolidated by the superb work of Simon Harris, who is gradually getting more of us to make full use of the capabilities of the website to support Committee work and provide an enduring, structured organisational memory. Along with tremendous efforts from Sarah King, the archive of our records, policies and processes is growing such that future committees will know how and why certain things were done, and how they should be approached, without relying on long-serving members and erratic memories.

The ability to take payments and provide registration for meetings has transformed our efficiency in this area, and has helped significantly with joint meetings, such as the GCG-HOGG meeting in September. The resources sector along with policies and other material is consistently being added to, so please visit the website regularly for updates. Even better, consider what YOU can provide that builds our support for both collections and curators.

Resources

Although delayed by my own lack of time in the earlier part of this year, we now expect to complete a revised 'Advice booklet' for geology students and their supervisors, to get them thinking ahead as to the fate of collections they may make. The original drafts have undergone major revisions and also redesign by Hilary Ketchum. We have copies available for comment at this AGM, and would appreciate constructive criticism.

Organisation

Special thanks must be given to Sarah King whose hard work has pulled together all of the AGM materials for today, but throughout the past year has been looking after GCG governance, liaison with the Geological Society, charitable organisation compliance and of course routine secretarial duties in organising committee meetings.

I want to thank Alex Peaker and Emma Bernard for their previous work on a social media policy, which is now online. Also in progress are GCG policies on selling fossils and minerals in museum shops. I am very grateful to Emma who has also managed our social media profile throughout the year.

Accounts

Our finances are in a healthy state at present, and our Treasurer, Rachel Walcott will report on them in more detail next. Apart from thanking her for all her diligent work in keeping control and upgrading our capacity with card readers and other equipment, it is perhaps worth noting that the increased money taken in from meetings and subscriptions actively goes towards increased activity, and a healthy turnover hopefully reflects a vibrant group.

Publications

I report on the journal status separately, but note that the future is looking good, with both plenty of potential papers in the pipeline for 2019 and potential transition to a new editor next year. I must also thank all those who have contributed papers, book reviews, reports and material for the journal, but especially the referees, who are largely unsung in their valuable contribution.

GCG's other long-standing publication, *Coprolite*, has successfully evolved into a new format, under the excellent stewardship of Emma Nicholls. The shorter, pdf format of meeting and event notices is being issued regularly, and is easily printed at home by members, saving significant, and ever-growing postage and printing costs for GCG. Other former elements included in *Coprolite* are now being delivered to members in the form of two blogs, again efficiently delivered by Emma Nicholls. One, '*News from the Sector*' covers all sorts of information, whilst the GCG blog carries more reflective or discursive contributions. The more frequent issue of these different channels provides better communication to members of relevant news. The JISC email subscription list also reaches a wider audience than our members alone.

Collections

As Mike Howe reports below, loss of posts and closures are an ever-present threat and unfortunate scenario. Whilst GCG Committee will continue to support curators and collections in individual cases, it is frequently too late for interventions, as these plans often only become public knowledge when effectively signed off. It is our collective belief that advocacy on behalf of collections and curators before they are under threat is the best use of our individual, voluntary capabilities. Providing a thriving support network, appropriate training and resources, and positive examples of the importance of collections is the target.

Programme

I thank Zoë Hughes for developing our 2018 programme, and especially for her work in preparing an interesting schedule of meetings for 2019. Details of these will appear very soon, allowing more time for planning your attendance and ensuring that you have budget allocations for them. Already confirmed are a 2-day workshop on fakes and forgeries and related topics in Edinburgh, next September, and an exciting new collaboration on a joint meeting with the Society for the History of Natural History in York next June (currently details can be found at <https://www.geocurator.org/events/87-trading-nature>). Save the dates for these!

Geological Society

Our relationship with the Geological Society is constructive and we have contributed to the Science Committee's works and policy in different areas. I thank our Society representative, Dr Sally Thompson, who attends most of our committee meetings and acts as a liaison between the Society and GCG.

Relationships with the wider world

We are looking at ways of better communication and representation with SPNHC, but have an established relationship with NatSCA. Whilst Isla Gladstone, who acts as the representative for NatSCA/GCG on each committee, was on maternity leave, Emma Nicholls has fulfilled the role admirably. We are hopeful that Isla will be managing a major new project, jointly submitted by NatSCA and GCG to Arts Council England for funding. Results of the application process are awaited.

I have attended almost all the meetings of the Geoconservation Committee of the Geological Society, and hosted their Annual Gathering in Dublin in November on the topic of *Geoconservation in Ireland: from global to local*. Nigel Larkin, as a working conservator and member of ICON, and has briefed GCG on relevant matters throughout the year, as well as combining with Cindy Howells to deliver GCG's joint meeting, the annual Symposium on Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation (SPPC) at the SVPCA meeting in Manchester in September.

Emma Bernard has been attending the Earth Science Education Forum (ESEF) for GCG and we hope to have a joint meeting with the Earth Science Teachers Association (ESTA) in 2019, with details yet to be confirmed.

The Arts Council England previously hosted a meeting of Subject Specialist Networks, and the various SSNs have been active recently in developing a continuing network. GCG will hopefully play a more active role in this network in future, in developing arguments for recognition and funding of the vital role groups such as ours play in the life of museums of all types. NatSCA have been acting as a proxy for us whilst in its infancy, but we shall aim to have a permanent representative on board from now on.

So, I close by thanking all of the Committee, both named here and those unnamed so far who have all contributed in many ways, and all the members who have contributed to the running of GCG, and I hope that we will see you involved in meetings or activities in the coming year. Two years have flown by, and I expect 2019 to be an even busier year for GCG and the committee.

Matthew Parkes

2. Accounts

We finished this year with a profit of £3671. The PayPal link on the website has proved to be very popular and is being used by our international members, so we took the decision to rationalise the accounts and close the US account. This added £266. In addition, we received a number of substantial donations towards publishing costs and the AGM in Dublin which added a further £1340. We have had a slight increase in subscriptions (again largely related to closing the US account), and a slight increase in workshop income. However, an increase in associated costs meant that the total profit at £211 was a third of the previous year. This year we also had reduced publishing costs partially as a result of the decision to turn Coprolite into a largely online document. It's taken a while to submit Gift Aid information, but we have a two year window and this has been done. Finally, we bought two pieces of equipment: a document scanner and a second PayPal card machine. As ever, all GCG funds are ploughed into continued support for geological curators and collections workers.

We thank our new auditors for 2018, Andy Ross and Neil Clark. We also thank Tiffany Adrain, who for many years took care of the US GCG Account from her base at the University of Iowa.

Rachel Walcott

Geological Curators' Group
45th Annual General Meeting, Cardiff 3/12/2018

2018 Accounts

28/10/2017 - 27/10/2018

Income			Expenditure		
Workshop income	£2,785.37	▶ (£2,513.43)	Geol Curator 10.7, 10.8	-£1,356.14	(-£3,017.51)
Subscriptions	£5,307.16	▶ (£5,133.13)	Coprolite	-£358.00	(-£1,334.80)
Donations	£1,373.48	▶ (£250.01)	AGM & Workshop expenses	-£2,964.99	(-£1,736.78)
			Committee expenses	-£635.05	(-£1,268.18)
			Website fees	-£116.07	(-£213.48)
			JISC GB/3D payments	£0.00	(-£250.00) [£66.87 remaining]
			Brighton Medals	£0.00	(-£785.14) [£1214.86 remaining]
			Equipment	-£247.98	(0.00)
			Eu Acct Bank Fees	-£126.70	
	<u>£9,466.01</u>			<u>-£5,804.93</u>	
Balance as at 27/10/2017	£13,379.25		Balance as at 27/10/2018	17,040.33	
European Account	€ 772.66		includes European Account	€ 462.91	(0.87 exchange rate)

Auditors:

Neil Clark

NOTES

American Account at (27.10.18)

\$0.00

Andrew Ross

Rachel Walcott, Treasurer 22/11/2018

3. Membership and networks

3.1 Membership and reach

I'm really pleased to be able to announce that this year we have seen a real rise in new subscriptions. This is entirely due to the ease of registering and paying on our new website. We have, as always, had a certain number leave us, or be deleted through non-payment, but this has been more than balanced by the new members we've had.

	2018	2017	2016
Personal UK	175	160	155
Personal Overseas	28	20	22
UK institutions	38	46	44
Overseas institutions	21	20	23
Honorary	7	7	6
Total	269	253	250

Subscriptions are now due for 2019, and the rates will remain the same as before. If you don't have a Standing Order set up, please send me a cheque, or log into our website and renew your subs sometime in January, to allow us time to reset the dates and check figures. If you do pay by SO, please check that you are paying the right amount, as several of you are not. I do send out regular reminders but there are always a few slightly behind the times! Remember we also have an optional concessionary rate, but if you wish to pay this amount please let me know, so that I can make a note of it.

Please remember to keep your details up to date on our website, and also by emailing me.

Cindy Howells

3.2. Correspondence and networks

We continue to meet annually with the Geological Society, including their Geoconservation Gathering, and have representation at the Earth Science Education Forum. We also had representation at the Munich Mineral Show (October), in an effort to broaden our networks in mineralogy.

We have pushed forward with our work with NatSCA this year, as a major partner on a funding application to Arts Council England's Subject Specialist Networks fund. The bid is called, 'Realising the potential of natural sciences collections in a changing climate'. If successful, it would allow us to more effectively extend our reach to the increasing number of non-subject specialists now looking after geological collections, including via developing an e-learning platform, and investigate sustainable skills exchange mechanisms, in collaboration with Museum Development networks. Many thanks to Isla Gladstone for leading on this bid, and to NatSCA for their work also.

In line with last year, there have been few pieces of unsolicited correspondence. Most queries now come through the GEO-CURATORS JISCMail list (see section 7.4 below). There was one followup enquiry about the whereabouts of part of Howard Bartlett's collection, following his obituary highlighted by GCG, one enquiry about ornithopod dinosaur collections for a dissertation, one

enquiry about recommended collections management systems, and one notification of a couple of museums with geological collections that weren't on our website. There also were 3-4 requests to send a message to the wider JISCMail list, about items for disposal, job postings, and general queries. Unfortunately, as a consequence of the change to generic email addresses a year or so ago (e.g. secretary@geocurator.org), regular spam mail is received by several committee members. However, this is easily filtered, and deemed worth it for the ease of use and continuity offered by the addresses.

Sarah King

4. Events and participation

Our 2017 winter seminar and AGM was held 14-15th November at the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Dublin, entitled 'Making the most of a Move', on the topic of collections moves. 50 delegates attended, slightly down on 2016's figure of 56. Both the talks and the workshops garnered positive feedback. On the second day, the workshops were a departure from the traditional model of holding a fieldtrip on this day, but yielded higher attendance than usual. Information on the event is available on our website (<https://www.geocurator.org/events/34-agm-seminar-2017>).

Compared to 2017, GCG was back up to a full annual programme of 3 well-attended events.

'Pyrite oxidation: where are we now?' (10th May) was a workshop held at, and in collaboration with, the Natural History Museum, London. The workshop was full to capacity, with 60 attendees and a waiting list. Feedback was excellent and there have been calls to repeat the day. However this may not be possible in the same format, as Project Airless at the NHM, around which the day was based, has scaled back in its final year (2018) and priorities are not on outreach or events. It might be possible to run again in collaboration with other organisations. However, all the resources from the workshop are available at <https://www.geocurator.org/resources/67-past-workshops-and-seminars/nhm-10th-april-2018> by logging in with your membership details, and the day was written up on our blog here <https://geocollnews.wordpress.com/2018/07/10/pyrite-oxidation-where-are-we-now/>. As this event was advertised on conservation forums, we have succeeded in getting GCG onto the radar of groups not historically targeted in our advertising. Hopefully we will be able to continue this with similar cross-promotion in the future.

A Moulding and Casting workshop (25-26th July), held at and in collaboration with the British Geological Survey, Keyworth, was also very successful, with 14 attendees – around the maximum possible to host given the hands-on nature of the course. One attendee wrote up a comprehensive blog post here <https://geocollnews.wordpress.com/2018/11/06/making-replicas-of-your-specimens/>. We are continuing to finesse our relatively new online booking systems, and will be applying a small fee to fieldtrips in the future to ensure attendances.

The meeting on 'Collectors, Collections and the Geology of South-West Britain' (18-19th September, Bath Royal and Literary Scientific Institution, Bath), which was held in conjunction with the History of Geology Group, was well received with nearly 70 attendees covering membership of both organisations. A blog post on the day can be found here <https://geocollnews.wordpress.com/2018/10/25/collectors-collections-and-the-geology-of-sw-britain-a-view-from-the-audience/>

Interestingly, our workshop events over the year have attracted more non-members than the AGM and winter seminar in Dublin. The pyrite and moulding workshops had 50% and 60% non-members respectively compared to 10% at the Dublin event.

The 2018 AGM and winter seminar will be held 4-5th December at the National Museum Wales, Cardiff, on the topic of volunteering, entitled, 'Inspiring Volunteers | Promoting Collections'.

We thank all hosts, facilitators and contributors to our events this year, without whom GCG would not be able to run its programme.

GCG has lots of exciting things lined up for 2019, so watch this space!

Zoë Hughes

5. Publications

5.1. The Geological Curator

In 2018, one part of The Geological Curator was published, in October. Volume 10, Number 9 carried 3 papers. This part also included an account of the 2017 Brighton Medal presentation to Graham Worton, the minutes from the 43rd AGM in Bristol (2016), and two book reviews (32 pages in total: 515 to 546). The second part for 2018 should appear after the AGM, before year end. For parts to be issued in 2019, we are looking to publish three thematic sets, covering material from two GCG events in 2018 (the pyrite decay day in May, and the joint meeting with HOGG in September, on collections of South West Britain), as well as the 2017 AGM on collections moves (see section 4 for details on these events). If you were a speaker or poster contributor to these meetings, please look out for separate communications with submission details and deadlines. If papers are not received in time, it will not be possible to include them.

We thank all contributors and referees for our 2018 issues.

We welcome paper submissions for our peer-reviewed journal at any time. There is no page limit or word limit on submissions to *The Geological Curator*, but the Editor and referees will require changes if your submission is not concise and includes excessive ‘padding’. We expect the text to follow *Geological Curator* style.

Members are reminded that receiving the journal electronically rather than in hard copy saves GCG money in admin, printing and postage, and are encouraged to consider this option. Notification of preference should be made to the Membership Secretary.

Matthew Parkes

5.2. Coprolite newsletter

Coprolite has been published since 1990, and has had three issues a year, giving 83 up to the end of 2017. It was at this time that Helen Kerbey decided to step down, and the GCG committee passes on their thanks to Helen for her hard work over the years. Emma Nicholls was elected *Coprolite* Editor at the end of 2017 and the start of 2018 saw a change in format, look, and contents for the newsletter. In an ongoing effort to help keep GCG membership fees down, at a time of increasing

costs of postage and materials, we have moved away from a printed newsletter. Moving to a digital *Coprolite* is also a way of GCG becoming more sustainable, and visibly conscious of the environment. However we recognise that some members may still require a hard copy due to being unable to access a computer. In these cases an exception will of course be made and a printed version sent out by post.

The content of *Coprolite* now fills four A5 pages, rather than the more numerous pages of its previous format. However to balance this, the newsletter is sent out four times a year instead of three. Each issue is sent out immediately following each GCG committee meeting, meaning that those receiving *Coprolite* get the most up to date news there is. As a publication for members of GCG only, *Coprolite* contains news and events specific to GCG, and is a platform to share anything going on inside, or directly relevant to, the GCG network.

Emma Nicholls

6. Collections support

6.1. Collections monitoring

Every year unfortunately brings news of more collections threats and funding cuts, and 2018 was no different. At the start of the year, Torquay Museum escaped a devastating cut from Torbay Council after holding a consultation on its budgets. Funding is now guaranteed to its current levels, but only until April 2020. Hampshire Cultural Trust has restructured, resulting in the redundancies of several subject specialist curators, including natural sciences.

Kingston University Earth and Marine Sciences department (which includes geology) is being wound down over the next two years, due to University-wide streamlining of degree programmes in order to shore up student numbers. Geological teaching material, built up over 70 years, is being disposed, and some has been rehomed at the BGS and NHM, with the rest possibly to end up skipped.

In collections development news, BGS has formally signed up to become an issuing agent for IGSNs (International Geosample Numbers), which will make UK collections more easily accessible at an international level, and has been allocated the UK prefix. This means that BGS will be able to use its existing registration numbers and MDA code – e.g. UKBGSE12345. The intention is to provide an issuing service to any interested UK collection, and using this format will provide a simple predictable system. The cost implications are still being considered, but data supplied checked and in the right format could be free.

There have been several encouraging developments in raising the scientific profiles of natural history collections. The UKRI's (United Kingdom Research & Innovation - the new umbrella organisation for all the research councils) Research Infrastructure Survey

<https://www.ukri.org/research/infrastructure/> received a number of submissions from Natural Science collections, including the NHM, NMS, NMW, Manchester and BGS. Full results are due in Spring 2019. Another encouraging development is that the DiSSCo project (Distributed System of Scientific Collections <http://dissco.eu/>) is now officially a part of the pan-European Research Infrastructure initiative. Whilst it is unlikely to provide direct funding, it should provide a vehicle for groups of collections to bid for funding. The UK organisers are the NHM. Intriguingly, their blog: <https://naturalhistorymuseum.blog/2018/05/16/uniting-europes-1-5-billion-specimens-digital->

[collection-programme/#more-12057](#) suggests “The Natural History Museum is one of over thirty UK museums and herbaria that could become partners in DiSSCo, subject to the programme’s successful admission to the ESFRI roadmap”. Are you one of those over 30 UK museums?

Compiled by Sarah King on behalf of Mike Howe

6.2. Care of collections

The pyrite decay workshop hosted by the NHM earlier this year (see section 4 above) was a great success. Videos of the talks delivered by the speakers are available to GCG members when logged in on the GCG website, and most of the talks and posters presented will appear as published papers in an upcoming issue of the Geological Curator in 2019.

Our hands were a little tied when it came to organising the Symposium on Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation (SPPC) this year at the University of Manchester (5th September), but we enjoyed a half a day with seven inspiring talks on a wide range of subjects, attended by 30-40 delegates. The next SPPC meeting will be different: we plan to deliver a two-day event on the Isle of Wight in September 2019, focusing on practical workshops with talks and demonstrations on a variety of useful topics relating to the collection, cleaning, conservation and display of geological and palaeontological material.

Plans are afoot for a two-day conference on fossil marine reptiles to take place at The Etches Collection in Dorset in early May 2020. It is hoped that this will include a session of talks on the excavation, preparation and conservation of recently discovered marine reptiles – not just from Dorset.

There will also be a two-day GCG meeting concerning geological and fossil fakes and forgeries on 25th-26th September 2019 in Edinburgh, which will be of special interest to all those who clean and conserve geological material.

If you have ideas for workshops concerning the conservation of palaeontological and/or geological material or require advice please do get in touch.

Nigel Larkin

7. Online activity

www.geocurator.org

2018 has given us an opportunity to consolidate the website which was newly launched in 2017. There have been a few small extra features added, but the focus has been on refining and improving our web presence. Particular highlights have included:

- A number of short training sessions for committee members to understand the processes involved in getting articles published - this means that we can get information out to our membership with the minimum of delay.
- Older editions of "The Geological Curator" are being rescanned at higher resolution and the older PDFs replaced on the website. Although the file sizes are slightly larger, this is negated by more widely available fast internet access, and the files much more closely resemble the paper originals.

They look particularly good on the modern "retina" screens found on newer phones, tablets and laptops. Perhaps now is the time to clear some bookshelf space by switching to digital journals??

secure | gcg-web-archive.s3-website-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/2016/arch/Curator/Vol7No1.pdf



Figure 6. A specimen collected by Sir Arthur Russell and labelled as "Brecciated vein-stuff the altered killas fragments cemented by chlorite with arsenopyrite, chalcocopyrite, a little

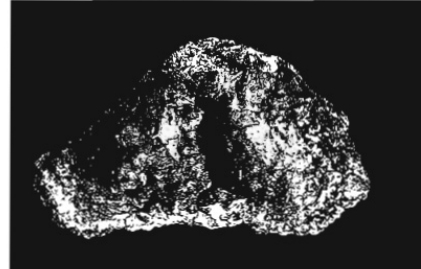


Figure 7. Leadhillite (with linarite and cerussite). Example of a specimen with very little associated documentation but which now includes the following as provided by T. Bridges

re | https://www.geocurator.org/images/resources/geocurator/vol7/geocurator_7_1.pdf

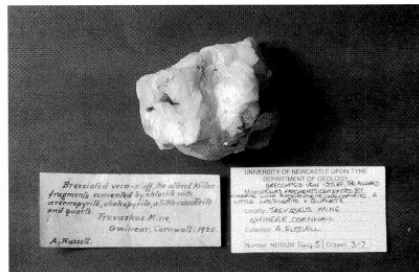


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Figure 7. Leadhillite (with linarite and cerussite). Example of a specimen with very little associated documentation but which now includes the following as provided by T. Bridges

Figure 1 - Much improved scan quality makes our journal archive easier to read and use. Better character recognition in the scans will aid in full text searching further down the line

- Improving integration with our various social media channels - for example, although our blog is technically a separate site, an automated plug-in pulls new stories onto the website as they are published.

- Booking for four events (including the 2018 AGM) was managed by our online system. This includes a particularly successful joint meeting with HoGG and BRLSI in Bath in September. Notably, over 95% of our bookings are handled through the website, and of those, over 70% pay electronically using our payment partner, PayPal.

- Two entire volumes of The Geological Curator (vols. 9 and 10) are now indexed in our full text search system. The search portal is available to members who have created an account on the website (<https://www.geocurator.org/resources/63-geological-curator/the-geological-curator-search-portal>).

Website statistics – how many people have visited the website?

Readers should refer also to the Annual Report for 2017¹ as they read this report. The list of the top 20 most accessed pages paints a balanced picture of the resources available on the website, containing pages relating to news and social media, archive content, events, membership, curation, and collections.

Page title	Section	Hits
GCG homepage	Main	35956
About the Geological Curators Group	Main	1590
The GCG blog	Main	1417
Thumbs-up leaflet	Promoting good curation	910
GCG Constitution	How the Committee works	747
Privacy Policy	How the Committee works	688
Making replicas of your specimens - a beginner's course	Moulding and Casting Workshop	673
Coprolite 81 - March 2017	Previous issues of Coprolite	571
Coprolite 79 - June 2016	Previous issues of Coprolite	568
Committee Profile: Simon Harris	Committee member profiles	550
Building the new GCG website	New site help	525
Coprolite 11 - May 1993	Previous issues of Coprolite	512
Obituary: Howard Bartlett	News	510
Membership of GCG	Membership	484
Geological Collections	Collections	457
Committee Profile: Sarah King	Committee member profiles	439
Committee Profile: Zoë Hughes	Committee member profiles	436
Committee Profile: Matthew Parkes	Committee member profiles	414
Geological Curator 7(3)	The Geological Curator Volume 7	414
Sign up for membership online	Membership	413

Figure 2 - Top 20 pages served by the website between January and October 2018. The number of hits to the homepage is extremely high probably as a result of visits from search engines which are indexing the content of the site.

In total, up to the end of October 2018, and factoring out visits probably made by search engines and web crawlers, the website has registered over 25,000 individual visitor sessions.

¹ https://www.geocurator.org/images/committee/mgmtdocs/AGM2017/GCG_annual_report_2017.pdf

Sources of referrers – where do people visit the website from?

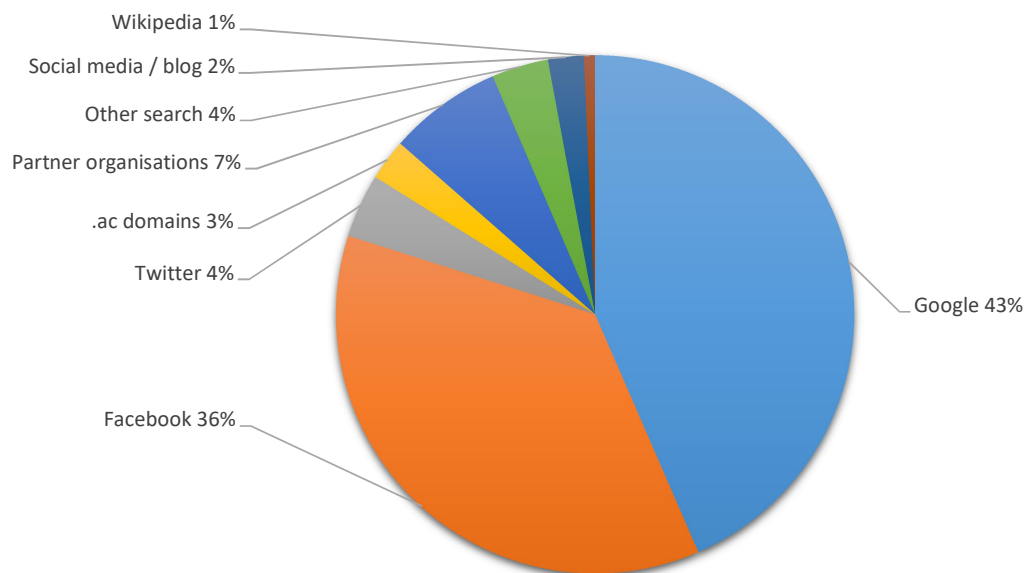


Figure 3 - Sources of traffic (where available) January - October 2018

Again the search giant Google dominates the source of our traffic, but it is also encouraging to see our social media channels driving traffic to the website. Mapping the locations of our visitors shows they come from all around the world, with visitors from the UK, Germany, US, China and France taking the top five positions, however we recorded visits from at least 112 different countries overall.

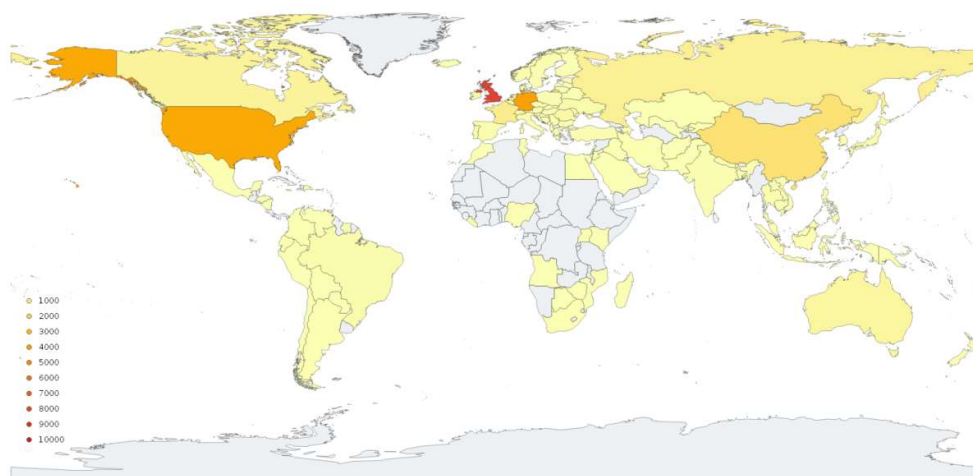


Figure 4 - Choropleth map showing location and number of visitor sessions, when it can be determined. Countries with no visits are shown in grey, hotter colours indicate larger numbers of visitors

Moving forwards

During the next year, we hope to continue adding information to the website. There are still significant amounts of historic data that will need to be scanned and indexed for inclusion, and we hope that the website will become the distribution vehicle for the newly updated “Guidelines for the Curation of Geological Materials”.

As always we welcome any suggestions on new features for the website, or offers of help in generating content.

Simon Harris

7.2. Blog

In May 2017, Emma Nicholls was elected as Blog Editor; originally as maternity cover for Isla Gladstone, and then permanently, following a joint proposal from Isla and Emma to committee. It was felt the transition should be made permanent on the basis that Isla’s role as GCG / NatSCA Rep was expanding, meaning she needed more time to concentrate on this area. Also, it would give Emma the opportunity to improve alignment of the Blog and *Coprolite*, as Editor of both.

Beginning with a number of articles previously sourced by Isla, Emma has worked since May to ensure at least three new articles are posted each month throughout 2018. As this new regime gained traction, the content and traffic on the blog increased significantly. There have been 22 articles published this reporting year. Throughout 2018, the blog received a 400 % increase in views on all previous years, showing that, with a constant flow of quality content, Blogs are still a popular format for disseminating information within our sector.

Emma now compiles a monthly series called *News from the Sector*, which serves as a round-up of exhibitions, events, workshops, jobs, and conferences across the field of Earth Sciences. This series is proving very popular, with the July and September editions being in the top five most read blogs of the year.

We hope you will find the content on our revamped Blog stimulating, and if you would like to contribute, please get in touch with Emma at the following email address: blog@geocurator.org.

Emma Nicholls

7.3. Social media

Social media has become a great way for fast communication of news and events, as well as a platform for queries and more light-hearted communication. As a result of the growing use of these platforms, we have put together a social media policy, which is available on our website (<https://www.geocurator.org/committee/management-documents/58-how-the-committee-works>). If you are looking to engage with GCG on social media, we would strongly recommend you read this document as it sets out some usage guidelines as well as what GCG uses social media for. We thank everyone who has contributed to keeping our social media presence dynamic during the year. We are always pleased to receive content to publish on our social media channels.

7.3.1. Facebook

We are represented on Facebook in two ways: a group and a page (both called Geological Curators' Group). All content is posted to both. 985 people have liked our Facebook Group (912 in 2017) and we have 292 members of our group page (225 in 2017). Posts typically reach 2000-3000 people every week.

7.3.2. Twitter

We currently have 1068 followers (961 in 2017) on our Twitter account (@OriginalGCG), which was launched in 2013. Numbers of followers have been steadily growing since. During November we had 231 profile visits, were mentioned 102 times and had 16000 tweet impressions. These numbers vary monthly.

Emma Bernard

7.4. JISCMail

The GEO-CURATORS@JISCMail.ac.uk mailing list currently has 276 members. This is a slight increase on last year's figure of 272, although in total there were 18 new email addresses subscribed. The difference is due to the natural wastage of email addresses becoming defunct and stripped from the list automatically, or being signed off as people move jobs and industries. The list is now the main point of contact for most queries, as opposed to getting in touch with the GCG committee, and a major vehicle for news and advertisements, so it is worth collating some information about its use.

This year, since the last AGM, there have been around 100 posts (down slightly from 107 last year). A quarter of these have been about GCG business (events, seminars, blog posts etc). Another quarter have been promoting events and training external to GCG. There have been 17 queries about collections, and 7 concerning collections support or promotion (including exhibitions). 9 have advertised jobs or studentships, and 15 have been other queries and general news.

Compared to 2017, around 50% of the output has again been about training opportunities and GCG business. The major difference is that this is now split equally between GCG business and external events, largely due to promoting the revitalised GCG blog, and a full programme of GCG events to promote in 2018. (iDigBio, the large scale American collections digitisation programme, seems to have posted fewer items this year also). Collections news and queries are down this year also (24:17; 16:7 respectively). Most of the rest of the posts have been more general queries and news (15 compared to 10 last year). This could possibly be trending towards a wider and less specialist composition of the email membership list, or could be that members feel that the expertise accessible through the list is likely to be able to answer questions outside of the core geological base, signifying a move towards a mainstream curatorial resource. The total number of posts on the list is relatively small however, so it is unlikely to be possible to give definitive answers. We will continue to monitor the list in coming years as a point of interest. Anyone (GCG member or not) is welcome to sign up to the list – please see our website for a link. As always, we thank everyone who has offered up their knowledge and expertise.

Sarah King

8. Outreach and profile

We have scaled back our physical attendance at outreach events in 2018, in order to maximise the use of GCG funds in promoting ourselves and our events. We now have some full colour postcard-sized fliers that are suitable to be put out at various events, and as committee members have attended these during the year, fliers have travelled to the Yorkshire Fossil Festival (September, Hull) and the Munich Mineral Show (October), to name but two. We also have a supply of branded tote bags, and we continue to investigate avenues of promotion and revenue to ensure that GCG remains sustainable while delivering on its aims.

If GCG members would like some fliers to promote GCG at their organisation or event, please let us know and we can arrange to get them to you. Similarly, if there are organisations that might like to sponsor an GCG event please get in touch with us.

As in 2017, we supported the Progressive Palaeontology conference, which this year was held in Manchester (7-9th June). We also hope to be able to roll out a new advice booklet in 2019 for new PhD students, called 'I am beginning my research. What do I do with my geological collection?', which aims to capture valuable geological specimens before they are consigned to university department basements.

Sarah King

****Please print your own copy of this document if you need it; GCG is working to reduce paper waste. Thank you****

GCG information

The Geological Curators' Group can be found at:

- www.geocurator.org
- <https://www.facebook.com/GeologicalCuratorsGroup/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/376700195784835/>
- <https://twitter.com/OriginalGCG>

Contact details:

info@geocurator.org

National Museums Scotland
Chambers Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1JF

Committee for 2018 (from AGM 2017-AGM 2018)

- **Chair:** Matthew Parkes (*National Museum of Ireland*)
- **Secretary:** Sarah King (*York Museums Trust*)
- **Treasurer:** Rachel Walcott (*National Museums Scotland*)
- **Membership Secretary:** Cindy Howells (*National Museum Wales*)
- **Programme Secretary:** Zoë Hughes (*Natural History Museum*)
- **Minutes Secretary:** Tony Morgan (*National Museums Liverpool*)
- **Journal Editor:** Matthew Parkes
- **Newsletter Editor, Blog Editor** (co-opted from May 2017): Emma Nicholls (*Horniman Museum and Gardens*)
- **Collections Officer:** Mike Howe (*British Geological Survey*)
- **Web Officer:** Simon Harris (*British Geological Survey*)
- **Ordinary Member:** Will Watts (*Hidden Horizons*)
- **Ordinary Member:** Emma Bernard (*Natural History Museum*)
- **Ordinary Member:** Alex Peaker (*Dinosaur Isle*)
- **Co-opted member** (NatSCA representative; to May 2017 Blog editor): Isla Gladstone (*Bristol Museum and Art Gallery*) (Maternity cover by Emma Nicholls)
- **Co-opted member** (Conservation Officer): Nigel Larkin (*Natural History Conservation*)
- **Co-opted member** (web and comms support): Hilary Ketchum (*Oxford University Museum of Natural History*)