



DROPPINGS
FROM THE
GEOLOGICAL
CURATORS
GROUP

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GCG website: <http://www.geocurator.org>

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Please note that the 31st AGM of the Geological Curators' Group will be held at 1620 on Tuesday 18 January 2005 at the Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne. Nominations for the post of Chairman, Officers, and two Committee Members must be made by two members of the Group and submitted in writing to Giles Miller, GCG Secretary, Department of Palaeontology, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD by **Tuesday 28 December 2004**.

Subscriptions 2005: look out for your invoice

This year, instead of completing a subscription form in *Coprolite*, Personal Members will receive individual invoices for their annual subscriptions. We hope that this will encourage more prompt payment than in the past. When you receive your invoice, please deal with it immediately: don't let it be subducted beneath the developing orogen of paperwork on your desk. If you have already arranged to pay by standing order, you will not receive an invoice.

Subscriptions are due on 1 January 2005. Subscriptions remain the same as last year: £12.00 for UK Personal Members and £15.00/US\$27.00/€22.00 for Overseas Personal Members. Institutional subscriptions are £16.00 for UK institutions and £18.00/US\$32.00/€26.00 for Overseas institutional subscribers. Institutional Subscribers will receive invoices as usual.

Standing Orders. If you are a UK Personal Member and you did not complete a standing order form last year, then you are strongly encouraged to do so this year. *This method of payment greatly simplifies the administration of subscriptions and helps keep costs (and, therefore, subscriptions) down.* If you completed a standing order form last year, there is no need to complete another this year.

Gift Aid. As a charity, GCG can recover tax from the Inland Revenue at a rate of 28p for each £1 of your subscription if you are a UK taxpayer. It costs you nothing and GCG benefits, helping to keep costs and subscriptions down. Please sign the Gift Aid declaration on your subscription renewal invoice when you receive it.

Subscriptions unpaid by 30 April 2005 will be deemed to have lapsed.

For the future: we are currently exploring a possible method of credit card payment via the GCG website. Look out for further details.

Sara Chambers, GCG Treasurer, Royal Cornwall Museum, River Street, Truro, Cornwall TR1 2SJ tel 01872 272205, fax 01872 240514, email sara.chambers@royalcornwallmuseum.org.uk

New members

GCG is pleased to welcome the following new subscriber: University of Otago Science Library.

Musical curators

Dan Pemberton, formerly Assistant Curator at Dinosaur Isle, is now Collections Manager at the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge; he is succeeded at Dinosaur Isle by **Lorna Steele**; **Ann Ainsworth**, formerly a Museum Studies student at Leicester University has been appointed Documentation Officer at Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service.

Deaths

We are sorry to report the deaths of long-standing members **Muriel Arber**, Cambridge, and **Paul Shilston**, Black Country Geological Society, and of **Colin Sparrow** of Penzance.

Brighton Medallist 2004

Since 1992, it has been the pleasant duty of the retiring chairman of GCG to award the AG Brighton Medal. The medal, which is awarded every three years, was the inspiration of the late Dr David Price of the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge, and commemorates the life and work of Albert G. Brighton, Curator at the Sedgwick Museum between 1931 and 1968. In that time Brighton catalogued some 375,000

specimens at an average rate of over 10,000 a year. With this in mind, the award is given to recognise actual achievement over a long period. This may be in the actual care of collections, or in inspiring others to better collections care, or in increasing the awareness of the value of geological collections through collections research.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that at the meeting of the Group to be held in the Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne on 18 January 2005, the Brighton Medal will be presented to Professor Hugh S Torrens. Hugh was a founder member of the Group, our second Chairman, and has been an active contributor to our publications and meetings over the last 30 years. Through these, and through his extensive publications on the history of our science, Hugh has always emphasised the necessity and value of proper curation of museum collections. As a researcher making use of collections, Hugh has had first-hand experience of the good, the bad and the downright ugly of collections management practice in museums in the UK and around the world. For many years he ran a unique and extremely useful regular column in our newsletter, *Collections lost and found*, a forum which aimed to unite missing collections with the researchers who sought them. He has been a driving force in the Group and has been an inspiration to many of us. Hugh will be the first to admit that he is not a curator; he is an academic, a user of our collections. As such, he has provided an invaluable perspective on our work. All of Hugh's friends and colleagues are warmly invited to attend the presentation which will take place just before the Annual General Meeting.

Patrick Wyse Jackson, GCG Chairman

Letter from America

Since the middle of July I have been staying in the small mid-Pennsylvania town of Carlisle on sabbatical at Dickinson College, one of the earliest such institutions in the United States. I am here working on various projects including some on Palaeozoic bryozoans and am attempting to finish editing two conference volumes. I also have an issue of *The Geological Curator* ready to be sent to the printers and hopefully this will be with you before the middle of December.

While I had hoped to escape, this was futile given that e-mail follows you wherever you go. This, nevertheless, has been useful and has kept me in touch with the happenings of the Group. We will be involved at the SPNHC meeting in London next year, and I encourage you all to attend. We are responding to the MA document on "Collections for the future". This suggests establishing networks each dealing with a particular subject area. The body that drew up this document seems not to realise that the GCG or NatSCA exist! They will soon know!

I shall be networking shortly myself and hope to meet as many museum geologists as possible when I visit Washington to give some presentations, go to New York to bring my daughters to see the dinosaurs at the AMNH, and attend the GSA meeting in Denver in November. As you will recall from my addresses at past AGMs I am concerned that the GCG membership is not as strong outside of Britain and Ireland as it should be, and this will be an opportunity to try and raise the profile of our Group on this side of the Atlantic.

I have visited several geological museums and institutions while I have been here. In Dickinson the 'geological museum' consists of various cases situated in the hallway of the building (once a church) that houses the departments of Geology, Environmental Sciences and Psychology. As a 'museum' this set up actually works very well – it takes up little space, requires little maintenance, and is viewed by a large number of people who pass through the building. I visited Pennsylvania State University (PSU) recently which is located smack in the middle of the State where two diagonal lines drawn on a map met – a typical US solution to avoid any argument on the merits of locating the college in either Philadelphia or Pittsburgh. Unfortunately the day of my visit coincided with the period when the museum gallery was being reorganised, and the room consisted of a pile of cardboard boxes that surrounded a bust of the mineralogist Dana who was looking quite pleased with himself having all the attention. For all you building stones buffs there is a real 'gem' on the PSU campus, in the form of an obelisk constructed of about 120 examples of stone from Pennsylvania. This was erected about 100 years ago to demonstrate the rate of weathering of various local materials. Most have handled the weather very well.

I look forward to returning to Ireland in late December and seeing as many of you as possible at the AGM in Newcastle in January. At this meeting I shall be presenting Hugh Torrens with the Brighton Medal. I am grateful to all the members of the Committee that have had to cover for me during my sojourn.

Patrick Wyse Jackson

Newish publications

British Lower Carboniferous stratigraphy by P.J. Cossey, A.E. Adams, M.A. Purnell, M.J. Whiteley, M.A. Whyte & V.P. Wright, 2004. Geological Conservation Review Series No 29. Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee, xix + 617pp. ISBN 1 86 107 499 9.

A geologic timescale 2004 by Felix Gradstein, Jim Ogg & Alan Smith, 2004. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 384pp, ISBN 0 521 78142 6, £75.00 (hardback), 0 521 78673 8, £28.00 (paperback).

Memoirs of William Smith LLD

Last year, Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution (BRLSI) reprinted *Memoirs of William Smith, LLD* by John Phillips, the biography of Smith by his nephew and assistant, himself an eminent geologist. To this reprint Professor Hugh Torrens, the leading expert on Smith, contributed a new introduction and overview of the eventful life of William Smith and the text of Hugh's 2000 Geological Society of London William Smith Lecture. A full index to Phillips' *Memoir*, and to Hugh's papers made this volume a valuable reference on Smith's life and work. As a result, the first reprint sold out quickly. The BRLSI have now reprinted their reprint, which is hardback, 210 x 145mm, with 288 pages including 30 illustrations, printed on 100gsm white paper, and is bound in grey with blue and white titles. The price is £18.00 plus postage and packing (UK postage £3. 10 Europe £3.75, North America £7.45, Asia £8.20).

Contact: BRLSI, 16–18 Queen Square, Bath BA1 2HN, UK, tel +44 (0)1 225 312084, fax +44 (0)1 225 442460, email admin@brlsi.org

Fossil, mineral and gem shows 2004

20-21 November Newmarket Racecourse, Newmarket, Suffolk

27-28 November Brighton Racecourse, Brighton, Sussex

Contact: HD Fairs Ltd, PO Box 72, Maidenhead SL6 7GB tel 01628 621697, email info@rockngem.co.uk, www.Rockngem.co.uk

UKRIGS receives ALSF grant for Earth science field teaching activities

UK Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (UKRIGS) and English Nature have announced that UKRIGS is to receive an Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund grant for a UKRIGS Education Officer pilot project to use five former aggregates sites to develop and publish examples of high quality Earth science field teaching activities. These will mostly be for use by non-specialist teachers delivering the National Curriculum to students from Primary to GCSE level. The Aggregates levy is a tax on primary aggregates introduced in April 2002 which aims to address the environmental and social cost of aggregate extraction. English Nature, English Heritage and the Countryside Agency administer Defra funding arising from the levy.

The main aim of this project is to address the serious problems of schools failing to undertake Earth science fieldwork, highlighted in English Nature Report 523 *The use of geological sites by schools* prepared by the National Stone Centre.

For this educational/interpretational work there will be close liaison with RIGS Groups and our partners in the Earth Science Teachers' Association [including the Earth Science Education Unit, based at Keele University] and the National Stone Centre. This project will follow the ESTA/ESEU pattern of operation in the use of writing workshops and the production of web-based activities and CDs. Links will be made between our field teaching activities and their classroom/ laboratory practical activities hosted on the www.jesei.org.uk website.

It is planned that, wherever possible, the interpretive activities will be case studies/exemplars capable of use, some with minor adaptation, at similar sites elsewhere. They will be written for three levels: Primary [mainly KS2] Lower Secondary [KS3] and Upper Secondary [KS4/GCSE]. They will help teachers in the delivery of the National Curriculum to students at all levels, locally and nationally, and thus directly benefit a large section of the community affected by past aggregates extraction. The selected sites will be designated geoconservation sites, have open public access and likely be currently owned by public bodies.

The five sites of the Pilot Project will include: The National Stone Centre, Wirksworth, Derbyshire. This is a large open site demonstrating a range of is tropical reef environments in the Lower Carboniferous. It is frequently visited by school groups. Park Hall Country Park, Stoke-on-Trent, including the Hulme Quarries National Nature Reserve/SSSI. The Triassic sandstones and pebble beds

reveal a story of flash floods in a desert environment. The open access site is frequently used by groups of all ages. The Open University had a regular Sunday slot for many years when their Science Foundation Course summer school was based at Keele, Apes Tor, and Ecton Hill, Wetton, Staffs, part of the Hamps and Manifold SSSI. This is an excellent locality to study the geometry of fold structures, as modelled with strips of foam and card at the 2003 UKRIGS Conference. Ecton Hill itself has the remains of copper mining, where school groups have worked on exercises related to vein mineralisation and industrial processes.

A success with this 8-month pilot will enable UKRIGS to bid for funding to extend the project nationwide and to include a greater element of liaising with RIGS Groups, teachers and a wide range of other partner organisations. The examples of Earth science field teaching activities produced by the project will be initially available on the UKRIGS website and on CD, with some paper copies.

John Reynolds, UKRIGS, National Stone Centre, Porter Lane, Wirksworth, Derbys, DE4 4LS tel 01629-824833, ukrigs@nationalstonecentre.org.uk, www.ukrigs.org.uk

The quiet workforce: women in geological museums in the early 1900s

While we are all familiar with Gertrude Elles and her work on graptolites in Cambridge, there are a great number of unheralded women in geology. I am looking for names and information about women who worked in geological museums in Britain and Ireland in the early to mid-1900s. I am particularly interested in women who were employed as model preparators or as assistants but who never rose very far up the institutional ladder. The work of these women frequently went unacknowledged, and some had to resign their positions on marriage. I would also like to learn of women employed in the universities in Geology Departments. Often they were employed as assistants and/or illustrators by the Professor of Geology, and would help in tedious research work. Rarely did they publish work of their own - an exception to this is Madeline Munro, assistant to E.J. Garwood at University College, London - although she produced only one paper, as far as I know, and it was an appendix to one of his!

If anyone has information or photographs however trivial, I would like to hear from you. I can be contacted by e-mail (wysjcknp@tcd.ie) or regular mail: Department of Geology, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Patrick Wyse Jackson

BGS collections

Issue 20 of *Earthwise*, the official magazine of the British Geological Survey, contains, amongst other interesting articles on the current work of BGS, an account of the National Geological Materials Collection by Mike Howe, Mark Dean, Graham Tulloch and others. This collection is the amalgamation of the disparate and varied collections held by BGS, including the biostratigraphy, palaeontology, mineralogy, petrology, and borehole collections as well as offshore samples and hydrocarbon data archive for the UK continental shelf. For more information, see the recently re-designed BGS website at www.bgs.ac.uk

Yorkshire Geology Month - May 2005

The simple aim of Yorkshire Geology Month is to ask geologists, geology groups and people with interests related to geology to run one or more local geological events for the public in Yorkshire and the surrounding areas in May (or early June) 2005. If you or your organisation/company are interested in taking part please contact Mike Horne FGS initially or visit www.horne28.freeserve.co.uk/ygm.htm for further details. It is also hoped that as a result of the month's activities an informal network of Yorkshire geologists will be created and those taking part will be invited to a 'gathering' during the month.

Contact: Mike Horne, 28 Salisbury Street, Hull, HU5 3HA, email m.j.horne@hull.ac.uk

Canterbury's Fossil Roadshow

Now in its seventh year, Canterbury Museum's next Fossil Roadshow will feature Gold and other precious materials of the Earth's crust. It is a little known fact that gold-fever struck Kent when the world's largest smelter was built at Dartford during the first Canadian Gold Rush of 1578. Examine samples of the 'black ore', part of a thousand ton cargo from Baffin Island and find out more about this fascinating fiasco masterminded by Elizabethan adventurer, Sir Martin Frobisher!

As always, local fossil and mineral groups, including the Oyster Coast Fossil Society, Medway Lapidary and Mineral Society and the Sheppey Fossil Study Group, who have given enthusiastic support to the Roadshow over the past six years, will all be exhibiting their latest finds from the area.

First and foremost, however, the Roadshow is about identifying fossils, rocks and minerals brought in by the public, and so our team of experts hope to be busy throughout the event. Activities for children (and adults!) will include panning for gold as well as trying your hand at finding real fossil sharks' teeth. The first 50 children attending the Roadshow will receive a specimen of 'fool's gold' (unfortunately the museum can't afford to give away the real thing!).

The Roadshow takes place on Saturday 12 February 2005 at the Royal Museum, High Street, Canterbury from 1000 to 1230 and 1330 to 1600. Admission is free.

For further details contact Ralph Anderson or Martin Crowther on 01227 452747.

GCG 30th anniversary seminar and fieldtrip: Is collecting dead? North Lincolnshire Museum, Scunthorpe 17-18 May 2004

The purpose of this meeting was to look at the ways that museums are acquiring specimens today. Do curators have time to collect and, if not, is this limiting the development of collections? Are collections in local museums stagnating?

Steve Thompson (North Lincolnshire Museum) outlined the lithostratigraphy of North Lincolnshire and the availability of the different rock types for collecting, such as the famous Frodingham Ironstones at Connisbury Quarry where the quarry is

being reclaimed by Manchester waste as landfill. The quarry face will be lost quite quickly but steps have been taken to replace the teaching resource in the form of the rock store – more about this later...

The collections held in the museum are 90% from the Jurassic with 60%, mostly ammonites being from a single, highly fossiliferous horizon the Frodingham Ironstone. It would be a huge investment to make the collection representative of the complete stratigraphy of the county. The museum's collecting policy covers the counties of North Lincolnshire and Lincolnshire and at the present the museum stores have 25% expansion space. Plans for the future – the museum in the old building will be closed and a new museum built in the town centre. Static galleries are not seen as a way to engage the local community – the new galleries are envisaged as being natural history centres with far more of the collections being available for the public to see.

Jon Radley, (Warwickshire Museum) answered the question "Is collecting dead?" with an emphatic no, but John did admit that there were only a few people collecting seriously in Warwickshire. Because it is difficult to collect from the Jurassic in Warwickshire there is little collecting pressure and, of course, there is no casual collecting allowed in working quarries. There is support from the museum, but no money. Jon's working environment allows for flexibility in collecting; for example, in 2003 there was a temporary exposure near Stratford down dip 8-10km across the Triassic-Jurassic on a Transco pipeline. Two days were spent logging the exposures using a GPS receiver and a Dictaphone and collecting ammonites from the spoil heaps. However, the largest specimens were kept by the workers but a specimen of *Oxynticeras* was found. This is a zone fossil and so will improve the biostratigraphical knowledge of Warwickshire.

Helen Kerbey, Curatorial Assistant in Petrology (National Museums and Galleries Wales) outlined the way a large national museum department manages its collections. The petrology department holds about 30,000 rocks, cores (and core logs), thin sections, slags and meteorites. Collecting projects are determined by the Museum's charter of 1907 allowing for the "education of the public ...by illustration of geology... by collection..." and the Corporate plan 2004/2005-2006/2007: 3.3.1 "research, select and acquire specimens...in the field or by purchase..." . Curators are encouraged to collect but they must prioritise the work and log it in job plans. They are helped by the fact that the Petrology Department has a fieldwork/specimen purchase budget. Helen outlined the reasons for collecting at NMGW; these included new displays and maintaining authoritative collections and responding to change, and gave as examples the coal collections and a new building stones initiative. At the NMGW the prospects for the collections are good but change is slow within a large institution. It is up to curators to keep collecting alive and to collect with a purpose and plan. We all need to network to achieve our objectives for collections and we must make information on our collections as accessible as possible.

Kevin Leahy, (North Lincolnshire Museum) talked from an archaeologist's perspective. As the current Principal Keeper of Archaeology and Natural History - a

post which has been held by both geologists and archaeologists and where the two subjects can overlap such as with Roman pottery furnaces in the ironstone mines in Scunthorpe - Kevin showed that the two subjects have similar problems when the *accuracy of the provenance of objects collected in the past make them unsuitable* for modern academic work. One solution to this has been the development of Community Fieldwork – trying to get large scale coverage of the local landscape and how it has changed using local volunteers armed with GPS receivers where all of the finds are plotted with GPS onto maps.

Robin McDermot, Registration Officer for Yorkshire Museums, Libraries and Archives Council explained the new registration criteria and suggested that we need a formalised co-ordination of collecting, an example of which is the National Railway Museum vintage carriages collection register. However, there are only 3,500 carriages in the country, and geological collections are a different order of magnitude in size and complexity. One issue that was raised in discussion was the question of who is collecting what – locally, regionally and nationally? It was suggested that we create a database of acquisition and disposal policies. MLAC are not prepared to do this – perhaps this is something for GCG to take on?

Jonathon Larwood, (English Nature) showed us how communication and networking pays dividends particularly with the problem of collecting and research at SSSIs. An example of this is the West Dorset Collecting Code and Recording Scheme which is working well and where the issue of the loss of scientific material is being addressed in part by the Dorset Coast Initiative, which is a voluntary scheme. In 2003-4 English Nature spent nearly £100,000 on clearing sites under the Face Lift Scheme. One site to benefit was Tideswell Dale SSSI, a Carboniferous sill and columnar siltstone heated by the sill which has now been cleaned and worked on by Bristol University who are doing palaeomagnetism, petrography and dating studies. He assured us that collecting on SSSIs is OK but we must follow good practice and local advice. English Nature aim to link the site, collector and museum. In the discussion after this talk David Sole emphasised the lack of time that curators have to excavate temporary sites and that they need to let the keen collectors know when the sites are available. The issue of Geoparks was mentioned and it was explained that as part of the ethics of the Geopark network they do not tolerate the sale of specimens within a Geopark. So the Dorset World Heritage Site could not qualify as a Geopark. But it is accepted that while collecting is an integral part of geology, the sale of specimens is not. GCG will be holding a seminar on the issue of Geoparks next year.

Will Watts, (Scarborough Museums) told us how the Dinosaur Coast Project had helped to show the value of geology to Scarborough as a resource. A code of conduct for collecting has been implemented and a registration process similar to Dorset is being developed. A very welcome initiative is that the Rotunda Museum will be restored as a geological museum. This has come about because of the involvement of the local geologists as part of the Dinosaur Coast project and the local interest to restore the museum. Will highlighted the value of good partnerships by telling us how a local amateur collector found a plesiosaur and told the local

museum because of work with the Dinosaur Coast and the owner allowed access to the site by the museum service. The plesiosaur is now being prepared by a local conservator and will end up as a central display in the new Rotunda museum. And the Museums Service at Scarborough will have a permanent Geological Curator from next March – so a successful end to the project

One of the themes running through this meeting seemed to be a desire for better communication of all kinds. Perhaps we will have to find different ways to achieve this exchange of information if we can no longer spare the time to attend meetings face to face to build those crucial relationships we all seem to want.

In the evening a small but select group gathered at a local Indian restaurant for a celebratory dinner to mark the 30th anniversary of the group. We were lucky to have in our group a founder member and two people who were at their first GCG meeting. On a personal note, I worked out that I had been attending meetings on and off for 20 years as the first meeting I attended was the 10th anniversary meeting in Leicester.

The next morning, which was gloriously sunny, we set off for the rock store at Connisbury Quarry. The rock store is actually a huge mound of the ironstone that has been placed where collectors can scramble safely around and upon it to hunt for the fossils. I came away with a car boot load of beautiful blue green ammonites to supplement our teaching collections.

From there we travelled through the very pretty countryside to look at the SSSI at Welton le Wold. John Aram, the Lincolnshire RIGS Officer, guided us expertly around this Pleistocene site which has yielded hand-axes, and on, via a very large glacial erratic, to the museum at Lincoln. We were made very welcome at all of our stops on this lovely field day and thanks are due to everyone who helped to make this a successful meeting – even if the numbers attending were quite small.

Mandy Edwards, University of Manchester

Forthcoming GCG seminars and workshops

9 December 2004 Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool

GCG Workshop: Meteorites, impactites and tektites

An overview of what meteorites can tell us about the origins and evolution of the Solar System. This one-day training session is designed for the non-specialist who wishes to find out more about the oldest 'rocks' in our collections. An emphasis will be placed on being able to identify a meteorite, tektite or impactite just to help with those numerous awkward enquiries that we all get (the family heirloom is often just a piece of blast furnace slag). Meteorights and meteowrongs will be stressed in order to assist with identifying the impostors and help clarify some of the popularly held misconceptions about meteorites.

Meeting fee: £5.00

Contact: Alan J Bowden, Curator of Earth Sciences, National Museums Liverpool, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EN tel 0151 478 4367 fax 0151 478 4350 email alan.bowden@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

18-19 January 2005 Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne.

GCG Seminar, 31st Annual General Meeting and Field Trip: Planning for disaster, rescue and specimen relocation.

This seminar will examine the range of situations that require collections to be moved to temporary or new permanent locations. This is becoming more common in the light of major Heritage Lottery Developments when collections have to be moved off site until the development is complete, and then returned. How is such a major task planned and undertaken? What are the resource implications and where do the collections go? How are the collections cared for during their absence and how are they organised? In addition to considering these questions there are a number of potential case studies which may be examined during this seminar. We will also be considering the ways in which curators can plan for disasters and the rescue of collections should a major event occur which threatens the museum. The second day will allow us to examine some of the best known exposures of the Permian strata of the Sunderland district.

Tuesday 18 January

1030 Arrival and Coffee

1100 Welcome: Steve McLean, Senior Curator, Hancock Museum (Tyne and Wear Museums)

1105 National Trust and Emergency Procedures: Pamela Wallhead, National Trust

1145 Mud Muck & Museums: Mark Simmons, Perth Museum and Art Gallery

1215 Business recovery and disaster planning: a national museum perspective:
Chris Collins, The Natural History Museum, London

1245 Lunch and tour of collections

1415 The Manchester Museum Capital Development Programme: Phil Manning, The Manchester Museum

1445 Protecting Collections in situ during large scale building projects: Gill Comerford, Natural History Museum, London

1515 Capital Developments and the TWM Regional Resource Centre: John Old, Tyne and Wear Museums

1545 Presentation of the Brighton Medal

1600 Tea

1620 Geological Curators' Group 31st Annual General Meeting.

1700 The Great North Museum Project: Steve McLean, Hancock Museum

1715 Meeting ends

Evening: There will be an opportunity to attend an evening meal and to view (externally only) some of the major cultural developments on the Newcastle/Gateshead quayside

Wednesday 19 January

0930 Meet at Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne

1015 Tunstall Hills SSSI, Sunderland. A chance to view this spectacular Zechstein reef sequence including the unique fossiliferous basal coquina site

1200 Travel to coast

1215 Lunch at Marsden Grotto Public House (payable on day)

- 1315 Marsden Bay SSSI. The Concretionary Limestone sequences and collapse brecciation
- 1400 Frenchman's Bay SSSI. Exposure of Marl Slate and Raisby Formation limestone along the axis of a basal Permian dune
- 1430 Trow Point SSSI. A chance to view the unique Trow Point Bed and evidence of the Raisby Formation submarine slide
- 1500 Meeting ends for those wishing to depart at this time
- 1530 Optional drop in to view the Sunderland North Dock Tufa RIGS
- 1600 Travel back to Newcastle
- Meeting fee: £10.00 (included teas, coffees and buffet lunch on 18th). Please return the booking form on page 16 **by 7 January 2005**, to Steve McLean, The Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT, tel 0191 222 6765, fax 0191 222 6753 email s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk

28 April 2005 National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

GCG Workshop: Identifying fossils 4. Trilobites

An overview of our current knowledge of trilobites by Dr Bob Owens, drawing on specimens from the extensive collections at the National Museum of Wales.

- 1000 Coffee
- 1030 Morphology, taxonomy, evolution and palaeobiogeography of trilobites
- 1230 Lunch in a nearby pub (payable locally).
- 1400 Practical identification session, using appropriate monographs
- 1600 Close

Meeting fee: £5.00.

Contact: Tom Sharpe, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP tel 029 20 573 265, fax 029 20 667332, email Tom.Sharpe@nmgw.ac.uk

16 June 2005 Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London

GCG session at the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections Annual Conference: Standards for geological collections

GCG will be hosting a session of talks on standards for geological collections as part of the SPNHC conference from 0900-1100 on Thursday 16 June. If you would like to speak in this session then please submit your abstract to the email address below **by 1 March**. There will also be the opportunity to display posters during the conference as well as a morning visit to a geological museum followed by an afternoon field trip.

Contact: SPNHC Conference 2005, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD email spnhc2005@nhm.ac.uk

7 October 2005 Venue to be confirmed

GCG Workshop: Gemstone Identification for Natural Science Curators.

After popular demand, this is a repeat of a training session first held in 2000 at Weston-super-Mare. Led by Dale Johnston, Fellow of the Gemmological Association and Events and Temporary Exhibitions Officer for Banbury Museum.

this *practical* workshop will cover the basics of gem identification from the perspective of natural science curators. Participants will get the opportunity to use

most of the simpler and more affordable instruments employed by gemmologists and will see close-up some of the more commonly encountered gemstones and synthetic gemstones.

Meeting fee: To be confirmed, but probably about £20.00 (including buffet lunch and a small pack of gems to be used in the workshop by each participant).

Contact: Steve McLean, The Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT tel 0191 222 6765, fax 0191 222 6753, email: s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk

October/November 2005 Geological Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark GCG Study Visit

This year we plan to visit to Geological Museum of the University of Copenhagen, where we intend to spend one day looking behind the scenes with staff, and the second day looking at the exhibits. There may also be the possibility of visiting other geological institutions in the area and, if there is sufficient interest, doing some fieldwork.

The Geological Museum opened in 1772 as the "Universitetets Nye Naturaltheater" (The New Natural Theatre of the University) and contains specimens which have been in museum collections for more than 300 years. When it was first formed it was the only geological institution in Denmark and it has been the parent body for the Geological Surveys of Denmark (1888) and Greenland (1946) and the four geological teaching institutes (1967), which were later joined to form the Geological Institute, University of Copenhagen (1991). Today the Geological Museum acts as a centre for Danish geology with special national responsibilities for keeping public records. The Museum consists of six major collections representing the branches of geology, a library (which also serves the Geological Institute and the Danish Lithosphere Centre) and an archive. The collections contain approximately 8 million specimens, which have been accumulated through the years from over 30 large collections, including royal, public and private collections together with material collected by the staff or obtained by donation, purchase or exchange. To find out more about the Museum visit their web site at: http://www.nathimus.ku.dk/geomus/index_eng.htm

Ros Gourgey will be organising accommodation and coordinating transport arrangements, so please contact her to register your interest and to receive further details.

Contact: Ros Gourgey tel 01371 810832, email ami_air-exel@msn.com

5-6 December 2005 University College Worcester GCG Seminar, Field trip and 32nd Annual General Meeting: Geoparks

Contact: Steve McLean, The Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT tel 0191 222 6765, fax 0191 222 6753, email: s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk

Other meetings

5-7 November 2004 National Museum of Wales, Cardiff Geofest@Cardiff

A weekend of geological activities in southeast Wales, including the Geologists'

Association Annual Reunion on Saturday 6 November, hosted by the South Wales Group of the Geologists' Association.

Contact: Geofest@Cardiff, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP www.geofest.swga.org.uk

20 November 2004 Biology Lecture Theatre, Biological Sciences Building, Lancaster University, Lancaster

Lancaster University Centre for NW Regional Studies in conjunction with Lancashire County Museums Service: Richard Owen: Dinosaur Man - a bicentennial symposium

2004 marks the bicentenary of the birth of Lancaster's 'Man of Science' - Sir Richard Owen. He is best known for coining the word 'dinosaur', but was the founder and visionary behind the establishment of the Natural History Museum and scientific adviser on everything from public health reform to sea serpents. He received over 100 distinctions during his lifetime and was a brilliant comparative anatomist and yet, because of arrogance and jealousy, allowed himself to be cornered as an anti-Darwinian and almost written out of scientific history. Accused of not crediting colleagues and ousting scientific rivals, to say he was a colourful and controversial character is perhaps an understatement. However, the quality and sheer volume of his work was remarkable and unparalleled.

The symposium will give people the opportunity to find out more about Owen's contribution to science, the huge impact new scientific discoveries had on Victorian lives and how the work of today's scientists studying dinosaur bones compares with those of the Victorian period.

Contact: Christine Wilkinson, CNWRS, Fylde College, Lancaster University, Bailrigg, Lancaster LA1 4YF

**12-18 June 2005 Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London
Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections**

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, SPNHC will be holding its 2005 annual conference, 'Realising Standards', at the Natural History Museum, London, its first venue outside North America. The conference will be hosted by the Natural History Museum in conjunction with The Natural Sciences Collections Association, The Geological Curators' Group and ICOM Natural Sciences Conservation Working Group.

Aimed at curators, collection managers, conservators and other museum professionals, the conference provides an international forum for all those interested in preserving the world's natural history collections and strengthening global networks. Experts from around the world will host presentations and workshops to tackle broad collections issues, including: current standards of collection care, benchmarking of collection condition, and sharing best practice in collection management. A GCG session on standards for geological collections is scheduled from 0900-1100 on Thursday 16 June. There will also be the opportunity to display posters during the conference as well as a morning visit to a geological museum followed by an afternoon field trip.

Contact: SPNHC Conference 2005, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD email spnhc2005@nhm.ac.uk

28 November 2005 Geological Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London

HOGG: The role of women in the history of geology

Contact: Cynthia Burek, Environment Research Group, Centre for Science Communication, Department of Biological Sciences, University College Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester CH1 4BJ tel 01244 375444 ext 3051, email c.burek@chester.ac.uk

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18-19 January 2005
GCG Seminar and Fieldtrip: Planning for disaster, rescue and specimen relocation
Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne
BOOKING FORM

- I will be attending the seminar on 18 January
- I will be attending the field trip on 19 September
- I can provide transport for people for the field trip
- I would like details of local accommodation
- I would like to attend a meal on the evening of 18 January

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

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone.....

e-mail.....

Please return this form with a cheque for £10.00 made payable to "Geological Curators' Group" to: Steve McLean, The Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT **by 7 January 2005.**

GEOLOGICAL
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