

# 35<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Geological Curators' Group. Woodend Creative Workspace, Scarborough. 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008.

## **1. Apologies for absence.**

Hannah Chalk, Jan Freedman, Mike Howe, Steve McLean, Camilla Nichol, Tom Sharpe.

## **2. Acceptance of the minutes of the 34<sup>th</sup> AGM held at National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.**

Agreed. No amendments.

## **3. Matters arising.**

5. Secretary's Report.

Scottish Fossil Code: Now available from Scottish Natural Heritage.

## **4. Chairman's Report.**

Although 2008 has been a rather eventful and busy year, I found it difficult to remember what I had actually been doing for the GCG. All I can hope is that I've been doing enough! Some of the more relevant work is summarised below:

### **1. Correspondence:**

#### ***JISCmail.***

We circulated a note to GEM, ESEU, ESTA and SESEF to make them aware of our JISCmail site and how it could be useful to their members. Hopefully this has been taken up – we did get some positive responses from the groups with an expression of interest in any further developments on our website.

If anyone wishes to develop the education side of the GCG website, then please contact HF.

#### ***Wren's nest.***

A letter of support for a Heritage Lottery Fund application to enhance the National Nature Reserve at Wren's Nest was requested and sent on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The bid was successful.

#### ***Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site.***

A response to a request for opinions re: Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site research strategy was sent to Malcolm Hart at Plymouth University on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

#### ***Howard Brunton.***

A condolence card was sent on behalf of the GCG. I have, in return, received a card of thanks from Eileen Brunton.

### **2. Collections at risk:**

#### ***Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery.***

The Assistant Curator of Geology left BCMAG taking up a post at the NHM. The post had been acting up to Curator for the past 2 years. This will leave BCMAG without a geological curator for the first time in 180 years. The geology collections are also Designated.

GCG wrote a letter requesting information and assurances relating to the advertisement of the vacancies. The post will be held vacant until a museum structure review is undertaken in April 2009, though the current intention is to create a joint curatorial/conservation post for natural science with the possibility of an assistant post.

Paul Brown (NatSCA Chair) also wrote a letter expressing concern relating to the future of the biology department as cuts have been proposed. Since then, a Bristol newspaper has reported on some of the concerns and I have received a letter of concern from Unison & Unite in Bristol.

#### ***Other collections – watching brief.***

Over the year concern has been expressed over the future of *Kendal Museum* (hopefully proposed plans for its future partnership with further education college will safeguard collections) and *North Lincolnshire Museums* where the restructure has left no natural history curator in post (we have been assured that the collections are "safe"). As with any such issues, we will endeavour to watch, listen and apply what pressure we can to ensure the support of the geological curatorial community.

### **3. Natural Sciences Subject Specialist Network.**

Latest terms of reference relating to the SSN have been circulated and are now on the GCG website. There is a proposal to use the Collections Link website as a way to bring the work of GCG & NatSCA together under the umbrella of the Natural Sciences SSN. Further work needs to be done to establish how the SSN will operate. My hope is that it will be effectively independent of NatSCA & GCG, but with a number of steering group members that are active participants of both groups to ensure that each groups interests are well represented.

Quite how the SSN will develop is unclear. For those who have never heard of the SSN programme, please visit [www.collectionslink.org.uk/find\\_a\\_network/subject\\_specialists](http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/find_a_network/subject_specialists). SSN's now cover the UK and not just England.

### **4. NatSCA/GCG representative on committee.**

I would like to welcome Leslie Noè (Thinktank, Birmingham) who has agreed to be GCG/NatSCA representative on both committees and thank Steve Thompson who stood down at the last AGM. This is an extremely valuable role that encourages the two groups to work together. There are too few natural science curators & conservators to miss the opportunity to work closely together for mutual support.

### **5. ICON representative on committee.**

A "visitor" to the GCG committee has been proposed: Adrian Doyle (or another ICON member in his absence) has been invited to attend a GCG committee meeting as a representative of Institute of Conservation. We will explore how to work more closely in the future.

### **6. Web developments.**

We have created an online resource for images, which can be used and shared (with minimal restrictions ... i.e. credits).

This, we hope, will act as a shared resource, especially as some of the smaller museums are struggling to meet reproduction fees for the larger museum services. If you are interested in sharing any geological images, please visit the GCG web pages and view the Flickr site link. I hope that this resource will grow.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Hannah Chalk for all her work on developing the website in the past year. We are always looking for more content and would particularly like to develop geology education resources (to download), handy techniques and hints for working or storing collections etc.

The website is a way to get more people involved in the workings of the group. Let us know if you use it, how you could use it and what you can add.

### **7. GCG logo.**

After some debate surrounding the group's logo, it was finally decided to re-scan an original green drawing to a higher resolution & stick with what we already have (including missing apostrophe). For those with an interest I have been informed that originally the apostrophe was left out of the logo due to layout aesthetics!

### **8. Committee**

Finally, thank you to everyone on the GCG committee for their work in 2008 and for helping me to get to grips with the role of Chairman / woman / person / piece of furniture.

Questions from the floor.

N Monaghan. Could the Flickr page be used for identifications instead of emailing the same image to all members?

HF. A good idea. Separate categories could be set up for different types of enquiry.

Report accepted.

## **5. Secretary's Report.**

Three Committee meetings were held during the year. January 24<sup>th</sup> at the Geological Society of London, 7<sup>th</sup> May in Manchester and 16<sup>th</sup> September in Cardiff ahead of the Microclimates Workshop. I would like to thank all our respective hosts for their support. Routine correspondence during the year included Geological Society Science Committee work and minor enquiries, but most other issues have been addressed by Helen, or feature in other reports.

One item not reported elsewhere is that of the Guideline for the Curation of Geological Materials. Given the workloads of those involved little progress was being made, and a new strategy has been agreed by the Committee and the Editorial team. The original guidelines have been scanned and made available for download on the GCG website [www.geocurator.org](http://www.geocurator.org). Thanks go to the Geological Society Publishing House for their agreement to this and the provision of a clean copy. Thanks go to Hannah Chalk for her rapid processing and upload to the website. A considerable number of contributions for the revised edition are already received and these will appear as downloadable units or chapters on the website. You should expect to see some appearing in the near future, and thereafter they can be added to as topics are completed. Once the full compliment of topics is achieved, then various options for producing a printed volume will be examined. The Committee believe that this will encourage greater involvement of GCG members in the writing and development of the Guidelines as an evolving tool for curators.

Report accepted.

## **6. Treasurer's Report.**

We end the year in a healthy position with a balance in hand of £10, 9224.66 compared to £8, 628.25 at the start of the year (Balance sheet circulated at the meeting). Subscriptions are down slightly, but this is not a cause for alarm, since last years figure was inflated by the large number of back subscriptions extricated from members by your Membership Secretary. Seminar and Workshop income is also substantially down on last year, but this is due to meeting organisers tending to look after their own income and expenditure, simply presenting any profits made (thus there are also no Seminar and Workshop expenses this year). Gift aid is also lower than last year, but again last years figure included back payments for 3 previous years, whereas this years figure is for a single year. Hence the Gift Aid per annum has actually risen substantially, due to the increase in subscriptions paid. An additional £200 income from advertisements in *Coprolite* is due to efforts by Mike Howe to whom I am grateful.

Expenditure is dominated by the printing and distribution of *Geological Curator* and *Coprolite*. Expenditure for the former is only half that of last year due to the fact that only one issue was produced this year instead of the normal two. The second issue is due imminently and had this been included in this years accounts, our year end profit of more than £2000 would have been approximately halved. Expenditure for three issues of *Coprolite* is similar to last year. Committee expenses have been reduced by the prudence of Committee members to whom I am grateful.

The American dollar account stands at \$1895.42 (\$1687.42 last year), and the European account stands at €487.22 (€163.37 last year). I would like to record my thanks to Tiffany Adrain and Matthew Parkes for their stewardship of these accounts, and to Caroline Buttler (Cardiff) and David Green (Manchester) for their willing auditing of the accounts. Finally, I thank Cindy Howells for her continued support as Membership Secretary. She reports the following membership figures:

### **Membership levels (2007 in brackets) are:**

Personal UK	169	(172)
Personal Overseas	18	(18)
UK Institutions	63	(62)
Overseas Institutions	26	(27)
Honorary	9	(8)
Total	285	(287)

Membership fees for 2009 are now due and we will be happy to accept payments at this meeting.

Report accepted.

## **7. Programme Secretary's report.**

Two Workshops and one seminar have been held.

**April 2008.** GCG Workshop: Geology and Archives. Manchester Museum.

**May 2008.** Joint GCG and Geoscience Information Group Seminar: Exploiting Geoscience Collections. Geological Society, Burlington House, London.

**September 2008.** GCG Workshop: Microclimates for your collections. National Museum of Wales.

## **2009 programme.**

**12-13 May. GCG Workshop:** Casting geological specimens. British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham.

**22 September. GCG Seminar** (joint with Society for Vertebrate Palaeontology). Bristol University.

**December, GCG AGM and Seminar:** Storage, sorting and documentation – good practice and practical solutions. Leeds City Museum and Art Gallery.

Committee is still looking at foreign study tours, but the membership need to let Committee know what they want and where they want to go.

Questions from the floor.

B. Loudon. Could we have more variety in the venues? Many meetings seem to be held in regular places.

HF. The recent survey (in *Coprolite*) suggested that members wanted more locations in the North of England and Scotland. The issue is being looked at and we encourage people to offer their venues for meetings and workshops – preferably at little or no cost to the membership.

Report accepted.

## **8. Journal Editor's report.**

I offer my sincere apologies to the members for the lateness of the Journal in 2008. It is entirely due to my own circumstances and over commitment to too many tasks and roles. Volume 8 No.9 will appear very shortly after this meeting as it has largely been laid out and proofed. Volume 8 No.10 will appear soon afterwards as the content had been received and needs laying out and proofing. The creation of an index to the volume will take some time, but a January distribution is planned, as it should be completed during Christmas. If anyone would like to assist in the production of the Index then please contact Matthew Parkes.

Despite problems with editorial time, the good news is that the level of papers submitted is healthy with content for Volume 9 No. 1 already received or reliably promised in time for a spring 2009 publication. A thematic issue is planned for Volume 9 No.2 in late autumn 2009. Contributors to the joint SPPC/SVPCA/SVP preparator's session in Bristol in September will be encouraged to submit for that issue.

Despite this healthy rate of papers being submitted and in prospect, there is room for more and all members are encouraged to submit papers wherever possible. In addition to full papers, I am keen to encourage more short notes, fact files, Lost and Found items, label information and book reviews.

I would like to thank David Craven for organising and supplying book reviews in 2008 and encourage members to contact him with reviews or suggestions of new titles to organise for review.

Report accepted.

### **9. Newsletter Editor's report.**

2008 saw completion of the 19<sup>th</sup> year of publishing *Coprolite*. As usual, three issues (Numbers 55, 56, And 57) were published, in March, June and November, totalling 48 pages (compared with 42 last year and 38 in 2004).

For *Coprolite* to fulfil its role as a newsletter, it needs to have some news. Any news of events, meetings, exhibitions, new acquisitions, publications, staff changes and job moves, or anything at all related to geology in museums would be very welcome. Do tell us what you and your museum are doing.

Thanks are due to Barnes Print Group of Nottingham who print and distribute *Coprolite* and always send it out on time.

Report accepted.

### **10. Recorder's Report.**

The handover from Helen Fothergill to Mike Howe took place during the summer and the new Recorder is currently reviewing strategy, considering new, and existing initiatives.

Report accepted.

### **11. Election of Officers and Committee for 2009.**

No nominations have received from the general membership, so Committee recommends the following changes:

Secretary. David Gelsthorpe to replace Matthew Parkes.

Committee. David Craven and Lyall Anderson.

Co-opted members. Will Watts, Cindy Howells and Hannah Chalk are happy to continue.

Proposed: Leslie Noè.

Seconded: Nigel Monaghan.

Changes agreed.

### **12. Any other business.**

None.

### **13. Date and venue of next Annual General Meeting.**

Leeds City Museum and Art Gallery. Date and venue to be confirmed.

In closing the meeting, Helen Fothergill thanked Will Watts and the staff at Woodend Creative Workspace and the Rotunda Museum for their time and hospitality.