



COPROLITE

Coprolite is the newsletter of the Geological Curators' Group, compiled and produced by Lu Allington-Jones, Senior Conservator at the Natural History Museum, London. Contributions from everyone are welcomed, and should be sent to the Newsletter Editor (coprolite@geocurator.org) by the appropriate deadline:

Spring edition issued in March - Deadline 15th February. Summer edition issued in June - Deadline 15th May. Autumn edition issued in September - Deadline 15th August. Winter edition issued in December - Deadline 15th November.

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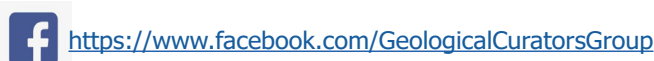
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Please log into our website and check that your contact details and preferences are correct and check whether you need to pay your subs (due from January 1st).



Events

Conferences and Events

As part of the Geological Society of London's 2022: The Year of Sustainability, a two day conference called Climate Change and Sustainability, Impacts and Innovation in Contaminated Land will take place 20th – 21st October 2022, at the City Hall Conference Rooms, in Bristol. <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/11-Climate-Change-and-Sustainability-Impacts-and-Innovation-in-Contaminated-Land>

The final event in the Geological Society's 2022: The Year of Sustainability, will be an online training course called An introduction to geotechnical monitoring for infrastructure embankments, cuttings and slopes on 7th November 2022. "The course is applicable to practicing engineers and geologists who are involved in specifying and/or carrying out monitoring programmes for assessing slopes". Register by 5th November 2022. <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/11-Instrumentation-Training>

The 6th International Palaeontological Congress is due to take place as an in-person event in Khon Kaen, Northeast Thailand, 7th – 11th November 2022. <https://ipc6.msu.ac.th/>

The next annual conference of the Volcanic and Magmatic Studies Group will be held in London, 4th – 6th January 2023. Here are a few important dates, but please see their website for more details: Abstract submission closes 31st October; Early bird registration closes 14th November; Registration closes 12th December 2022. <https://vmsg.org.uk/events/upcoming-events/>

The Marine Reptile Conference 2023 is due to be hosted by the Etches Collection: Museum of Jurassic Marine Life in early May next year. Further details will be posted on the MRC website, as soon as they become available. <http://marinereptiles.org/>

The Petroleum Exploration Society of Great Britain (PESGB) and the Geological Society are launching a new major conference series entitled the Energy Geoscience Conference (EGC). "The series will disseminate high-quality, energy-related geoscience to a UK and global audience via a physical and virtual conference every six years, with the proceedings published by the Society's Publishing House. The first conference – EGC1 – is scheduled for 16th – 18th May 2023 in Aberdeen, UK". <https://geoscientist.online/sections/news/the-energy-geoscience-conference-series/>

The Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collection (SPNHC) next year will be the 38th Annual Meeting and will take place in San Francisco, California, from 28th May – 2nd June 2023. They have issued their Call for Papers. Some key dates are as follows, but please see their website for more details: Workshop/Symposia proposal submission deadline: 26th September 2022. Abstract submission will open 24th October 2022 and close 9th January 2023. <https://www.calacademy.org/spnhc-2023>

Webinars

SedsOnline is an online webinar series sponsored by the International Association of Sedimentologists. They have a webinar every Wednesday at 4pm BST, as well as regular communal Coffee Breaks. <https://sedsonline.com/events/>

Many thanks to Emma Nicholls, GCG Blog Editor, for collating this information.

Special Information

Dippy Returns: The Nation's Favourite Dinosaur

Dippy is back for a short visit. Experience Dippy's memories of nature throughout the UK and see how different communities are connecting with it.

Book your free ticket at <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/exhibitions/dippy-returns.html>

The Natural History Museum's Nature Live will be back in the Museum this October. Join the team for interactive talks featuring topical discussions with scientists and cutting-edge research. Got a question? This is your chance to ask it <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/exhibitions/nature-live.html>

These talks will be in-person only. Past Nature Live Online talks are still available to watch on the YouTube playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-6w4ihPqk5_LCRt5zst8q7HrKlxiGP0gA Including discussions on volcanoes, ammonites, dinosaurs, megalodon, water on Mars and a possible new human species.



News Features

Phil Phillips awarded an MBE

Some good news from Liverpool, Phil Phillips, former museum trainee (1962-73), Assistant Keeper of Geology (1973-1988), Curator of Palaeontology (1988-92), currently New media Development Manager, has been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Jubilee Birthday Honours List.

From the National Museums Liverpool newsletter:

“Our very own Phillips, Phil, New Media Development Manager, has been awarded an MBE in Her Majesty The Queen's Jubilee Birthday Honours List. Phil has been honoured for his service to museums and science. Huge congratulations to Phil on this brilliant recognition for his commitment and dedication over the years.

Phil said: “I've been fortunate to work on a wide variety of projects with some wonderful colleagues over the years. These have included working on the What's in Store exhibition about our extensive reference and research collections which led to the establishment of the Natural History Centre, and the JASON Project, an American educational programme organised by Dr Bob Ballard the oceanographer, who rediscovered Titanic in the Atlantic Ocean. Ballard used satellite technology to conduct live broadcasts from scientific expeditions in remote parts of the world. We were the first organisation outside America to take part in these broadcasts. More recently I have been involved with the installation of the new Planetarium shows, including adding subtitles which improves access for our audiences.



Equally exciting projects included ‘Dinomania’, where I imported a special T. Rex from Australia and had the dinosaur ‘roaming’ around the museum. In the evenings, we had a ‘Dinosaur disco’ in the atrium and the scene reminded me very much of the closing episode of the film Night at the Museum - Living the Dream indeed.”

*by Tony Morgan, Education Demonstrator
at National Museums Liverpool*



Left: the World Museum, Liverpool, houses over 67,000 rocks, minerals and fossils in the earth science collections from all around the world.

<https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/collections/world-museum/geology-collection>

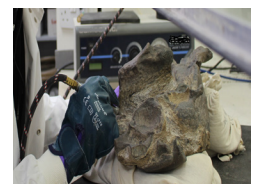
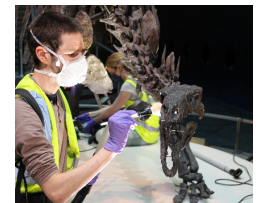
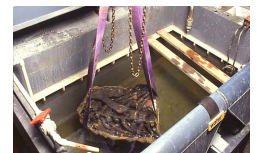
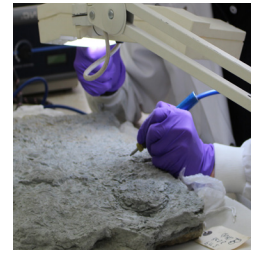


SPPC 2022



On Wednesday the 21st of September, The Natural History Museum in London hosted the 2022 Symposium on Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation (SPPC). The one-day event, organised in association with GCG, included platform presentations and a poster session in the morning, followed by afternoon tours for those who had booked in advance. The event was well attended, with delegates arriving from 11 different countries. NHM co-hosts Lu Allington-Jones (Senior Conservator) and Kieran Miles (Fossil Preparator) introduced the speakers and helped keep the day on track. Once the attendees had taken their seats in the comfort of the Flett Theatre, there was a short introduction, and fossil fish curator Emma Bernard gave a brief overview of the benefits of GCG membership.

The first presentation was by Kayleigh Johnson (Museum of Geology, South Dakota Mines) on 'significant effects of fossil preparation using sodium bicarbonate air abrasion on dental microwear'. An interesting cautionary tale as Kayleigh demonstrated how air abrasion can wear away useful data on teeth and even create artificial new markings, potentially misleading researchers if they are not aware of how the specimens were prepared. The next speaker was independent palaeontologist Richard Forrest, on 'preparing a fish', detailing a tricky preparation job on a Jurassic fish in a cracking nodule. Richard's DIY approach to preparation included the use of useful tools such as the CECS ('chewed end of a cocktail stick'). Next up was Dean Lomax (University of Manchester), revealing his work with Judy Massare on the 'rediscovery of two casts of the historically important 'Proteosaurus', the first complete ichthyosaur'. The original skeleton having sadly been destroyed in World War 2, it was gratifying to discover that two casts still exist, despite no record of them having been made existing. Dean's experience as a presenter was obvious during this engaging and confident talk.



Yasmin Grooters presenting on preparation of a Triceratops skeleton © The Trustees of The Natural History Museum London

After a break for tea, biscuits and an opportunity to peruse the posters (available soon on the GCG website), it was time for the next three presentations. Véronique Rouchon (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle) spoke about 'the Durfort Mammoth at the MNHN, Paris: a specimen that accounts for 150 years of consolidation treatments'. The massive skeleton, on display since 1873, is unfortunately very fragile and has gone through a number of conservation treatments over the years; after analysis Véronique showed that the historical consolidants had included

beeswax, gelatine and pine resins. Next, Jasmin Grooters and Marty Guliker (Naturalis Biodiversity Centre) took us through the preparation of the first of ‘the Triceratops skeletons of the Dutch Naturalis natural history museum’ for display, a process that took four years – and with four more skeletons to complete in the next year and a half, they probably have their work cut out for them. The mounted skeleton, original material supplemented with 3-D printed parts, did look splendid. Finally, Kathryn Royce presented ‘past, present and future: what the current state of pyrite tells us about historic conditions and means for decision-making’. With pyrite oxidation of perennial relevance to museum staff, we listened with interest to the results of Kathryn’s intensive survey of 13,000 pyrite specimens and her conclusions on their stability.

Posters

- Pyrite decay in the historical collection of the Stuttgart Natural History Museum in Germany *by Cristina Gasco Martin*
- The conservation of a feather imprint from Abric Romaní (Spain) *by Lucía López-Polín, Andrea Díaz-Cortés, Juan Marín, Josep Vallverdú, María Gema Chacón, Palmira Saladié*
- From children’s art to natural science specimen: steam and its magic power *by Vicen Carrió*
- Chalk and cheese: successes and misadventures in plaster jacketing fieldwork finds *by Nigel Larkin*
- A gentler approach? Testing Rewoquat as an alternative to air abrasion on exceptionally preserved echinoderms from the Forest Marble formation *by Kieran Miles*
- Utilising dewetting to remove “insoluble” resin coatings *by Lu Allington-Jones*



Some of the delegates in the Flett Theatre © The Trustees of The Natural History Museum London

Those who had booked a place on the afternoon session took a behind the scenes tour of the Conservation Centre, where the lab staff showcased some of their current projects and talked about the remedial and preventive conservation work undertaken here at the NHM. From delicate repairs of fragile fossil sponges, to analysing taxidermy to check for hazardous heavy metals, to restoring dried out fluid specimens, the visitors got a glimpse of the varied work of the lab. Finishing with, naturally, a look at the fossil preparation area and some of the remarkable fossils currently being prepared. They were then treated to a tour of the palaeontology collections by Emma Bernard and Katie Collins, exploring some of the highlights of the fossil fish and molluscs collections respectively. The delegates were very interested and appreciative of the tours and asked all sorts of insightful questions. We also had the opportunity to compare techniques and exchange ideas. All things considered, we thought SPPC 2022 was a great success, and we look forward to the next one!



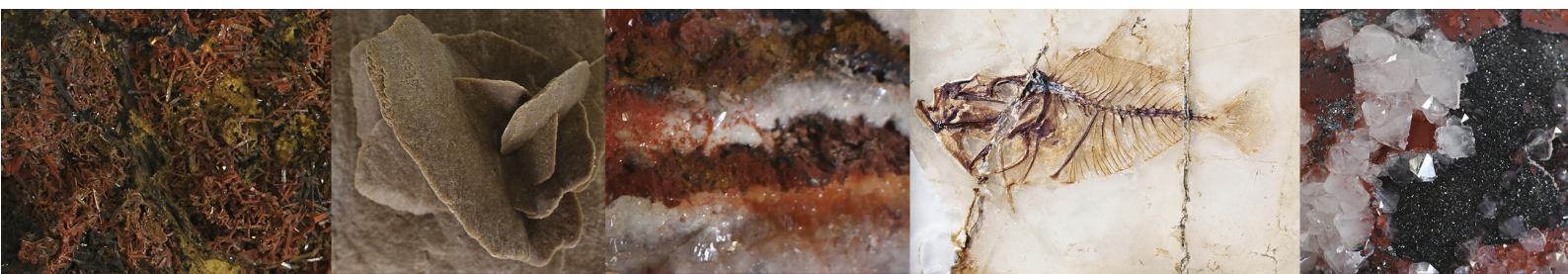
Rob McLeod (right) discussing environmental monitoring in the Conservation Centre. © The Trustees of The Natural History Museum London

Grateful thanks to all those who made the day a success: the SPPC committee (Emma-Louise Nicholls, Nigel Larkin and Lu Allington-Jones); palaeontology curators Emma Bernard and Katie Collins, who led the afternoon tours of the collection; Conservation Centre staff Fabiana Portoni, Rob McLeod, Chelsea McKibbin, Erica Read and Arianna Bernucci, who spoke about their work during the lab tours; Simon Harris (GCG web support) and Susanna Maidment (SVP-CA support).

by Kieran Miles, Fossil Preparator at The Natural History Museum, London UK

The majority of the presentation abstracts and posters will be available shortly at the link below. In the meantime past abstracts are also available to read.

<https://www.geocurator.org/sppc2022>



Coprolite of the Quarter

Answer to last quarter's mystery coprolite:

Stratigraphy: Pleistocene

Location: Kent's Cavern, Torquay,
Devon UK

Likely culprit:
Hyaena

Collection:
The Natural History Museum,
London UK

Specimen: NHMUKPVM1119



Image: © The Trustees of the Natural History Museum London

Guess the Coprolite

Guess the
Formation!



Please send guesses to coprolite@geocurator.org

The answer and winner will be announced in the next quarterly newsletter. The winner will also receive a small prize. If there are several correct answers, one winner will be selected at random.

<https://www.geocurator.org/coprolite>