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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

Neurodiversity Celebration Week: Virtual 'Coffee' Morning – Neurodiversi-Tea: Celebrating Neurodiversity in Geological Collections. This free to register event. *11am-12pm on Thursday 16th March*. All neurodiversities and allies are welcome.

Godfrey Bingley and the late nineteenth-century geological imagination: online talk of The History Of Geology Group (HOGG) on *Thursday 16th March between 2-3pm*. Tickets are £5.

Excavating plesiosaurs: by Richard Forrest (of Geologist's Association's), will be a hybrid talk in-person at Burlington House and on Zoom on *Friday 17th March at 5:30pm for 6pm*.

Joining the dots Climate Change, Mineral Extraction and the Engineering Geologist: President's Public Lecture by Ruth Allington (President of the Geological Society) on *Wednesday 22nd March*.

The 2023 **Geochemistry Group Research In Progress Meeting** will be held at the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Cambridge on the *18th (afternoon only), 19th and 20th of April*. The deadline for early-bird registration and abstract submission is the 17th March 2023 and for late registration is the 31st March.

NatSCA annual conference and AGM: at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, on Thursday 27th and Friday 28th April 2023.

38th Annual Meeting of The Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections is being held in San Francisco, California from *28th May to 2th June 2023*.

EXIBITIONS

Manchester Museum reopened its doors to the public earlier this month after an ambitious 18 month transformation.

The **BBC Earth Experience** opens on *30th March* at the Daikin Centre, Earl's Court, London.

Titanosaur: Life as the Biggest Dinosaur opens at the Natural History Museum on *Friday 31st March 2023*. Tickets cost £16 and the exhibition runs until *7th January 2024*.

FIELD TRIP

Lyme Regis Museum will be running fossil walks each weekend in March.

VACANCIES

Plowden and Smith are looking for a Senior Stone Conservator

Many thanks to Robert Theodore, GCG Blog Editor, for collating this information



News Features

MAGMAX

MAGMAX is a private museum that is open to the public through appointments.

“A museum in a room” and “the smallest mineralogical museum in Italy... and perhaps in the world” were some of the most apt definitions used by the visiting media to photograph MAGMAX.

Located on the top floor of a medieval tower in the historic center of Asti, it offers a 360° view of the world of minerals and mining, presented from a naturalistic, historical, scientific, artistic and social point of view. Although concentrated in a few square meters, the collection is able to represent the immensity of space and time, from the origin of the earth to the third millennium, and from the depths of the earth’s mantle to meteorites. Visits are divided into permanent and temporary exhibitions. Adjacent to the exhibition area, there is a laboratory/library for the training of young mineralogists and for the in-depth study of a wide range of geoscientific topics.

At the heart of the project has always been a strong belief that the purpose of any collection should be to share, seeking to engage the community in the wonders and importance of the mineral kingdom. Massimo Umberto Tomalino, the creator of MAGMAX, wanted to share his passion with everyone who wanted to learn more about it, and to make the result of half a century of passionate research available to all visitors.

The front of the “permanent” exhibition is housed in historic display cabinets and chests of drawers (some of which were designed and made a century ago by the famous ceramist and painter Mario Sturani).

The visit to the permanent exhibition is divided into five areas, arranged clockwise around 360 degrees of the room

1) NATURE: Shapes and colors of the mineral kingdom. In particular, the scales of the 12 basic mineral pigments and crystal morphologies can be obtained through didactic models of various materials and sizes. Ancient protractors for measuring crystals and collections of glass reproductions of the main gemstones used in the past as color references are also worthy of note.





2) MAN: This special showcase is dedicated to man's ancestral and everyday relationship with the mineral kingdom in all its facets: artistic objects such as statuettes, ceramics, and graphic designs inspired by minerals or made possible by the existence of certain mineral raw materials such as kaolin for porcelain and quartz for glass. There are tools such as hammers and crucibles used by man for excavation and mining, as well as dioramas and toys that recreate mining scenes, such as the marble quarries of the Apuan Alps and the copper mines of Katanga. There is also a small but important collection of comic strips, from Mickey Mouse to Tex and from Nembokid to Diabolik, with covers and plots related to mining.

3) COSMO: An area in MAGMAX that brings together minerals and rocks from the depths of the Earth (read mantle!), from the Moon and beyond (read meteorites), into science fiction... with a tangible sample of authentic kryptonite. There are some examples of 'the universe in a box,' that is, one box contains the periodic table represented by samples of chemical elements, while another represents the Earth's crust by minerals arranged in order of abundance of the main chemical elements they contain. The walls were decorated with posters, photographs, and maps relating to the area, such as the first geological map of Monferrato (1889).

4) SCIENCE: An overview of the scientific instruments used to study, discover, and classify the mineral world. The chronological overview presents almost two centuries of the history of mineralogical sciences against the undeniable fact that the relationship with minerals has lasted since the first moment when man could consider himself as such, in his immediate need to use quartz, flint, and obsidian to make the first tools necessary for his survival. The spectroscope, microscope, goniometer, and diffractometer are milestones in this journey undertaken by scientists to answer the two main questions of mineralogy: what and how a mineral is made of. Chemistry, physics, and crystallography have been able and willing to provide the original and historic instruments contained in the MAGMAX display case to successfully answer these two questions.

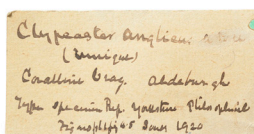
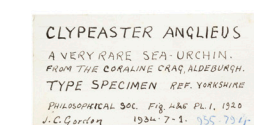
5) HISTORY: In the last permanent area, equipped with drawers and display cases, the history of mineralogical sciences is presented through the classification of minerals and rocks during the millenary relationship of humans with mineral raw materials. The main mineralogical classifications are presented according to the S.C.E.T.C.H. system (Systematic, Crystallographic, Aesthetic, Topographical, Chemical-Physical, Historical collection), with examples from two 19th-century collections created by Gregory of London and Krantz of Bonn to contribute (in a truly masterful way) to the dissemination of knowledge about rocks, minerals and fossils. One display case contains 'historic' specimens from illustrious mineralogists such as Hugo Strunz (father of systematic mineralogy) and internationally renowned museum institutions such as the British Museum in London and L'Ecole des Mines in Paris. The History section offers a select library of texts that have made the history of mineralogy and a permanent 'Mining Crib,' which replaces mountains, shepherds, and caves with real rock and mineral samples, statuettes of miners at work (some in fine porcelain and others in handpainted tin), and reproductions of real mines.



Ipswich Museums Awarded Designated Status for Post-Cretaceous Geology Collection

Ipswich Museums' Post-Cretaceous Geology Collection, which includes our outstanding ice age collection, has been awarded Designated status by Arts Council England.

The Designation scheme is administered by Arts Council England and identifies the pre-eminent collections of national importance held in England's non-national museums, libraries and archives, based on their quality and significance. The award is a mark of distinction that recognises collections of outstanding quality and which are essential research resources, making a significant contribution to the public understanding of the subject.



A bit more info about what's been Designated: the Ipswich Post-Cretaceous Geology Collection includes those specimens more recent than the extinction of the non-avian dinosaurs, 66 million years ago. The greatest strength of the collection includes Suffolk Plio-Pleistocene fossils, the remains of animals which lived during the ice age (which started 2.5 million years ago), and the warmer Pliocene before it. Suffolk has an outstanding Plio-Pleistocene record, with the only exposures of the Coralline Crag (Middle Pliocene) and extensive exposures of the Red Crag (the only exposed British deposit to document the transition into the ice age). The county's deposits also document the dramatically changing environments of the ice age between warmer, wetter episodes (interglacials) and colder, drier episodes (glacials). With pre-eminent collections covering this period, the collections now attract international research.

This news is very timely indeed as we shape our new museum at Ipswich. It is the optimal opportunity to build in the international significance of this collection in the new displays, in a way that the public can be proud of this outstanding collection, which is on their doorstep. The displays could allow them to 'connect' to a rich, ancient past, beneath their feet and around them, offering an invaluable insight into the shaping of our modern world, in a period which was geologically "only yesterday".

Many thanks to Dr Simon Jackson AMA FGS, Collections and Learning Curator (Natural Sciences), Colchester and Ipswich Museums member, for collating this information



IN MEMORIAM

We are saddened to bring the news that several long-standing or early members of GCG have died within the last few months. All will be greatly missed and we send condolences to family, colleagues and those who knew them. Full obituaries have been published elsewhere.

Alan Howell (ex Guernsey Museum) had been a GCG member from 1975 and was actively involved in the group until his sudden death in November 2022. Although retired from his post as Keeper of Guernsey Museum, he was still working on the collections as a volunteer.

Mike Bassett (ex National Museum of Wales), was a member and great supporter of GCG in its early days. He had served on many palaeontological committees and his work contributed greatly to our understanding of Lower Palaeozoic brachiopods and stratigraphy.

John Cooper (ex Natural History Museum) had been a GCG member since at least the 1980s. Although retired, he still visited the museum regularly to work on the collections.

Beris Cox (ex British Geological Survey) had been a member of GCG since our very earliest days. She was also involved in the History of Geology Group and had research interests in Jurassic stratigraphy and ammonites.

Cindy Howells, GCG membership secretary

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are now due for 2023. Many members have already paid through annual Standing Order, and we thank you for that. Before paying any other way, please do check either on our website, or with me, that you don't already have a Standing Order set up. At some point soon, we will be sending round details of our new bank account. We hope that it will be easy for many of you to swap your regular payment to this instead, and we'll send out instructions. If you prefer to pay online through PayPal, then this option will still continue.

Please note that we have changed the pricing structure of our membership, so that if you wish to continue receiving our printed journal - the Geological Curator, there will be an add on cost, which will vary depending on where you are in the world. This is to compensate for the increased cost of postage.

As always I'd like to assure GCG members and supporters that I'm happy to respond at any time if you have queries about membership.

Cindy Howells, GCG membership secretary



Coprolite of the Quarter

Answer to last quarter's mystery coprolite:

Stratigraphy:

Vectis or Wessex Formation,
Early Cretaceous

Location:

Yaverland, Isle of Wight, UK

Likely culprit:

Theropod dinosaur or large crocodilian

Collection: Dinosaur Isle Museum IWCMS:1999.111

Last quarter's winner: Martyn Hornett



Guess the Coprolite

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.



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