

Geological Curators Group



www.geocurator.org

Annual Report for 2024

For presentation at the 2024 AGM

The Geological Curators Group is a UK-based membership organisation and charity (no. 1198339), 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 mission and vision are available [here](#).

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Previous years' Annual Reports can be found at:

<https://www.geocurator.org/committee/management-documents/60-annual-reports-and-accounts/>



1. View from the Chair

1.1 The sector

This year, like any other, the Committee and the community have seen highs and lows. One of the greatest lows was the unfathomable loss of jobs, and indeed department, at National Museum Wales. Not least because of the attitude towards geological collections that it represents. I think the whole community felt shocked by this decision, and our hearts go out to all those affected, which is not just those who ultimately left, but also those that remained.

However, as you will read in the Collections Report, there has also been some good news, as both the Mineral Gallery at the Royal Cornwall Museum and Buxton Museum have reopened. I am sure the road ahead will provide further challenges for Buxton Museum as they try to overcome a variety of ongoing issues and it is important for our community to come together in these times. By standing together, we are better able to fight for individuals, jobs, collections, and institutions, and to present a united front against decision-makers who may undervalue geological collections and the expertise of those who work and volunteer with them.

On a more granular scale, it is clear to me that to *an ever-increasing* extent, we are all having to achieve more and more with less and less, right across the sector. This can be extremely stressful, so I encourage you all to tap into any and every resource that will help you in your role. From simply reaching out and seeking advice via the Geo-Curators JiscMail, through swapping materials and physical resources between institutions, to telling us at GCG what training or other types of support might be helpful to you. We are here to listen and to help where we can.

1.2 The Committee

We have gained and lost committee members throughout the year, as people's commitments and priorities have changed. On behalf of us all, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Andrew Haycock, Rob Theodore, Brigit Tronrud, and Rachel Walcott, who have all decided to stand down this year. All four have been amazing colleagues and helped in immeasurable ways to drive GCG forward.

I would like to extend a particular thanks to Rachel who has been on the GCG Committee for eight years. As a committee colleague, and subsequently as Chair, I greatly valued the years of her down to earth attitude, sense of humour, and candour. Thank you, Rachel, for all that you have done for GCG, you will be greatly missed!

As mentioned, we have also *gained* this year! Karen Bell and Phil Hadland joined us in January 2024 as co-opted committee members, and both have already made notable contributions to GCG, as you will read in the Web Coordinator and Collections Coordinator reports.

The last piece of individual news is that long-standing committee member Simon Harris, who has used his incredible skills and expertise to overhaul and run our website (no small task!) for several years, is standing down as a Trustee at the end of the year. He will remain on the Committee until at least the end of 2025, during which time the Committee will put succession measures in place to support both Simon and the website into the future.

One prominent change in the actual structure of the Committee going forward is in the way we communicate with sister Subject Specialist Networks. The Committee has had, at different times, a NatSCA Rep and a SPNHC Rep for example, but sitting on two committees of this nature in order to feed back to each group is a huge time commitment. Therefore, rather than having specific reps, we propose that all relevant SSNs share a brief synopsis of meetings in a central depository. GCG would



then have one committee member to monitor this and update the group. This should allow us to keep in better communication with more sister-SSNs than we do at present. SSNs identified to contact so far include, IUGS, NatSCA, PalAss, and SMMP. If you represent another group and would like to be part of this information sharing, please do get in touch.

Finally, a word on the current Committee. The GCG Committee comprises nearly 20 remarkable people who go above and beyond to deliver every one of our outputs on top of their daily jobs, lives, and responsibilities. It feels as though more and more people in the modern world struggle from being overstretched and overwhelmed, at work as well as in other aspects of their lives. Everyone on the GCG Committee volunteers in their role because they are dedicated and passionate, and not due to an absence of those other pressures. I just wanted to take a moment to thank them all and to recognise how much hard work and commitment it takes to keep things going. To the Committee – you are amazing. Thank you!

1.3 GCG bursary scheme

Work has nearly been completed on a formalised bursary scheme. We propose three deadlines a year, to coincide with committee meetings, to minimise wait time for applicants. Funds can be used to cover expenses including but not limited to; conference attendance, workshops, a small collections project (including conservation, for example), emergency ‘rapid response’ projects, etc. These bursaries would only be available to GCG members. The recipient would be expected to produce a tangible output for the GCG community, such as a blog or newsletter article. The total amount awarded per funding round would be a third of a fixed percentage of GCG’s financial resources.

1.4 Membership offer

In the 2023 Annual Report, I started this section with two sentences that I am going to repeat! When you log into the GCG website using your membership details, there is a plethora of resources awaiting you. Please do make sure you take some time to familiarise yourself with everything that GCG has to offer, and benefit from these resources whenever you need them.

As part of our 2024 Winter Seminar, we will be holding two workshops: “Reciprocal relationships: an appealing offer” and “More than the sum of our parts” on how GCG can improve its offer to members, as well as how to encourage our members to benefit from the resources that exist. If you aren’t able to join us for the workshops but have thoughts along these lines, please do get in touch with one of the Committee. We would love to hear from you!

1.5 Reaching those who need us

Speaking on behalf of the Committee, this section is about the opening up of GCG to be more inclusive of all who work with or care for geological collections. Our [Mission](#) states that our role is to support those working with or caring for all types of geological collections; to advocate for expertise in the care and use of geological collections, and their importance for scientific research and education; and to connect people, skills, information, and collections.

To achieve this, all those to whom the above applies need to know we are here and that we are for them. In order to unify our community, to bring people together and support them, the Committee has proposed a name change to Geological **Collections** Group. At the AGM in 2023 we invited open discussion on the topic, and the response in that meeting was very positive. One delegate said “Thank you! I have been a member since the 70s but never really felt like I belonged because my title is not curator”. This response sums up perfectly the reason for the proposal. The Committee often



finds themselves encouraging conference or workshop attendance by saying “it’s not just for curators”. If GCG stood for Geological Collections Group, it would be obvious from the outset.

Changing ‘curator’ to ‘collections’ means that we keep our acronym ‘GCG’ as a recognised brand but become more inclusive at the same time. A number of other SSNs have changed their names in the past and become stronger as a result. We don’t need to be afraid that changing our name to be more inclusive will result in a loss of recognition, especially as the acronym ‘GCG’ will remain.

Our hope is you will agree with our aim to better serve all those we *should* be serving, and not just those that we currently reach. To finalise this discussion, there will be a vote at the AGM on the 12th November 2024. Of course, if you have any questions, please do get in touch with us. We will facilitate a vote for those not able to attend the AGM.

1.6 50th anniversary year

The Golden Anniversary event *Geological collections: past, present and future*, was a huge success as you will see in the Programme Coordinator’s report. The Committee was thrilled by how many delegates from the early years of GCG attended, and the line-up of nine of the 17 Chairs from our fifty years, personally, gave me goose bumps! Huge thanks to all who contributed to make the conference and field trip so memorable, from hosts, to presenters, to the catering staff. It was wonderful to return home to our roots and hold the anniversary event in Leicester where GCG was first conceived. The Committee would like to extend particular thanks to Dave Unwin for hosting us, Mark Evans for so much of the organising, Tom Sharpe for a wonderful after-dinner speech, and Simon Harris, Mike Howe, Jack Matthews, and Duncan Murdock for running an amazing field trip.

The 50th anniversary event also allowed us to unveil the new logo! Thank you to all those who submitted entries into the competition and to Nigel Chapman for the beautiful artwork that will, I’m sure, serve us well for many years to come. Pride of place on the new logo is the old one, sitting prominently at the top, accompanied by an ammonite, mountains, minerals, a hand lens, a museum icon, and trace fossils. We hope you will agree it represents our community really well.

In final exciting 50th news, the (very!) special issue of *Geological Curator* that will provide a lasting legacy of the golden anniversary event is nearly ready to hit your in- and post- boxes. This issue will certainly finish volume eleven off with a bang! **So please do make sure your subs are up to date for 2024 so that you don’t miss out.** For more information, please see the Journal Editor’s report.

1.7 Looking to 2025

Looking forward to the upcoming year, we already have lots of plans in place to continue and build on the success of 2024. We have ideas for workshops, networking events, field trips, seminars and conferences, and some new features for the newsletter *Coprolite* (see Newsletter Editor’s report). Amongst other things, we are also working on updating our various policies, finalising the CIO byelaws, and working with DiSSCo to ensure geological collections have a firm place at the table when it comes to largescale digitisation.

We hope that you continue to be part of the GCG community going forward into 2025, thank you for all of your support up to now!

Emma Nicholls
Chair of the Geological Curators Group



2. Accounts

The Geological Curators Group has remained financially healthy this year.

The Group's new PayPal and CAF accounts are working well, with the level of support that CAF provides being exceptional. The old TSB account is being closed at the end of our financial year, so **please make sure that you have switched your standing orders to the new account by the time of the 2024 AGM.**

The group is looking to open a fixed term savings account to enable us to better utilise some of our reserves so that we can better support the community.

The 2023-2024 accounts will be released before the AGM once they have been audited.

My thanks once again to Rachel Walcott for her continued support in managing the TSB account.

Rob Lowther, Treasurer

3. Membership

GCG has gained 21 new members this year, which is great. However, overall there has been a slight drop in membership figures for 2024 (below). As I am writing this (mid-October) there are still 41 individual members from 2023 who have failed to renew for this year, and that is the main reason for this low figure (along with the earlier date of the AGM). It is quite possible that some of those 41 will pay up before the AGM itself, but it does make the role of the Membership Coordinator much harder if I have to keep sending out reminders. So, do please try and pay your membership **on time at the start of the year**, and not ignore our emails. I have deleted 11 individuals and 7 institutions who failed to pay for 2023 but didn't inform us they wished to leave, alongside a few who left for personal reasons. Please let me know if you change your email address or wish to leave GCG.

We have now fully changed over to our new account with CAF bank, so that all BACS and Standing Orders should now be paid to this, or you can of course pay through our secure website as always. Please do contact me about any membership questions.

Very sadly this year, three long-standing GCG members died, and we send heartfelt condolences to their families.

Breakdown of membership figures for this year (up 14 Oct 2024).

Full individual members paid to date	153 (125 UK, 28 OS)
Concessionary members paid to date	33 (28 UK, 5 OS)
Honorary members	7
Institutional subscribers paid to date	27
Total	220



	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Personal UK	153	164	170	159	169	173	175
Personal Overseas	33	33	37	45	39	34	28
UK Institutions	15	19	24	19	26	37	38
Overseas Institutions	12	16	19	16	19	20	21
Honorary	7	7	8	8	8	7	7
Total	220	239	258	247	261	271	269

We are proud to have members from 18 countries, including: Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Columbia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, USA and the UK.

As always, we love to hear from members, especially when you write in to propose an idea, a talk, an article, or offer of a meeting venue. Do continue to promote GCG to your colleagues. GCG is relevant to anyone who deals in any way with geological collections, whether you be a student, volunteer, curator, conservator, illustrator, preparator, dealer, photographer, collections manager, or any of the other types of geological roles that professionals and amateurs work within. Hence, the suggested name change!

Finally, I'd like to thank Rachel and Rob for their work during the year to ensure that the bank accounts run smoothly and helping me with identifying payments that have no reference codes!

Cindy Howells, Membership Coordinator

4. Events

This past year, November 2023-November 2024, we have held a number of events, and celebrated our 50th, or Golden, Anniversary. Following on from the success of last year's field day and workshops, we have also seen a welcome return to larger, in-person seminars and conferences.

4.1 Winter 2023

Despite initial discussion on holding our 2023 Winter seminar and 50th AGM at least partly in-person, logistics meant that we had to hold this meeting as a purely virtual event, which took place on November 28th, 2023. The Seminar **Building Bridges between Private Collectors and Museums** attracted 90 delegates from 11 countries. The meeting included 13 talks and a discussion session. Details of the programme and abstracts can be found here ([50th Annual General Meeting and Winter Seminar - The Geological Curators Group \(geocurator.org\)](#)). Our thanks to the discussion panel members, Rachel Walcott, Mike Howe, Cindy Howells, Martin Munt and Tom Cotterell. Emma Nicholls and Duncan Murdock coped admirably with IT problems by shuttling between various offices in Oxford University Museum of Natural History (OUMNH).

Our final event of 2023 was the **Digital Morphology Workshop** which was held in-person at OUMNH on December 11th, organised by Emma Nicholls. Tutors Duncan Murdock and Frankie Dunn led 13 delegates through the processes of building virtual 3D models of palaeontological specimens from computerised tomography (CT) data.

4.2 Spring 2024

Our 2024 programme kicked off with a virtual coffee morning, **Neurodiversi-Tea**, to mark Neurodiversity Celebration Week on March 18th organised by Gemma Laker. The event offered a



relaxed and open space to encourage conversations for neurodivergent celebration in the geological collections sector.

We celebrated our 50th Anniversary with an in-person meeting based in Leicester, the birthplace of GCG. This is where the initial discussion meeting that led to the formation of the Group was held in 1974. Exactly 50 years later we met on May 17th for our Golden Anniversary seminar **Geological Collections Past, Present and Future**. Our venue was the School of Museum Studies with Dave Unwin acting as our host. We welcomed 37 delegates in all, and the programme included 12 talks and two posters plus a discussion session. We looked back at GCG's origins and some of our past activities (including the overseas study tours of the nineties and noughties), current curatorial practices and a glimpse into the AI-assisted future. We were pleased to be able to welcome nine Chairs, past and present, and there was ample opportunity to catch up with old friends and make some new ones. The day ended with the cutting of an amazing celebratory 50th Anniversary cake, made and decorated by Chair Emma Nicholls in the form of the new GCG logo. We then reconvened at the nearby Belmont Hotel for a special 50th Anniversary Dinner after which Tom Sharpe gave an entertaining after-dinner speech.

The following day a group of 17 delegates boarded a coach and set off from Leicester for the field trip around the nearby Charnwood Forest and then on to the British Geological Survey (BGS). Jack Matthews, GeoHeritage Conservation and Interpretation Officer for the Charnwood Forest Geopark, led the group to three localities in Charnwood Forest: Morley Quarry, Billa Barra Nature Reserve and Beacon Hill Country Park, where we ate our sandwich lunch. We then proceeded to BGS where Mike Howe and Simon Harris showed us casts of Ediacaran fossils from Charnwood Forest and more of the collections and core store. Welcome refreshments were provided before return coach travel to Leicester. There is a great write-up of the [50th Anniversary event on our blog](#), by Nadine Gabriel.

4.3 Summer 2024

Our second in-person meeting of the year was the **Symposium on Toarcian Palaeobiology** held on June 17th-20th at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution (BRLSI), Bath. The meeting was jointly organised by GCG, BRLSI and the University of Leeds with Meghan Jenkinson leading on GCG's behalf alongside myself, Crispin Little (Leeds) and Matt Williams (BRLSI). A total of 30 delegates attended this Early Jurassic-themed symposium in person, with an additional two presenters giving prerecorded talks. A total of 21 talks were given across a wide range of fossil groups, with three of these being keynotes on fossil insects (Emily Swaby), marine crocodiles (Michela Johnson) and African ichnology and sedimentology (Emese Bordy). Two workshops on ammonite identification (Kevin Page) and palaeoart (James McKay) were well attended and proved popular. The final day of the meeting comprised a collections workshop run by Matt Williams, with the opportunity to study specimens from the Charles Moore collection from Strawberry Bank, Somerset, held at BRLSI. Feedback for the meeting has been overwhelmingly positive, with delegates commenting the most on how they enjoyed meeting new colleagues, the diversity of topics presented upon, and the ability to view the collections.

Our third in-person meeting of 2024 was a joint meeting with the History of Geology Group (HOGG) on **The History of Geological Discovery in Polar Regions** and was held in Cambridge on July 16th-17th. The main organisers were Duncan Hawley (HOGG), myself and Cindy Howells, with Cindy wearing both HOGG and GCG hats, and 38 delegates attended. The first day was held at the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and included 11 talks, one film and a poster covering both the northern and southern polar regions. There was an opportunity to view a small collection of rock specimens from Scott's



1901-1903 *Discovery* expedition from the BAS collection. Our thanks go to BAS Director Prof Dame Jane Francis for making the conference facilities available.

The following day presented a further opportunity to view historic collections and archives with self-led visits to the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences and Scott Polar Research Institute (SPRI), while tours of the Sedgwick Museum Collections Research Centre were provided by Dan Pemberton, Sandra Freshney and colleagues.

4.4 Autumn and Winter 2024

The **Symposium on Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation** was held on 11th September and hosted by the University of Southampton. Many thanks are due to the Southampton team, especially Neil Gostling and Kate Cooley. The SPPC Committee this year consisted of Lu Allington-Jones, Kieran Miles and Nigel Larkin. There were 7 virtual delegates (which included one remote presenter) and 49 in-person delegates. The morning programme included six oral presentations, five posters and one film followed by tours of the archaeological labs and muVIS μ CT visualisation suite in the afternoon. Abstracts are available on the GCG website here ([SPPC - Symposium on Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation - The Geological Curators Group \(geocurator.org\)](https://geocurator.org)). It was great to see a mix of new and nearly-new faces amongst our loyal long-standing supporters.

Our next event is the Winter Seminar and 51st AGM, **Reciprocal Relationships: how can partnerships help us and our collections develop?** which will be held at OUMNH on November 11th – 13th, and organised by our very own Emma Nicholls and Duncan Murdock

4.5 Summary

Overall, our events programme engaged with 278 delegates over the past year, with 167 attending in-person and 111 virtually. Whilst we have made a return to in-person conference-style meetings we recognise that maintaining virtual or hybrid meetings is more inclusive and enables us to engage with a wider range of members and colleagues around the world. However, hybrid meetings continue to present challenges in terms of the required IT support from the physical venue. I would like to extend my thanks to committee colleagues and all others who have helped with the events programme this year, and apologies to those I have inadvertently omitted.

Mark Evans, Programme Coordinator

5. Publications

5.1 Geological Curator

[11\(8\) December 2023](#)

All articles were released in digital format, to members only, with physical copies distributed in January 2024.

- Sorting a sticky situation: Engaging students in sorting and identifying microfossils from La Brea Tar Pits *Christine M. Mazzello, Elizabeth R. Ellwood, Aisling B. Farrell, Nathaniel S. Fox, Stephany Potze, Cornelia A. Clarke, Gary T. Takeuchi, Molly Porter, Emily Lindsey*
- Archives in lockdown: The curious case of the BGS 'Wilson Collection' *Graham Tulloch, Beverly P. Bergman, Philip Stone, and Michael Togher*
- Collection security: low-cost measures for mineral collections *Erika B Anderson*
- Shackleton and Bruce: disentangling Antarctic geological collections at National Museums Scotland *Philip Stone, Rachel Walcott and Peder Aspen*



- Hiding in plain sight: the unexpected discovery of a historically interesting dinosaur egg in a mineralogy collection *Robin F. Hansen and Paul M. Barrett*
- Still potentially deadly after all these years: how to safely handle and display radioactive dinosaurs and other fossils *Nigel R. Larkin and Jana Horak*

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All articles are available to members as online early access. Distribution of the print edition has been delayed until late 2024.

- Illuminating an uncatalogued micropalaeontological collection at the Lapworth Museum of Geology, University of Birmingham *J. D. Dixon, Alexandra Z. Meek, Jon Clatworthy and Kirsty M. Edgar*
- In search of lost time: Recovering missing stratigraphical data from fossil marine reptile specimens using micropalaeontological analyses *Nigel R. Larkin, Dean R. Lomax, Ian Boomer and Phil Copestake*
- Using the methyl cellulose poultice method to remove plaster and burlap - A case study on Triceratops bone *Kieran Miles*
- Trilobite thin section analysis clarifies matrix separation properties *Maximo Alfonso Rojo, Atle Jorstad Qviller, Nélia Castro and Øyvind Hammer Hammer*
- Book Review: *Ichthyosaurs from the Early Jurassic of Britain*
- *Remaining articles are in press and will be online soon.*

11(10) 50th Anniversary Special

The final issue in volume 11 will be an exciting special celebration issue to commemorate fifty years of GCG, with contributions from our golden anniversary meeting in May. This issue will form a lasting legacy of this special year, so please do make sure you have paid your 2024 subs to ensure you receive your copy!

Volume 12 – Coming in 2025! - A brand new volume will start next year!

Editorial Team

Huge thanks go to the current editorial team: Duncan Murdock (Editor); Lu Allington-Jones, Neil Adams, Jess McCoy (Associate Editors); Jordan Bestwick, Alexandria Gour (First Stage Production Editors); and Emily Carlisle (Second Stage Production Editor).

Submitting a manuscript

All submissions should be sent to journal@geocurator.org and should follow the [Instructions for Authors](#). They should be in English, appropriately structured, relevant to the journal, clear, concise and fully referenced.

Please carefully read through our [Journal Policies and Guidance](#) before submitting a manuscript for consideration.

Issues of Geological Curator

The most recent three issues can only be accessed by current members through logging in to the website. Issues older than 2 years are made freely available via the website. Back issues of most printed editions are also still available [here](#).



The [Journal Policies and Guidance](#) are currently undergoing a revision, and will be published on our website in the new year.

Duncan Murdock, Journal Editor

5.2 Coprolite Newsletter

Issue n. 108 (Spring 2024)

- *Megalosaurus*: Curating a global icon in its 200th year – by *Emma Nicholls* (Oxford University Museum of Natural History), Chair GCG
- UZH new opening – *Cinzia Ragni* (PhD Student University of Turin: Newsletter Editor GCG)

Issue n. 109 (Summer 2024)

- 50th Anniversary – by *Cinzia Ragni* (PhD Student University of Turin: Newsletter Editor GCG)
- Communication to the “Salone internazionale del libro di Torino” - by the “Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali” of Turin - By *Lorenzo Ridolfi* (PhD Student UNITO)

Issue n. 110 (Autumn 2024)

- List of shows (October 2024 – Feb 2025) - by *Gerald Lucy*
- Mineralogy and Museum conference 10 - Cardiff, UK. 11 - 13 August 2024 - By *Helen Kerbey* (Mineralogical Society of the UK and Ireland)
- The National Museum of Ireland - Natural History ('Dead Zoo') shuts its doors for 5 to 10 years - By *Patrick Roycroft* (National Museum of Ireland)
- Summary of “For a few dollars more” of Roy Starkey - By *Cinzia Ragni* (PhD Student University of Turin: Newsletter Editor GCG)

To read previous editions of the newsletter please see <https://www.geocurator.org/resources/17-coprolite> and members can access the latest editions at <https://www.geocurator.org/component/phocadownload/category/2-coprolite?Itemid=101>.

Many thanks to Cindy Howells for adding information about future events and parts related to the organisational level of GCG and Rob Theodore for supplying details of upcoming events. Thanks to Cindy Howells, Lu Allington-Jones, Dr Emma Nicholls and Brigit Tronrud for feedback and Nigel Larkin for providing many of the images of coprolites.

In general, there is low participation in “Guess the Coprolite”, so this element is under revision. Going forward, we are looking to introduce some new features to the newsletter, including a roundup of committee news, articles such as favourite specimens or collection highlights from museums and other institutions, etc. Discussions on the direction of *Coprolite* are ongoing and ideas from the membership are warmly welcomed.

Cinzia Ragni, Newsletter Editor

6. Collections Support

The safety of geological collections in local museums and one national remains a serious concern, with numerous councils around the UK experiencing budgetary challenges or worse. Years of cuts and high inflation mean that they struggle to cover their statutory expenditure, even before their discretionary costs. The closure of the Geology Department at the National Museums Wales, Cardiff,



and the complete severance of all mineralogy and petrology staff is staggering. At a time when international efforts to minimise climate change by achieving Net Zero are likely to fail because of insufficient critical metals, to remove the very staff familiar with the mineral potential of Wales seems unbelievable. If our forebears were able to find the resources to establish and develop such important collections and museums, one has to ponder why, when we are told we are so much better off, we can no longer do the same.

Buxton Museum, also with key mineral collections, has appointed a new curator and there are some signs of progress. Although the old building and its dry rot is unlikely to be repaired, serious public pressure may force the council into finding alternative premises. The Mineral Gallery at the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro reopened on 11th July 2024. The number of minerals on display has been significantly reduced, with many of the non-Cornish minerals going into store. Most of the display cabinets have been lowered to make them more accessible to children and wheelchair users. The biggest change has been the replacement of detailed labels with numbers, which can be deciphered with the hard copy catalogues available, or with online resources accessed by QR codes. It will be interesting to see how visitor numbers and average gallery visit times change going forwards.

The main cause for optimism remains DiSSCo-UK, which was formally launched on 25th March 2024, following a visit of the then Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, Michelle Donelan, to the Natural History Museum. The project involves a £155 million investment by the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) of UKRI over 10 years in digitising the UK natural science collections – or at least 50% of them. Apparently, in 2022, more than two research publications a day cited UK natural science collections data, highlighting the importance of UK records to global science, and the transformative potential of DiSSCo UK in unlocking the data held within the UK's collections, from national museums to local and university collections, botanic gardens and specialist institutes. Whilst a Life Sciences portal has already been launched (through GBIF), the Earth Sciences seem to be languishing and viewed as “marginal”. This is concerning, given the key role of geoscience collections in addressing Net Zero. GCG is currently developing an advocacy document to help address this wider concern.

Another piece of positive news is the establishment of an IUGS Sub commission on Geo-Collections - <https://iugs-geoheritage.org/subcomission-on-geo-collections/> . The group is currently working towards a publication on the 100 most important heritage collections in the world.

Dr Mike Howe, Collections Coordinator and Karen Bell, Collections Coordinator Assistant

7. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The EDI Coordinator in the GCG is still a relatively new role, so progress and ideas are still coming together. I personally would like to do more and push existing things on, so if there are suggestions, questions, or concerns these would be appreciated as the GCG is always looking for ways to support our members.

The GCG registered for Neurodiversity Celebration Week and hosted a Neurodiversi-tea event for our second year. Turnout of this event was equally relatively low, and we are thinking of ways and considerations of how to approach EDI-related events in the sector, so they are appealing, engaging,



and most importantly impactful. Saying this, productive conversations around accessibility, workplace adjustments, and the relationship of other demographics (e.g. age, gender, race) to neurodivergence were had in this event.

Discussions relating to revising and updating our policies are still underway, and appropriate changes should be made by the next report. The GCG supported me getting accredited EDI training, making me more equipped to contribute to editing these policies, as well as providing access to the training for another committee member and museum worker of a relatively small collection. There are still two places on this online training course, so please reach out to me if you would like to take this up.

I wrote an article on [queer experience in the Geosciences](#), and would aim to hopefully write something else for the blog in the coming year. Lastly, I made up a resource page on our website, listing various themed EDI resources for those who want to explore the sometimes unconsidered or overlooked parts of Geoscience and collections work, inside and outside of the workplace.

Gemma Laker, EDI Coordinator

8. Online

8.1 Website

This year has seen the website continue to perform a central role in our public facing activities – we continue to use it to disseminate news and to book events, and we continue to host ever more content for our membership.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the group, the new logo was scheduled to replace the old one on the top banner at the same time as it was unveiled to attendees in Leicester. We have also added a close-up image of native gold on quartz to the banner to commemorate reaching this milestone.

The *Geological Curator* full text article search (www.geocurator.org/journal/search/) continues to provide a very useful service to the community, with statistics showing that in the last twelve month period, 48,000 DOI resolutions to *Geological Curator* articles have occurred. We record basic stats (date, article ID) about each resolution, and so can summarise the breakdown as follows (Volume 0 is used for *Coprolites* etc.):

Volume	Redirects	Volume	Redirects
0	46	6	2779
1	4967	7	2214
2	7353	8	2417
3	4945	9	3167
4	7385	10	3788
5	5511	11	3361

The top five articles were as follows, showing that it is always worth citing a DOI if possible – if the article you are citing from *Geological Curator* did not have a DOI when published, you can obtain the retro-DOI via the search page, where it is shown in the search results listing.



Vol	No	Article title	Authors	Redirects
4	9	Palaeobotany in Museums	Cedric H. Shute and Christopher J. Cleal	459
10	1	Preserving carbonatite lavas	Lu Allington-Jones	250
11	8	Archives in lockdown: The curious case of the BGS 'Wilson Collection'	Graham Tulloch, Beverly P. Bergman, Philip Stone, and Michael Togher	236
2	5	Collections & Collectors: 4. The Bath Geological collections: The Moore collection of Upper Liassic crocodiles: a history	Christopher J. Duffin	233
4	3	Preparation Techniques for Material From The Posidonienschiefer (Lias Epsilon, Upper Liassic) of Germany	Fritz Lorcher and Thomas Keller	210

The table below shows the now customary top 25 pages by website impressions, from 1st January to 12th October 2024. As usual it shows a broad mix of old and new pages on the website, but it is encouraging to note that the overall count of hits is much higher, and that the article search page for the journal maintains a very high ranking.

Rank	Page title	Hits
1	GCG homepage	67959
2	Article search results	24157
3	Coprolite 93 - Summer 2020	8094
4	SPPC 2007 Glasgow	5797
5	Symposium on Toarcian Palaeobiology	3858
6	Thumbs-up leaflet	3550
7	Committee Profile: Robert Lowther	2632
8	The Geological Curators Group mission statement	2421
9	Privacy Policy	2317
10	The GCG blog	2315
11	Geological Curator 11(8)	2148
12	Notice of increase of membership fees	1568
13	Make a donation	1540
14	50th Anniversary Meeting: Geological Collections Past, Present, and Future	1352
15	SPPC 2008 Dublin	1322
16	Geological Curator 10(8): RTI paper extra content	1032
17	Geological Curator 11(3)	1023
18	Brand new Natural History Museum opening in Sheffield	1002
19	Committee Profile: Dr Emma Nicholls	964
20	GCG Constitution	759
21	Committee Profile: Nigel Larkin	710
22	Committee Profile: Andrew Haycock	693
23	Geological Curator 10(1)	636
24	Committee Profile: Mike Howe	626
25	Geological Curator 8(10)	595

Finally, another interesting new initiative this year is our “virtual library”. It is probably fair to say that we all have *too many books* already, yet we still keep expanding our personal library whenever we see a book on a colleague’s bookshelf that might be useful to our work! With increasing amounts of



historical texts becoming available digitally, as well as new resources being published online and in print formats, it is sometimes difficult to know where to turn to find information. The aim of the **Geological Collections Distributed Library** (www.geocurator.org/library), developed and maintained by new committee member [Phil Hadland](#) is to become a comprehensive bibliography of texts relating to geological collections management and curation – and critically how to get hold of a copy for your own library. At the moment it takes the form of a simple spreadsheet, but in the future we can if we wish make it into a fully searchable database.

Please check out the work Phil has done so far at the link above, let us know if you find it useful, and **most importantly**, if there are references that are critical to your practice as a collections professional, please let us know about it so we can build the list.

As always, offers of help for the website or ideas for new content are always appreciated, and can be e-mailed to webmaster@geocurator.org

Simon Harris, Web Coordinator

8.2 Communications

This year the Communications Coordinator aided the search for the new logo design by fielding entries and initially compiling them for the Committee, assisted with the proofreading of the *Coprolite* newsletter, and proposed a “Geology in the Wild” feature of weekly or bi-weekly posts, that would solicit pictures and experiences from GCG members; there is potential for aspects of it to be looped into other communications (the blog or the newsletter).

Investigations have found that the GCG Wikipedia page can be edited by anyone, and this does not require registering. The current History section could be expanded to include original founders, past annual meeting themes, etc. A Projects section could be added (collections! libraries! connections! etc) and the fact that we publish a blog as well as the *Geological Curator* (and *Coprolite* newsletter). Social media might be made easier/more efficient by the use of social media management accounts like ‘Pally’ or ‘Metricool’, which have free options and can schedule and cross-post on multiple platforms.

Using the GCG JiscMail, members shared 128 posts this year. These were mainly advertisements for relevant events but there were also some job postings and requests for collection care advice.

Brigit Tronrud, Communications Coordinator

8.3 Blog

This year we have published eight blog entries on a range of subjects from conferences to conservation. The blog has received 5186 views and has been visited by people from 93 countries. Sadly, our Blog Editor Rob Theodore has had to step down recently due to other commitments. The Committee would like to thank Rob for all of his hard work since December 2022. More information about our blog can be found at <https://www.geocurator.org/blog>

Blogs should be around 800 words. The absolute minimum is 400 words (there is no maximum, within reason). One image per 200-300 words is the optimum number. Please send submissions to blog@geocurator.org, we would love to hear from you!



This year's blogs:

[Mould in Geological Collections](#)

January 2, 2024, by *Lu Allington-Jones* (Principal Conservator), The Natural History Museum, London

[Reconstructing the Palaeontological Object: Digital Morphology with the Geological Curators Group](#)

January 19, 2024, by *Sophia Reinisch*, Amateur entomologist

[The Geological Curators Group history – Bringing us up to the end of the 20th century.](#)

April 22, 2024, by *Cindy Howells*, Palaeontology Curator at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales.

[You Can't Be What You Can't See: Queer Perspectives in Geoscience](#)

June 1, 2024, by *Gemma Laker*, Palaeontology and Geobiology MScR Student at the University of Edinburgh

[A Golden Anniversary – Celebrating 50 Years of the GCG](#)

June 17, 2024, by *Nadine Gabriel*, Curator, Mineralogy at the Natural History Museum, London

[183 Million Years in the Making: The Symposium on Toarcian Palaeobiology](#)

August 23, 2024, by *Meghan Jenkinson*, Postgraduate Researcher at the University of Leeds

[Controlled exsiccation of fossilised remains in waterlogged marl: Slowly slowly dryee squiddie](#)

September 20, 2024, by *Lu Allington-Jones* (Principal Conservator), The Natural History Museum, London

Coming soon: Our new Collection Store Turns 10: Highlights and Hiccups

October 2024, by *Rachel Walcott* (Principal Curator, Earth Systems), Department of Natural Sciences, National Museums Scotland

Lu Allington-Jones, Secretary

9. GCG information

The Geological Curators Group can be found at:

www.geocurator.org

<https://www.facebook.com/GeologicalCuratorsGroup/>

<https://twitter.com/OriginalGCG>

Email: info@geocurator.org

Contact details:

Address: Geological Curators Group
(c/o Becky Goddard)
The Geological Society
Burlington House
London
W1J 0BG

<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=296050&subid=0>



Committee for 2024 (from AGM 2023)

(T = trustee)

Chair (T): Dr Emma Nicholls (*Oxford University Museum of Natural History*)

Secretary (T): Lu Allington-Jones (*Natural History Museum, London*)

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator (T): Gemma Laker (*University of Edinburgh*)

Collections Coordinator (T): Dr Mike Howe (*British Geological Survey*)

Communications Coordinator (T): Dr Brigit Tronrud (*Manitoba Museum*)

Treasurer (T): Robert Lowther (*Imperial College, London*)

Membership Coordinator: Cindy Howells (*National Museum Wales*)

Programme Coordinator (T): Dr Mark Evans (*British Antarctic Survey*)

Journal Editor (T): Dr Duncan Murdock (*Oxford University Museum of Natural History*)

Web Coordinator (T): Simon Harris (*British Geological Survey*)

Newsletter Editor: Cinzia Ragni (*Università degli Studi di Torino*)

Blog Editor: Rob Theodore (*Sedgwick Museum, University of Cambridge*) and Phil Hadland (*Hastings Museum & Art Gallery*)

Officer: (Conservation Officer): Nigel Larkin (*Natural History Conservation*)

Officer: (SPNHC Rep): Andrew Haycock (*National Museum Wales*).

Officer: (Outgoing Treasurer) Dr Rachel Walcott (*National Museum of Scotland*)

Officer: (Collections Coordinator Assistant) Karen Bell (*Natural History Museum London*) and Phil Hadland (*Hastings Museum & Art Gallery*)

Officer: (Programme Coordinator Assistant) Meghan Jenkinson (*University of Leeds*)

Officer: (Web Coordinator Assistant) Sherri Donaldson (*University of New England*)

Geological Curator journal support team:

Associate Editors: Neil Adams (*Natural History Museum, London*), Jess McCoy (*Northumbria University*) and Lu Allington-Jones (*Natural History Museum, London*)

First Stage Production Editors: Jordan Bestwick (*University of Zurich*) and Alexandria Gour (*Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and Sea Center*)

Second Stage Production Editor: Emily Carlisle (*University of Bristol*)