



Coprolite

Droppings from the
Geological Curators' Group

No.1 February 1990



Contributions to **Coprolite** should be sent to Tom Sharpe, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales. Cathays Park, Cardiff CF1 3NP, U.K. Tel: 0222 397951 ext.265

From GCG's Chairman

I am very pleased that this first issue of *Coprolite* coincides with my first period as GCG's Chairman, for it gives me an ideal opportunity to do just what I believe we should have been doing more of - communicating with you, the members. It is curious that the more successful the Group has become and the more professional our products, the less easy it has been to maintain the informal and punchy style of our earlier days when everyone knew what was going on. Now the Group is more active than ever, and the concerns of the Committee seem to grow ever more distant from the working curator - rather like the apparent impossibility of actually getting around to that cataloguing that's been waiting for months! Perhaps the most serious problem that has arisen is the slippage with *The Geological Curator* and the subsequent difficulties in informing the membership of current news, events and activities. Despite its consistent high quality, this situation could not continue. I hope therefore that *Coprolite* will solve the problem and under the guiding hand of Tom Sharpe I have no doubts that it will prosper. Please let Tom know of anything - news, meetings, exhibitions, publications - which you feel will be of interest to the membership and which you want to see out as soon as possible. As Chairman, I want to be sure that the group is serving your interests. If I ring you for a chat to discover your views, don't be surprised. Likewise, please ring me if you have any gripes or groans, brickbats or bouquets. If it's not too late, Happy New Year.

John Cooper (Booth Museum, Brighton 0273 552586)

Forthcoming meetings and seminars

24th February 1990 University of Birmingham

Earth Science Teachers' Association: Safety in earth science fieldwork.

Contact: Mr. D. Yourden, 25 Millfield Crescent, Pontefract, West Yorkshire, WF8 4LU

18-23 March 1990 Earnshaw Hall, University of Sheffield

GCG/BCG Natural Sciences Curatorial Course.

Contact: Bob Toynton, Division of Continuing Education, 85 Wilkinson Street, Sheffield S10 2GJ. Tel. 0742 768555 ext. 4932

22 March **1990** Peterborough City Museum and Art Gallery
Joint **GCG/BCG** Seminar: Steneosaurs, Sunflowers and Standards

10.00 - 10.30	Arrival and coffee
10.30 - 10.45	Welcome. David Constant, Leisure and Amenities Officer, Peterborough City Council
10.45 - 11.00	Welcome. Martin Howe, Museum Services Curator
11.00 - 11.45	The new geology and wildlife gallery at Peterborough Museum. Gordon Chancellor, 1st Assistant Curator.
11.45 - 12.00	Discussion
12.00 - 14.00	Lunch and chance to view gallery
14.00 - 14.20	Proposals for terminological development for BCG and GCG. John Cooper, Booth Museum, Brighton
14.20 - 14.40	The Sunflower Campaign. BCG
14.40 - 15.00	Discussion
15.00 - 16.00	Visit to AMSSEE Taxidermy Studios <i>or</i> chance to examine natural history reserve collections
16.00	Tea and depart

Meeting fee **£1**. Contact: Gordon Chancellor, City Museum & **Art** Gallery,
Priestgate, Peterborough PE1 1LF. Tel. 0733 43329

25-27 April 1990 The Natural History Museum, London
Landmarks **in** natural history. 7th International Conference of the Society for
the History of Natural History.

Contact: Gina Douglas, **Linnean** Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly,
London W1V 0LQ

7-11 May 1990 Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago
5th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History
Collections.

The provisional programme includes sessions on pest control, **museum** hazards and safety,
problem solving, and a symposium on the conservation of exhibit specimens.

Contact: David Willard, Bird Division, Field Museum of Natural History,
Roosevelt Road at Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60605, U.S.A.

21-22 June 1990 Museum Building, Trinity College, Dublin
GCG Seminar and Fieldtrip: Geology in Irish Museums.

The programme for this meeting includes **talks** on the geological collections of Trinity
College by **Patrick Wyse Jackson**, the Mitchell **Museum** (University College, Galway) by
Dave Harper, the Ulster Museum by **Phil Doughty**, the **Geological Survey of Ireland** by **Andy**
Sleeman and the National Museum of Ireland by Nigel Monaghan, as well as opportunities
to view the collections in the 3 Dublin institutions and an evening lecture on the history of

Irish geology. The field trip to the Wicklow Mountains will include stops at a Giant Deer graveyard, and ~~Pb/Zn/Ag~~ mines and will finish in time to catch return transport. A reception at Trinity College and a traditional Irish liquid welcome are also promised.

A full programme will be included in the next issue of *Coprolite*.

Contact: Nigel Monaghan, Natural History Division, National Museum of Ireland, Dublin 2, Ireland. Tel. 0001 618811

27-29 September 1990 Sussex University, Brighton

Society for the History of Natural History: Gideon Mantell Bicentenary Meeting.

Contact: John Cooper, Booth Museum of Natural History, 194 Dyke Road, Brighton BN1 5AA. Tel. 0273 552586

10-11 October 1990 Cromer Museum, Norfolk

GCG Seminar and Fieldtrip: Collecting and identifying Pleistocene material

Contact: Martin Warren, Cromer Museum, East Cottages, Tucker Street, Cromer, Norfolk. Tel. 0263 513543

6 December 1990 Yorkshire Museum, York

GCG Seminar and AGM: Recapturing the initiative.

Contact: Paul Ensom, Yorkshire Museum, Museum Gardens, York YO1 2DR. Tel. 0904 629745

Exhibitions 1990

Dinosaurs Past and Present

Royal Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh	1 Mar - 27 May
National Museum of Wales, Cardiff	16 June - 30 Sep
Natural History Museum, London	1 Nov - 3 Feb 1991

Dinosaurs alive! / Dinamation

City Art Centre, Edinburgh	28 Feb - 3 June
National Museum of Wales, Cardiff	16 June - 30 Sep

The Dinosaur Roadshow

Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne	until 27 May
Derbyshire Museum Service	8 June - 15 Sep
Scunthorpe Museum	22 Sep - 17 Nov
Doncaster Museum	Nov 1990 - Jan 1991

The Legacy of Ice

Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery	13 Jan - 24 Feb
Rowley's House Museum, Shrewsbury	12 May - 23 June
Dudley Museum & Art Gallery	30 June - 11 Aug
Walsall Museum & Art Gallery	18 Aug - 29 Sep
Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry	8 Oct - 17 Nov
Malvern Museum	24 Nov - 5 Jan 1991

New Officers and Committee 1990

Chairman: John Cooper Booth Museum of Natural History
194 Dyke Road, Brighton BN1 5AA Tel. 0273 552586

John A. Cooper BSc AMA FGS, Keeper of Geology at the Booth Museum of Natural History, Brighton, was elected Chairman of the Group for the next three years at the AGM in Oxford in December. After graduating from Leicester University, John completed the Museums Studies Course at Leicester in 1973 and then held posts in the Leicestershire Museums Service before moving to Brighton in 1981. He was GCG Treasurer and Membership Secretary from 1977 to 1982 and has served as a Committee Member several times. He was Chairman of the Committee for Geological Site Documentation and co-authored *Guidelines for the curation of geological materials*.

Secretary: Simon Knell Scunthorpe Museum
Oswald Road, Scunthorpe DN14 7BD Tel. 0724 843533

Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Andy Newman Hancock Museum
Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4PT
Tel. 091 222 7418

Editor: Peter Crowther Bristol City Museum
Queens Road, Bristol BS8 1RL Tel. 0272 223592

Recorder: John Nudds The Manchester Museum
The University, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL
Tel. 061 275 2634

Public Relations Officer: Phil Doughty Ulster Museum
Botanic Gardens, Belfast BT9 5AB Tel. 0232 381251

Minutes Secretary: Di Smith Haslemere Educational Museum
High Street, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 2LA
Tel. 0428 2112

Committee: Chris Collins Leicestershire Museums
96 New Walk, Leicester LE1 6TD Tel. 0533 554100

Mandy Edwards Department of Geology
The University, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL
Tel. 061 275 2000

John Martin Leicestershire Museums
96 New Walk, Leicester LE1 6TD Tel. 0533 554100

Monica Price Oxford University Museum
Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PW Tel. 0865 272950

Newish publications

œ curiosities and rare things. The story of Leeds City Museums by Peter Brears.
Friends of Leeds City Museums, 1989, iv + 84pp. ISBN 0 907588 07 7 £6.75

The history of the Yorkshire Museum and its geological collections by Barbara Pyrah. William Sessions, York, 1988, vi + 165pp. ISBN 1 85072 042 8 £4.50

Reading the rocks by Peter Whitehead is the title of teaching material for the earth science component of the National Curriculum for Science, and comprises pupils' textbooks (A4, 44pp, £2.95 each, teachers' pack (notes, worksheets, photograph sets, geological maps, £19.95 each + VAT) and specimen sets "Rocky Rex's Rock Box" (£199.00 per set + VAT). From Geo Supplies Ltd., 16 Station Road, Chapel-town, Sheffield S30 4XH

Bibliography and index of Dorset geology by Jo Thomas and Paul Ensom. Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society, 1989, 102pp, A4. ISBN 0 900341 27 0 £4.95 + £1.40 p+p from Dorset County Museum, High West Street, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XA

Agates by H. G. Macpherson. British Museum (Natural History) and National Museums of Scotland, 1989, 72pp. ISBN 0 565 01100 6. £5.95

Take care where you core. A code of conduct for rock coring is a leaflet produced by the Geologists' Association in conjunction with the Conservation Committee of the Geological Society of London. From: Geologists' Association, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 9AG

Geological walks in Charnwood Forest published by Leicestershire County Council is a leaflet describing 6 walks of geological interest. £0.40 from Countryside Section, Department of Planning and Transportation, Leicestershire County Council, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester.

Quaternary of Wales is the first in the Geological Conservation Review series published by the Nature Conservancy Council, 1989, 240pp, A4. ISBN 0 86139 570 0 £27.00 (post free) from NCC, Northminster House, Peterborough, PE1 1UA

Musical Curators

Paul Ensom, formerly Assistant Curator at Dorset County Museum is now Keeper of Geology at the Yorkshire Museum, where he succeeded Barbara Pyrah, who has taken early retirement.

Brian Meloy has been appointed Trainee Assistant Curator of Natural History at the Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter and took up his post on 16th October.

At Leicestershire Museums, Gill Weightman who was Curatorial Assistant is now Assistant Curator, Geology and Sites; and Kate Pontin, formerly Graduate Trainee, is now Teacher-Leader, Earth Sciences.

At the National Museum of Wales **Geraint Price**, formerly Head of Geography/Geology at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfelen, has been appointed Museum Schools Service Officer for Geology for 3 years from 1st January, succeeding **Alun Thomas** who retired in August.

Sarah Nash, formerly Assistant Curator (Natural Sciences) at Devizes Museum has been appointed Keeper of Natural Science at Plymouth City Museum and Art gallery. **Clare Valentine** who completed the Leicester Museum Studies Course last year has been appointed Curatorial Assistant (Documentation) - Natural Science at Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery.

John Norton of Ludlow Museum retired on 22nd December after 30 years of service to the Museum.

Steve Laurie has been appointed Curatorial Assistant at the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge and took up his post on 2nd January.

Phil Phillips, Curator of Palaeontology at Liverpool Museum has been named as the *Times Shell Museum Professional of the Year* for his work in setting up the Natural History Centre at the Museum. The Centre, too, has been named as the most innovative development in the *Museum of the Year* Awards.

Fake fossils from Morocco

Stuart Baldwin warns members that he has recently been offered very large trilobites of the genus *Phacops* from Morocco, up to 6 inches (15cm) long which, close inspection revealed, were very clever reproductions, although they were being offered as originals. The dealers concerned had purchased them in Morocco in good faith as originals. The major diagnostic features of these fakes are:

1. There is a certain unreal general look about the specimens and they differ in colour from the matrix. The replicas are made of polyester resin and the initial gel coat is almost certainly filled with genuine ground limestone to give a rough, greyish appearance.

2. The replicas have been cleverly glued to a matrix of genuine limestone. The join between replica and matrix has been smoothed out to give markings parallel with the outline of the trilobite. A genuine specimen is more likely to show tool marks at right angles to the outline of the specimen.

3. The strongly tuberculated cephalons show air bubbles at the tips of the tubercles.

4. Final proof can be obtained by inserting a red hot needle into one of the air bubbles. If there is melting it is resin, if not, it could be genuine.

If in doubt Stuart would be happy to advise. He can be contacted at Fossil Hall, Boars Tye Road, Silver End, Witham, Essex CM8 3QA Tel. 0376 83502