COPROLITE

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DROPPINGS FROM THE GEOLOGICAL CURATORS GROUP

Coprolite is compiled and produced by Tom Sharpe, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP (tel 029 20 573265, fax 029 20 667332, e-mail Tom.Sharpe@nmgw.ac.uk). It is published three times a year in March, June and November. Any material for inclusion should be sent to Tom Sharpe by the first of the previous month, i.e. by 1 February, 1 May or 1 October.

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Chairman:Tom Sharpe, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP tel 029 20 573265, fax 029 20 667332, e-mail Tom.Sharpe@nmgw.ac.uk
Secretary: Mandy Edwards, Geology Department, University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL tel 0161 275 3825, fax 0161 275 3947, e-mail Mandy.Edwards@man.ac.uk
Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Andy Newman, Department of Archaeology, University of Newcastle, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU tel/fax 0191 222 7426, e-mail andrew.newman@ncl.ac.uk
GCG website: www.man.ac.uk/Geology/geocurgrp/gcghome.html

Chairman's Report

In my report to the Annual General Meeting in Dublin last year, I anticipated that "the BGS situation will continue to have the attention of GCG Committee". This it has certainly done. As you will be aware from my last report, and from regular updates in *Coprolite*, reorganisation at the British Geological Survey is resulting in the loss of two very experienced curators. Steve Tunnicliff, who looked after the biostratigraphic collections, lost his job in May this year; Stuart Hollyer, curator of the borehole cores, goes in March 2001. Despite each of them having over 20 years experience in collections management, it seems that the Director has no place for them in his plans for the collections. These plans include the appointment of four curators (who, we have been told, will be appointed from existing BGS staff) and a Chief Curator, and involve the construction, within three years, of a public access database for all the BGS collections. We have pointed out to the Director that getting rid of two experienced curators with in-depth knowledge of the collections will do nothing to expedite such an ambitious documentation project.

Although we have failed to persuade the Director that his plan is flawed and that the existing curatorial staff should be retained (especially as BGS has received a £1.9 million rate rebate), there is some good news. A new BGS Collections Advisory Committee is to be established and GCG has been invited to nominate a member to sit on it. Hopefully, we can soon put the dark days of the past 18 months behind us to ensure the continuity of safe custodianship for these important collections. This is, though, of little consolation to Stuart and to Steve both of whom clearly would have had great contributions to make to the management of the BGS collections.

Last year, I also referred to the collections at Peterborough Museum, where there was no longer a geologist in post. An advertisement for a collections manager has recently appeared. Although it does not specifically require geological experience, a geologist or palaeontologist is preferred, and we hope that they find one.

This year, we have written to the Scottish Executive in support of The Museum of Lead Mining at Wanlockhead which, like a number of industrial museums in Scotland, is finding itself in difficulty. We have also been in correspondence with the Essex Field Club over the future of the geological collections formerly in the Passmore Edwards Museum.

On the positive side, we have endorsed an exciting initiative in the Bristol region where the Rockscape Project, coordinated by Simon Carpenter, aims to create a new Earth Heritage Trail.

In addition to dealing with these external issues, Committee has been looking at our membership base and how we can expand it. Susan Cooke has suggested a number of areas we will be exploring further over the next year or so. We are also about to revisit the collections survey conducted by Phil Doughty 20 years ago. Glenys Wass, our Recorder, has been busy compiling a questionnaire which we hope will quantify how things have changed since Phil published his report. Recognising the heavy sigh with which curators will receive the questionnaire, we are trying to design it to minimise the time it will take to complete. This should be with you early in the new year. Our plans for a revised edition of the *Guidelines* have been well received by the Geological Society Publishing House and we will be pushing ahead with that in the coming year. We have also had a positive response from the President of SPNHC who we hope will help broaden the scope of the book and increase its North American appeal.

We have had a full, busy and successful meetings programme again this year, with seminars and workshops in Scarborough, Edinburgh, Munich, Cambridge and York. The Scarborough conference brought together for the first time all three natural science curatorial groups - BCG, GCG and NSCG. I hope that we will come together more frequently in future at such meetings where we can share our common concerns. We are grateful to everyone who has contributed to the

success of our programme – those who act as local coordinators and those who speak at our meetings or lead field trips and visits. Thanks are due this year to Nick Gordon at Leicester who organised the joint Scarborough conference; Mike Taylor (NMS) and Stuart Monro (Dynamic Earth) for arranging the Edinburgh meeting; to Günter Viohl (Jura-Museum), Georges Bergér (Museum Bergér) and Michael Schieber (Rieskrater Museum) for making our Munich visit such a success, and of course to Ros Gourgey and Steve McLean who made all the travel arrangements; to Dale Johnston for organising and leading the gemstone identification workshop in Cambridge in November; and to Phil Manning for hosting this year's AGM here in York. As our Programme Secretary, Steve McLean puts together an excellent programme every year, and we are especially grateful to him for all his work, well above and beyond the call of duty.

We cannot function as a Group without the continued support and enthusiasm of our Officers and Committee. I would like express my thanks to Mandy Edwards, our Secretary, who keeps us running smoothly and keeps track of our membership; to Andy Newman, our Treasurer for keeping us comfortably off; to Patrick Wyse Jackson for his continued production of an excellent journal; to our Recorder, Glenys Wass, who has been busily drafting our collections survey questionnaire; to Tony Morgan, Minutes Secretary, for somehow managing to make sense of our Committee meetings; and to our Committee Members Giles Miller, Susan Cooke and Mark Evans. Susan and Mark leave Committee this year and I am grateful to them for their contributions over the last two years. Thanks are also due to our Coopted Committee Members, Steve Thompson who is an invaluable link with BCG, and John Nudds whose experience as our last Chairman has been a great help to me. I am also grateful to Steve Thompson for again manning our stand at the Geological Society Careers Day in London.

Of course, without you, the membership, GCG would not exist, and I would like to thank all of you, who through your attendance at our meetings and through your contributions to our newsletter and journal make GCG what it is.

Tom Sharpe, GCG Chairman
Cardiff 7 November 2000

Subscriptions 2001: a reminder

Subscriptions for this year were due on 1 January and a subscription renewal form, was included in the last (November 2000) issue of *Coprolite*. Subscriptions remain the same as previous years, ie £10.00 for UK personal members and £12.00 for Overseas Personal Members. **Any subscriptions unpaid by 30 April will be deemed to have lapsed and will be removed from the mailing list.** Please ensure that your subscription is paid as soon as possible to Amanda Edwards, GCG Secretary, Department of Geology, University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL.

GCG Committee 2000

Chairman: Tom Sharpe, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP tel 029 20 573265, 07968 800228 (mobile), fax 029 20 667332, e-mail Tom.Sharpe@nmgw.ac.uk

Secretary: Mandy Edwards, Geology Department, University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL tel 0161 275 3825, fax 0161 275 3947, e-mail Mandy.Edwards@man.ac.uk

Treasurer: Andy Newman, Department of Archaeology, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU tel/fax 0191 222 7426, e-mail Andrew.Newman@ncl.ac.uk

Programme Secretary: Steve McLean, Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4PT tel 0191 222 6765, fax 0191 222 6753, e-mail s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk

Editor of Journal: Patrick Wyse Jackson, Department of Geology, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland tel +353 1 608 1477, fax +353 1 671 1199, e-mail wysjcknp@tcd.ie

Editor of Newsletter: Tom Sharpe, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP tel 029 20 573265, 07968 800228 (mobile), fax 029 20 667332, e-mail Tom.Sharpe@nmgw.ac.uk

Recorder: Glenys Wass, Department of Geological Sciences, Gower Street, London WC1E 3BT tel 0171 380 7900, e-mail g.wass@ucl.ac.uk

Minutes Secretary: Tony Morgan, Natural History Centre, Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool L3 8EN tel 0151 478 4286, fax 0151 478 4390, e-mail tonym@nmgmnhc.demon.co.uk

Committee Members: Helen Fothergill, City Museum and Art Gallery, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AJ tel 01752 304774 fax 01752 304775; Camilla Nichol, Hunterian Museum, The University, Glasgow G12 8QQ tel 0141 226 5498 fax 0141 226 5498 e-mail cnichol@cqm.co.uk; Giles Miller, Department of Palaeontology, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD tel 0207 942 5415 fax 0207 942 5546 e-mail G.Miller@nhm.ac.uk

Coopted members: Susan Cooke, Charnwood Museum, Loughborough, Leicestershire; Steve Thompson, Museum of North Lincolnshire, Oswald Road, Scunthorpe DN15 7BD tel 01724 843533 fax 01724 270474; John Nudds, The Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL tel 0161 275 2660 fax 0161 275 2676 e-mail john.nudds@man.ac.uk; Ros Gourgey, 32 Durham Close, Great Bardfield, Essex CM7 4UA tel 01371 811429 email rosgourgey@hotmail.com

New members

GCG is pleased to welcome the following new members: **Günter Viohl**, Jura-Museum, Eichstätt, Germany; **Michael Schieber**, Rieskrater Museum, Nördlingen, Germany; **Debbie Snow**, Leeds City Museum; **David Lewis**, Natural History Museum; **Jane Dunn**, Natural History Museum.

Musical curators

Sara Chambers, Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales has been appointed Curator of Environmental Sciences at the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro and took up her post at the end of January; **Glenys Wass**, Assistant Curator of Geology at the Department of Geological Sciences at University College, London has been appointed Collections Manager at Peterborough Museum and took up her post on 19 February; **William Lindsay**, Head of the Palaeontology Laboratory at the Natural History Museum has become Head of the Conservation Department at the Royal College of Art; **Lyall Anderson**, previously Lecturer in Palaeontology at the University of Aberdeen, has been appointed Curator of Invertebrate Palaeontology at the National Museums of Scotland, where he has been joined by **Jason Hilton**, NERC Research Fellow at Cardiff University who will be taking up a post as Curator of Palaeobotany and Invertebrate Palaeontology at the end of the year.

National Museum of Ireland: the correct email address

The new email address for Nigel Monaghan and Ivor Harkin at the National Museum of Ireland in the last issue of *Coprolite* got a bit garbled in translation. The correct email address is: earthscience@museum.ie

Mineral, fossil and gem shows 2001

10-11 March **York** Racecourse, North Yorkshire
31 March-1 April **Cheltenham** Racecourse, Gloucestershire
7-8 April **Kempton Park** Racecourse, Middlesex
21-22 April Christ's Hospital School, **Horsham**, Sussex
28-29 April Newark Showground, **Winthorpe**, Nottinghamshire
Contact: The Exhibition Team, tel 01628 621697, fax 01628 680702

Newish publications

Identifying marble by Jacques Dubarry de Lassale, 2000. Editions H. Vial, 303pp. ISBN 2 85101 0654, £95.00

Origins. The evolution of continents, oceans and life by Ron Redfern, 2000. London: Cassell, 360pp. ISBN 0 304 35403 1, £35.00

The dinosaur hunters. A story of scientific rivalry and the discovery of the prehistoric world by Deborah Cadbury, 2000. London: Fourth Estate, x + 374pp. ISBN 1 85702 959 3, £15.99

Museums and adult learning: a perspective from Europe edited by Alan Chadwick and Annette Stannett, 2000. Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, xi + 242pp. ISBN 1 86201 021 8, £14.95.

Exhibitions 2001

Tracking Dinosaurs Perth Museum, George Street, Perth until 22 April; Kendal Museum, Station Road, Kendal 13 July - 3 November 2001.

Walking with dinosaurs Hunterian Museum, Glasgow until 29 April 2001

Glowing report

The Financial Times carried a report on 18 January that the Natural History Museum is being prosecuted for breaching safety legislation with some exhibits of radioactive material in the Minerals Gallery. As the report said: "If a visit to the museum gave you warm glow, it may have been due to more than just the superlative quality of its displays". However, the museum has emphasised that there has been no actual danger to visitors. This case highlights the need for museums to be rigorous in checking that any displays of radioactive minerals conform to the requisite safety legislation.

Excited dinosaurs in Cambridge

Sources close to the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Cambridge tell us of an application which the department recently submitted to Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of the Sedgwick Museum:

"Describe the services and/or activities which your organisation provides. Give solid facts about what, when, who for and where.

Answer: "... National Science Week, major innovative events attended by over 5,000 people each year eg Time Tower, Time Truck which visited many schools in the area, life-size dinosaur erection ...."

It's not clear whether this was soft part or hard part preservation. Our correspondent says, "I should stress that the museum staff did NOT get to see the application before it was sent. This was a department cock-up rather than a museum one."

Paul Ensom receives the YGS Phillips Medal

Congratulations to Paul Ensom of the Natural History Museum's Department of Palaeontology, and GCG past Chairman, who has been awarded the Phillips Medal of the Yorkshire Geological Society. The medal is awarded for 'distinguished contributions to, or work bearing upon, knowledge of the stratigraphy or palaeontology of the north of England'. Before his move to the Natural History Museum, Paul was Keeper of Geology at the Yorkshire Museum, a post held in the 1820s by John Phillips for whom the medal is named.

BGS Collections Advisory Committee

GCG has been invited to nominate a member to sit on a new Collections Advisory Committee which BGS is establishing to advise on best practice and to review BGS's plans for the development of the collections. We are pleased to report that Philip Doughty of the Ulster Museum, who has been advising BGS on the appointment of the Chief Curator, has agreed to act as GCG's representative.

Launch of the Friends of the Sedgwick Museum Cambridge, Friday 23 March 2001

These are momentous times for the Sedgwick Museum in Cambridge which is

currently undergoing major redevelopment under the project management of Liz Hide, whose previous experience includes the geology displays at the Museum of Scotland. This first phase of the renovation is planned to take up to two years. The Museum is also launching the Friends of the Sedgwick Museum on 23 March.

The first phase of the development involves the closing of the Oak Wing for complete renovation, including the restoration of the original oak Victorian display cases. The Oak Wing also houses John Woodward's late 17th / early 18th century collection, in its beautiful walnut cabinets. These formed the original collection which was housed in the Woodwardian Museum in Senate House Lane but, as the collections quickly outgrew the available space, a fundraising campaign was launched to raise money for a purpose-built museum. Adam Sedgwick himself raised over £24,000, a massive sum in those days. As he died in 1873, he did not live to see the Grand Opening of the Museum in 1904 by King Edward VII, accompanied by Queen Alexandra. The museum archive has a delightful collection of local newspapers reports and photographs of this important royal occasion when the museum was named in honour of Adam Sedgwick.

Consultation about the development is reaching far and wide, including SYDS (Sedgwick Young Design Squad), a group of 16 children from local schools who are advising on how to make the museum displays and resources accessible to children. Liz Hide, writing in the first issue of *Trilobite*, the Redevelopment newsletter, stresses however that the aim will be to make the museum more exciting while retaining something of the specimen-richness which makes the Sedgwick so special. Further details about the development can be found at www-sedgwick.esc.cam.ac.uk, click on Redevelopment.

At last this world-renowned museum is also going to have its own Friends organisation to offer volunteer support for the day to day running of the museum (perhaps enabling longer opening hours), assisting in fund-raising, arranging public and Friends' events such as tours, visits, field trips and social occasions, including an annual dinner at one of the colleges. The Friends of the Sedgwick Museum will be officially launched at the Museum at a reception on the evening of Friday 23 March 2001 and GCG members are warmly invited to attend this opening event. Annual membership will be £12 for an individual.

Members are being sought amongst the alumni of the university, all those who have worked and studied at Cambridge and members of the public locally who are interested in geology. Museum staff involved in the setting up of the Friends include Mike Dorling and Annette Shelford. Members of the steering group include Peter Fuchs and Dr Muriel Arber plus GCG members Gerald Lucy and Ros Gourgey.

Anyone interested in attending the launch on 23 March, or becoming a member, should contact Annette Shelford, Museum Assistant, email: annette@esc.cam.ac.uk for an invitation or Rosgourgey@hotmail.com

Good home sought

Andrew Mathieson has a set of *The Geological Curator* (and *Newsletter of the Geological Curators' Group*) from Vol 1 No 1 to Vol 4 No 8 that he wishes to dispose of to a good home for the price of postage. If you can give a loving home to these journals, please contact Andrew at Eversleigh, Newlands Hill, Portishead, Bristol BS20 9AZ.

Petrology Collections Workshop

A full and extremely useful meeting was held at the Natural History Museum on the 1 November 2000. The idea of the workshop arose from the results of a questionnaire that was sent out to University Departments from the NHM. Many Departments have created web pages and are trying to get their collections on-line, but the work is very variable. There were two definite aims to the workshop. One was to encourage researchers to use well-documented collections rather than to continue collecting yet more material for themselves, and encouraging Universities to make sufficient resources to allow this - not a trivial task by any means. The second was to facilitate discussion and best practise amongst curators.

Participants included curators from the NHM, National Museum of Wales, National Museums of Scotland, Hunterian Museum, British Geological Survey and the Universities of Leicester, Manchester, Cambridge, Oxford, UCL, Reading and Bristol.

Andy Fleet Head of the Mineralogy Department NHM spoke of his hopes for the future including a network of petrology databases and collections, individual institutions building on their own particular strengths, perhaps starting with a meeting at the EUG in Strasbourg between Researchers and Curators.

Mike Howe, Tim McCormack and Neil Fortey of the BGS talked about the work already completed and the work to be done on the databases held by the Geological Survey. They are aiming to provide a full web access database in two years time.

John Faithfull (Hunterian Museum) spoke passionately about the problems presented by petrological research but equally enthusiastically presented several possible solutions to the challenges faced by most of the members of the workshop. He described how rocks are used in a wide range of institutions and that most rocks are held in University Geology departments. Most of these departments have little in the way of staff, recognised procedures and resources. Where there are museums with close contacts with Geology Departments further problems can occur in that most museum professionals do not have a petrological background and that standard museum procedures are over the top and unsustainable. Museums tend to be interested in older, historical material. The majority of research rock collections are recently collected and it is

these that are the most scientifically interesting. How do we redress this balance? The Hunterian Museum, part of the University of Glasgow has developed a system called HUGII, based on the University of Leicester Collections. The system deals with objects within a group and makes it easy to keep the data and the objects within the group together. HUG started out as a manual system but is now also a computer system, which is distributed as freeware. To read more about this excellent system check out John Faithfull's web site, which has all the details http://www.hmag.gla.ac.uk

Steve Laurie from the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge described in detail the main challenges associated with a collection spanning several centuries of collecting, the earliest specimen was collected in 1560, and the collection is still growing. PhD collections provide most of the material now with approximately 600 specimens being added a year. A biographical index has been kept since the early 1990's, there are now 1200 records, and the idea is that these will appear on the Sedgwick's web site in the next year. Another aim is to get details of PhD Collections onto the web as well.

Kevin Walsh (Oxford University Museum) talked about his work on the John MacCulloch Collection. This collection came to Oxford in 1858, but was not worked on until 2000 when 3,000 records were entered onto a database, initially by volunteers and students, and then checked by a petrologist. Some of the outcomes of this project, which was funded by the Museum Challenge Fund were both scientific: the mineral chlorophaeite (iron silicate) had never been described accurately before the type specimen was found in the collection and analysed using modern methods: and created better access to the collection. A web page has been created which will include a searchable database and thumbnail images of the rocks. It is hoped to be published this year.

Monica Price completed this presentation by explaining the relationships between the museum collections and the university department collections and she raised the question of how much time and resources should be invested in very large collections where collection use is minimal.

Karen Wicks (PRIS, University of Reading) described a situation at Reading, which was very familiar to the other University Curators at the workshop. She explained how Reading separated its collection with different people being responsible for collections. The primary collections are the teaching Collections, including the Thin Sections. PRIS is to merge with the departments of Soil Science and Archaeology and the thin section collections are expected to expand significantly after this. Web access to information on the collections is seen as a cost effective way of increasing the use of the collections when funding is very tight.

Each of the curators from the other universities present at the workshop included details of their collections and their hopes for the future. Just before lunch David

Dawson gave details of useful web sites to investigate for funding opportunities for rock collections. These included The New Opportunities Fund and the IT fund within the National Grid For Learning. He recommended looking at the Resource Discovery Network http://www.rdn.ac.uk

Malcolm Scoble (Department of Entomology, NHZM) talked about the ENHSIN (European Natural History Specimen Information Network) initiative. Funding for this project comes from the Framework 5 fund of the EU. The aims of Framework 5 that apply to ENHSIN are improving human resource potential and enhancing access to research infrastructures. At the moment only biologists are involved but there are no reasons why geologists or GCG could not link in with the network. ENHSIN are looking for feedback from users as well as data providers. The web site is http://www.nhm.ac.uk/science/rco/enhsin

Dave Smith (NHM) spoke about databasing the petrology collections in the museum. He explained how the databases are used as a management tool. All new acquisitions from 1993 are entered on the computer. 20% of curatorial time is spent entering data. To give us an idea of the backlog the NHM face, here are some statistics. There are 187,000 minerals, 179,00 rock samples and 1,800 meteorites!

Frances Wall (NHM) outlined the museum's future plans for databasing. These include the addition of more data to the database, to make the database available on the web for simple searches and to link the specimen database to related information e.g to add digital field images.

There was a really frank and extremely useful exchange of ideas during the discussion slot of the workshop. Two of the outcomes have been the development of a UK Petrology Collections web page, hosted at the Natural History Museum site and the setting up of a new e-mail discussion list for geology curators. The Petrology Collections Website can be viewed at: http://www.nhm.ac.uk/mineralogy/externalcollections/externalcollections.htm Please have a look at this page. If you would like the details of your organisation to appear please forward them to Frances Wall or Dave Smith at the museum.

Mandy Edwards
Department of Earth Sciences, University of Manchester

Geo-curators e-mail discussion list

This new discussion list arose from the petrology collections workshop held at the Natural History Museum in November. It has been set up so that we can communicate news items, requests for information and receive ideas from the membership of GCG. With the huge potential now for making collections information available by electronic means, it is vital that curators have an excellent electronic means of communication as well. The list will be available for anyone to join, but only members can mail to the list and get the review list of members and e-mail addresses.

We will e-mail everyone who has sent us details of their e-mail address to let them know that unless we hear from then we will enrol them onto our discussion list. You will receive an introductory file and an e-mail asking you to confirm your membership. If you do not wish to remain on the list, it is a very easy process to leave.

Mandy Edwards
Department of Earth Sciences, University of Manchester

A long way to go

Bob King has drawn our attention to an article published in the April 2000 issue of a newsletter called *Mineral News*, and Bob's reply which was published in the December 2000 issue. Both are reproduced here courtesy of Bill Bolton, editor of *Mineral News*.

Are geological specimens safe in museums?

More and more amateur geologists and recreational collectors are being exhorted to place their finds into the hands of local and national museums. The rationale being that in such institutions the material will be preserved for posterity and so be available for future research. On the face of it this seems a reasonable exhortation, to which most people would wish to respond in a positive manner. Unfortunately in a quite large number of cases the depositing of material has been just as valuable as throwing the material onto the local council's refuse tip.

The Geological Curators' Group publish a journal called *The Geological Curator*. This is an excellent publication which contains much information of value to all who are interested in the collection of geological material. In the matter of the curatorial care of collections it makes alarming reading. The magazine has a Lost and Found feature in every issue, in which enquiries are made regarding material which in many cases has either been lost, destroyed, misplaced or simply stolen.

Some Cases

David Oldroyd of Australia, requesting information about archival material on geological research of the Lake District, learnt that some geological maps at Liverpool University about 10 years previously were impossible to locate. GC, Vol. 6, No. 10, page 404.

A request regarding the whereabouts of ammonites known to be in the Gibraltar Museum drew the following response:- "In the Gibraltar Museum, the new Director Dr. Clive Finlayson (since 1991) has adopted a new broom approach", which is discovering odd items long buried in storerooms. The Ammonites may yet reappear". GC, Vol. 6 No. 1, page 32.

Gaynor Boon (City Museum, Weston Park, Sheffield) would like to know ' the whereabouts of the original specimen of the cast of a young

ichthyosaur. It is 22" long, and has no locality or horizon information. GC, Vol. 5 No 1, page 161.

I am attempting to trace the whereabouts of an ichthyosaur missing from the collections of the Geological Museum, Dept. of Geology, Trinity College, Dublin.
Patrick N. Wyse Jackson, Curator. GC, Vol. 5 No. 8, page 325.

The above cases are not untypical but specimens of major international importance are also at risk from simple destruction. Sue Cowdrey writing in the *Newsletter of the Russell Society* gives one such example. "In 1989, I found two drawers containing 7 specimens in all of "Ladies Slippers" - siderite pseudomorphs after baryte - from Buckland Monachroum, Devon, (the famous Virtuous Lady Mine). ... The "slippers" have since suffered a major accident and on my return in 1998 I found them smashed to pieces. The original label was also missing. I did find a larger siderite obviously from the same source, uncatalogued, in a different drawer".
Newsletter No. 34, March 1999, page 17.

In issue number 36, March 2000 of the same Newsletter, under the title "Absurd", Mick Cooper makes the following observations on the donation of specimens:
"... and as for insisting that our "particularly interesting or rare" specimens would necessarily be better off in a museum is ridiculous. Has the writer ever been in the average museum geology store? Frankly there are only a handful of museums that have the resources to curate a mineral collection properly-far fewer I fear than actually own them. (See the farcical and horrific story of the Bath "slippers" in Newsletter 34! And are Members (of the Russell Society) to be denied the enjoyment of a "particularly interesting" addition to their collection (not to mention the scientific and educational benefit they went in search of in the first place) just because a museum store is a "better" place"?

So think hard before you donate, don't be coerced into becoming unpaid museum field workers. Specimens that are purchased are far more likely to be curated and looked after than specimens given freely. At best it would be reasonable to donate inferior but nonetheless representative samples to museums. However as the specimens are yours their ultimate destination is in your hands, this is not a plea not to donate but a suggestion that you think before you do.
Bill Bolton

Bob King, of course, leapt to the defence of curators with this reply:

While I would endorse the overall theme of Bill Bolton's article entitled "Are Geological Specimens Safe in Museums?" which appeared in No. 9 page 8 of *Mineral News*, I would like to make a case to support the much maligned geological curators who are often the 'whipping boys' in an

adverse situation not of their making. The large majority of these poor souls are highly trained and very efficient. I can personally vouch for that.

As Mick Cooper correctly states in No. 36 on page 50 of the *Newsletter of the Russell Society*: "...there are a handful of museums which have the resources to curate a mineral collection". The reasons are not far to seek in a situation which is proliferating.

Many geological curators joined a museum in good faith and have given years of expert service (in one case, 34 years) only to receive a redundancy notice, or, at least an horrific cut in their financial budgets, or worse still an enforced change of direction. A new director who has little interest in geology can represent disaster. If he retains his job the geological curator soldiers on against all odds, be they financial or psychological. My sympathies lie with him, for he sees his job slipping away from his grasp.

The Geological Curators' Group was formed in Leicester in 1974 with the express wish that it should address the problems in British museums. To that end, Philip Doughty wrote a paper on the State and Status of Geology in U.K. Museums. This admirable paper made all geological curators aware of the problems in their midst, but did not provide what was most needed - money.

Bath museum referred to in No. 34 of the Russell Society Newsletter has had its trials and tribulations and, it is sad to see the agony of the previous expert curators who can only watch the vandalism from their retirements. They wish, for the minerals' sake, that the wonderful collection of minerals had remained in the ground from whence it came.
R. J. King.

It is rather sad to think that, despite 25 years' work by GCG members to improve the care of geological material in collections, there are some sectors of the geological community which have such low opinions of the standards of care as those expressed by Bill Bolton and Mick Cooper. It is unfortunate, too, that the role of Lost and Found in *The Geological Curator* has been so misunderstood. Clearly, we still have a long way to go, not just in improving collection care, but in terms of the perception of how well we care for that material.

Tyrannosaurus on the move

In early February 2001, the Natural History Museum unveiled a new animatronic *Tyrannosaurus* and received much coverage in the broadsheets. The robotic dinosaur was developed in collaboration with the Japanese company Kokoro and cost £220,000. At 4 m high and over 7 m long, it is three-quarters the size of a full grown *T. rex*. It is said to be the most sophisticated animatronic dinosaur ever built and is activated as visitors pass by. From 17 February, the model will go on display with the museum's dinosaur exhibits in the Ronson Gallery. It is the first

of several new animatronic exhibits which will arrive at the museum this year. Others include a great white shark and a funnel web spider (much enlarged, of course). The newspapers made much of the fact that the *Tyrannosaurus* is accompanied by the musty smell of a Maastrichtian swamp, instead of the stench of rotting flesh which *Tyrannosaurus* would certainly have smelt of, from the festering lumps of meat stuck between its teeth. A Lancashire scent company, Dale Air, developed the aroma which they call 'Maastrichtian miasma'.

As well as reporting on the new robot, *The Telegraph* includes a comment in its leader column in which it says, "Virtual reality, however fast and furious, is nothing on full reality, however battered and basic. ...The real thing is more moving: the odourless dinosaur skeletons in the Natural History Museum are scarier than their polyurethane cousin."

Angela Milner, *The Times* quotes, said, "The technology has come a long way. In five years from now, this beast could be walking around the gallery." This is picked up by the *Independent* in its comment column. Instead of visitors "wandering around museums, pressing noses against panes of glass and wondering whether the dust is meant to be part of the exhibit, ... we will move around like Indiana Jones, or the characters stranded in Jurassic Park, dodging mechanical tyrannosaurs and – who knows? – one day even outwitting the robotic velociraptors. While it does sound nice, this is the sort of thing that could easily go too far. ... This is the year when, in the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the guaranteed fault-free computer Hal went very faulty and turned murderous. Are we really ready for a *T. rex* version of Hal, or vice versa?"

Most definitely, yes!! Especially if it eats troublesome visitors.

GCG study visit to the Munich Mineral Show and the museums of Bavaria
5 – 10 October 2000

This year's study visit was to Bavaria in Southern Germany and saw GCG back in "Grand Tour" mode. The itinerary included a visit Europe's main fossil and mineral show in Munich and the chance to visit a range of different museums in Bavaria, as well as getting in a bit of fieldwork.

Thursday 5 October

Thirteen intrepid souls gathered at Stansted Airport for the 13.55 flight to Munich. On arrival at Munich Airport we took possession of our hired transport, two People Carriers. We had been warned to try to keep our luggage down to one small case or hold-all and now we knew why, People Carrier means just that, plenty of people and little space for luggage. Our volunteer drivers soon got the hang of the vehicles and the German Autobahn system and we were soon on our way to Munich itself. Our accommodation, the Hotel Bristol, was just a short walk from the centre of Munich so after sorting ourselves out, it was into the city

centre to look for food and whatever else Munich had to offer. Sadly, no late nights on this tour as we had to be up early every morning.

Friday 6 October

After breakfast, we met in the hotel foyer at 8.30am and then negotiated the Munich rush hour before heading out of the city on the A94 to the New Trade Fair Centre east of Munich, the venue for the Munich Mineral and Fossil Fair. Friday is the preview day for dealers and professionals, with the public being allowed in on Saturday and Sunday, so we had the chance to see and perhaps purchase some good specimens before the fair got too crowded. The fair itself fills the two largest of the Centre's three halls, and is made up of around 500 stalls covering approximately 30,000m^2. The range of exhibits on offer covers a wide variety of geologically related subjects including rocks, minerals, fossils, meteorite fragments, books, scientific instruments and geological equipment. For a curator with plenty of money to spend this could be heaven, and for those not wanting the bother of transporting their purchases home, there were a number of shipping agents on hand offering their services. The fair also had a number of non-commercial displays from local museums and universities. There were also a large number of exhibitors offering gemstone jewellery and decorative material such as necklaces and cameos made from various stones, clocks set in agate and plenty of "new age" bits and pieces.

Baltic amber seemed to be popular, and with so many exhibitors offering this material, I wonder if there is any left to be found. Meteorite fragments and tektites featured on a number of stalls and displays, including a wristwatch made from meteoritic iron. If it's ammonites you want, you were spoilt for choice with many good examples including several from the British Jurassic, with one British dealer offering superb specimens from the Jurassic near Scunthorpe. North African material was available from a number of dealers and featured a range of nice specimens in addition to the more usual trilobites and polished cephalopods. An Italian dealer had nice samples of Bolivian stromatolites for sale. These ranged from small blocks up to large bookend sized pieces. He also had some thin polished pieces around 50cm long by 30cm high that would look good in museum displays and these had some of us reaching for our Deutsch Marks.

Mineral collectors were spoilt for choice with superb specimens from around the world. North of England minerals could be found. Some nice Australian minerals were available including nice opals and a number of dealers had minerals from Pakistan. One display feature was a large amethyst geode big enough for a child to crawl into, and several did.

The sensible thing to do before attending the fair would be to draw up a list of specimens to buy and try to stick to it. It would be very easy to spend a lot of money here as there were so many tempting things available.

By late afternoon, fatigue was setting in so we all found our way to a pre-arranged meeting point before starting our journey north to Eichstätt. The

journey took up the A9 through the rolling countryside of Southern Bavaria and into the Naturpark Altmühlthal, an area of real natural beauty. Once in Eichstätt we found our hotels and then set out to find somewhere to eat, and where could be more appropriate than the Ammonite Restaurant? Specialising in Bavarian cooking and with a nice range of Bavarian beers it was the natural choice for our two nights in Eichstätt.

Saturday 7 October.
We met in the centre of Eichstätt at 8.30 for the short drive to the Jura-Museum. This is housed in the Willibaldsburg, a hillside castle on a bend in the Altmühl River overlooking the town of Eichstätt. We were met by the Director, Günter Viohl, who gave us a brief introduction to the history of the building and the museum. The collections date from around 1844 and were used by the Episcopal Seminary in Eichstätt for teaching a natural science course at the College of Philosophy and Theology. In 1968 a new course was introduced and the collections were no longer needed. The Bavarian State Natural History Collection Department took them over in 1972, but the church is still responsible for the upkeep of the building. The museum fully opened only in September 1976 and attracts between 80,000 and 90,000 visitors each year. The theme of the museum is the geology and natural history of the area and houses a systematic collection of fossils from the Solnhofen limestone. As part of the introduction we were shown a AV presentation on the evolution of life. After this, Günter took us on a guided tour of the highlights of the museum. First stop was the section on the Solnhofen Lithographic Limestone. This explained the palaeoenvironment of the area at the time of the deposition and how the fossils are preserved. We were shown a large specimen of an ichthyosaur containing gastroliths of quartz and feldspar typical of the Bohemian landmass to the east. There was a display of current indicators showing marks made by the rolling of ammonite shells. Fish were very prominent in the gallery, with a number of cases showing giant fish specimens. Others were dedicated to cartilaginous and bony fishes, reptiles, crustaceans, sponges and water and terrestrial plants.

The big attraction was the fifth specimen of *Archaeopteryx* to be discovered. This was found in Workerszell north of Eichstätt in 1951 and is now housed in its own case in one corner of the gallery. One part of the gallery tries to relate past environments to similar ones found today. This is done using aquaria containing living examples of *Nautilus* and *Limulus*. A large central tank holds modern reef fish. There were also general displays on the geology of Southern Bavaria and an introduction to general palaeontology.

Our visit coincided with a temporary display on pterosaurs, which included many specimens of these creatures in addition to several reconstructions, including one of *Arambourgiania philadephiae* built by Dave Martill of Portsmouth.

After lunch we travelled a few kilometres northwest for our second museum visit of the day, the Museum Berger. This is one of the largest collections of Solnhofen fossils in private hands. The owner, Georges Berger, operates a number of

quarries in the area and from these he obtains the specimens for his museum. The specimens on show include ammonites, crustaceans, insects, fish and reptiles. The contents of the museum change as new specimens are found in the quarries, the unwanted specimens are then sold in museum shop.

After the museum we had a tour of the Berger tile works during which Georges explained how the limestones are extracted and worked. In the quarries the stone is worked by hand. When the stone reaches the workshop it is cut to size, the edges polished and the surfaces treated to give either a polished, semi-polished or rough finish.

After the tour we were taken to one of the working quarries. We were given a demonstration by one of the workers on how the stone is cut to shape by hand using templates and rock scissors. After this we were let loose on some quarry tips hoping to find our own *Archaeopteryx*, sadly most of us only found examples of the crinoid *Saccocoma* and an occasional ammonite.

Sunday 8 October

8.30am start again, this time for the journey to Nördlingen and the Rieskrater Museum. Arriving at the museum mid morning we were met by Dr Michael Schieber, our guide for the day. The Rieskrater Museum is housed in a renovated barn dating from 1503. It was established as a museum in 1990 and gets around 50,000 visitors each year. The Rieskrater Museum is a specialised geological museum dealing with a natural catastrophe which took place about 15 million years ago, this being the impact of an asteroid which formed the Nördlinger Ries Crater and the nearby Steinheim Basin.

The Museum is split into distinct sections, each dealing with a different aspect of the crater formation and the history of the area before and after the impact. The first section explains the geographical position of the crater and explains some of the early attempts at interpreting the formation of the crater. The second section explains planetology, how planets are formed, and how asteroids and comets collide with planets. This section has a large, wall-mounted LED model showing orbits of the planets, asteroids and comets around the sun. There are also a large number of meteorite specimens on display. Another section deals with the mechanics of crater formation and explains how country rocks are modified by such impacts. Further sections explain the geology of the area prior to the impact, how the impact affected that geology and the history of the crater after formation including a description of the deposits that formed in the crater. A further area of the museum explains the economic uses of the rocks and soils of the Ries. This is then followed by a section outlining the history of research in the Ries, from early interpretations of the area as a volcanic feature up to the proposal by E.M. Shoemaker and E.C.T. Chao in 1960 of the asteroid impact idea. This section also contains, in a bullet-proof display case, a sample of impact breccia from the Moon collected by the crew of Apollo 16.

After lunch in Nördlingen, we regrouped at the museum for an afternoon's fieldwork around the Ries Crater itself, guided by Michael Schieber. We travelled southeast to Monchsdeggingen to examine some rotated limestone blocks on the edge of the crater. Then north to Wennenberg, a hill near Alerheim, where basement granite and a lamprophyre intrusion can be seen. This is overlain by Ries Lake Limestone, a brackish water deposit formed after the crater became a lake. Then it was east and over the crater rim to the village of Otting. Here we visited a quarry where the impact breccia had been worked. This highly shocked impact breccia is known as suevite and is made up of material ejected when the asteroid impacted. Some nice fresh samples were available for collection here (but don't take large pieces as they show up on airport security scanners!). The last stop was to the northwest and a quarry near Oettingen. Here was an exposure of the suevite and a second ejecta deposit, the Bunte Breccia, which consists of fragments of Triassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous and Tertiary rocks up to 25cm in diameter.

It was then back to Nördlingen and our accommodation for the night, the Hotel Altreuter. The hotel was home to the NASA astronauts Eugene Cernan, Edgar Mitchell, Alan Shephard and Joe Ingle when they used the Ries for field training before the Apollo 14 mission. The bar and restaurant has a number of photographs of the astronauts enjoying the local hospitality.

Monday 9 October
All good things must come to an end so its back to Munich today, but we had a few hours free before we have to check-in for our flight at 16.30. What better way to finish our trip off than with a visit to the state Palaeontology Museum in Richard-Wagner Strasse? Here we had the chance to see our second *Archaeopteryx* of the weekend among other excellent specimens. All too soon it was over and we were soon back in the UK, with at least two of us wondering where our luggage had gone.

This was a great weekend with a wide variety of things to see and places to visit, so thanks should be given to the following: Ros Gourgey and Steve McLean (who sadly could not join us due to work commitments) for the transport arrangements and accommodation; Tom Sharpe for an informative and detailed handbook which he provided for each of us; our volunteer drivers for getting us around, and finally to our local guides, Günter Viohl, George Berger and Dr Michael Schieber.

Some websites to check, to see what you missed:

Jura-Museum, Eichstätt http://www.jura-museum.de/
Ries Crater Museum, Nördlingen
http://www.iaag.geo.uni-muenchen.de/sammlung/Rieskrater/RiesCraterMuseum.html
Palaeontology Museum, Munich (in German). www.palaeo.de/museum-muenchen

Tony Morgan, Liverpool Museum

GCG training course: gemstone identification
Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge 14 November 2000

This course was organised by Dale Johnston and held at the Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge. The principal aim was to introduce natural science curators to the basic methods of gem identification and curation. The day was attended by nine natural scientists from as far afield as Belfast and Edinburgh. Having successfully negotiated trains, roads and the Cambridge Park and Ride we arrived at the Museum armed with pen torches, hand lenses and tweezers. Following coffee, Dale introduced us to the structure of the course and the range of materials and gem testing instruments at hand.

The first session consisted of an introduction to gemmology and gem testing. The basic descriptive terminologies, units of measure and identification strategies were discussed. We were then invited to inspect external and internal features of selected gemstones and commonly encountered fakes with handlenses. This allowed us to spot features that may uncover a composite stone (e.g. garnet-glass doublets), artificial treatments, or simply clues to the identity of the stone.

Following a short break and practical demonstration of opaque stones, we were introduced to the Polariscope as a method for identifying single and double refraction, pleochroism and strain in both natural and synthetic gemstones. This is a particularly quick, simple and cheap method of spotting a large proportion of glass specimens – look for the 'writhing snakes'! More practical work followed, covering the variety of destructive and non-destructive techniques available to distinguish amber from various simulants, including plastics, Copal and Kauri gum.

Following a pub lunch close to the Museum, the curatorial challenges presented by gemstones were discussed. Because gems cannot be marked, the importance of accurate description was emphasised (weight, colour, dimensions, photography) to effectively match specimens to documentation. Gemstones also include organic substances such as pearl, coral, amber and ivory, that have different environmental requirements to most geological materials. Cleaning method was also flagged up as an important issue. Emeralds for example are almost always 'oiled' to enhance clarity and only the weakest of detergents can be used. The dangers of ultrasonic cleaning were outlined, with special reference to specimens with internal weaknesses. Some interesting facts came to light, such as the susceptibility of diamonds to fire damage due to their virtually pure carbon composition.

For the rest of the course we divided into groups, to make best use of the remaining time and techniques to be explored. Use of the Refractometer was demonstrated, to measure the refractive indices of gemstones. In practice this proved to be something of an art, but we all gained confidence after a few attempts. Then there was the Dichroscope, a handy instrument that is used to

view pleochroism in anisotropic gems. We all familiarised ourselves with the Spectroscope. This is one of the most important gem testing instruments that can give absolutely diagnostic results for quite a few types of gems, and even non-gem quality mineral specimens, whether rough crystals or cut stones. Finally, several of us had a go at using the Chelsea Colour Filter, which only transmits yellow-green and deep-red light. This is particularly useful for aiding the distinction of emeralds and rubies from many similar looking gems.

The course was excellently organised, incorporating a range of well-prepared slides, specimens and up-to-date analytical equipment. Dale's enthusiastic teaching style proved both popular and effective and I'm sure the course was enjoyed by all. On a personal level I now feel sufficiently confident to tackle the occasional gemstone enquiries that I receive at Warwickshire Museum.

Following an all too brief look around the Sedgwick Museum's wonderful displays, I left Cambridge with a set of useful course notes and brochures listing gemmological instruments and literature. Many thanks to Dale for providing a very useful and informative course.

Jon Radley, Assistant Keeper (Geology), Warwickshire Museum

GCG seminar: Dinosaur tracks, too big for their boots
Yorkshire Museum, York 4-5 December 2000

This meeting on the collection and storage of dinosaur tracks, despite the fact that I had heard some of the presentations before, was one of the most interesting GCG meetings I have been to for some time. In fact, it was good to not just refresh my memory, but also to hear either how things had developed, or to get a different perspective.

The morning's talks were very much of a theme, being the physical recovery of sets of dinosaur tracks. Steve Howe covered the recovery of tracks from the South Wales coast. The trials and tribulations of doing so seem quite formidable. The sites are generally well off the beaten, or at least metalled, track, often half way down a cliff, and always at the mercy of the tides. Getting people and equipment on site is just the beginning, as the hard work really begins in removing several tonnes and many square metres of rock back off the beach up the cliff and back to base. The alternative, of casting the prints, in cold, wet weather, and in between the tides, would seem to be a choice between two evils.

Paul Ensom and Jon Radley had similar stories to tell and Paul's brought back pleasant memories, as the last time I had heard him talking on this topic was at the very first GCG meeting I ever went to, and a refresher was well overdue. Neil Clark's stories of borrowing RAF helicopters, and acquiring a broken leg without even realising it (until he came to use it, that is) just go to show that our profession has it moments of drama as well. Collecting material of this sort is not at all like typical fossil collecting, (at least in this country). The size and nature of

these things means that they can't be removed as a single piece, but rather as a whole series of smaller (but, nevertheless, often disturbingly large) pieces. These have to be carefully recorded before anything is actually moved, and then equally carefully packed up, so that they can be accurately reconstructed back at the museum. Such excavations are much more like an archaeological dig rather than a geological one. Perhaps we should call in the Time Team to the next one!

For all that the morning talks were interesting, for me the more interesting half of the meeting was in the afternoon. Here, we looked away from the collecting of the material and more towards the use of the resource, whether it be in situ or back at the institution. Mike Romano and Martin Whyte's presentation was on the study of the tracks once they were collected. Indeed, much of what they were looking at was not so much the tracks themselves, but the sediment in which the tracks were made. It was fascinating to see the details in which this could be studied. The precise manner in which the sediment had been deformed could be examined to give remarkable evidence for the way in which the dinosaurs walked and on to conclusions about the animals themselves. This was all something of an eye-opener for me, as I had not come across this work before.

Alistair Bowden's talk on the Dinosaur Coast Heritage Project I have heard a number of times before, but it is always good to hear about any project that has been so successful in raising the profile of geology in the public mind. Furthermore, this being a relatively new scheme, there is always something new to hear. The question naturally arises as to how the results to date going to be built upon after the end of what is sadly a temporary scheme, though, as Alistair made clear, this was appreciated from the outset, and designed in such a way that there was plenty that could be carried on after he had left. Let's hope it continues to be as successful in the future.

The final presentation came form the host, Phil Manning, and looked at the relationship between the media and our subject. Phil, of course, has first hand and inside experience of this, having been an advisor on programmes such as Walking with Dinosaurs, as well taking part in a number of others. While it is easy for us to criticise the makers of these programmes when we don't like what they come up with, there is no doubt that if we are able to tap into the media, there is an enormous amount to be gained, Furthermore, the quality of the science is usually improved when good advice is taken. We should also remember that we do much the same thing ourselves, in that we take a complicated subject and select out bite-sized pieces to present to a public generally unfamiliar with it. Furthermore, we do it in such a way as to make it not just educational but entertaining as well. In other words, we would like our galleries and events to be good television, though, of course, we would never put it like that would we? Naturally, this talk generated the most amount of discussion, and it would be good to see Phil put something together for publishing. And perhaps the material from the meeting could be used for an issue of *The Geological Curator*?

Steve Thompson

Forthcoming GCG seminars and workshops

Please note that the GCG workshop: Brush up your rocks! scheduled for 12 March 2001 at University College, London has been postponed.

Wednesday 23 May 2001 The Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester

GCG Seminar: The commercial trade : ethics versus science

Many of you may have noticed the now regular "Ethics" column in the *Museums Journal* where readers pose ethical questions to a panel of experts from the Museums Association Ethics Committee. The first two columns included interesting geological questions concerned with the acquisition of palaeontological specimens from either commercial dealers, mineral and fossil fairs or private individuals. In these particular cases the issues focussed on the ability of museum curators to establish that the specimens were acquired legally. However, what happens to material that is offered for sale and not purchased by museums. Is the "rescue" argument a valid one? Do we risk perpetuating a "black market" with the ultimate price being the destruction of important collecting sites and the loss of contextual scientific data. Or is the loss of scientifically important specimens to private collectors the price we are paying now? What part do museums play in the illicit trade of fossil and mineralogical materials? The Museums Association Code of Ethics is clear.....but are the issues clear cut? This seminar will focus on the important debate surrounding the ethics of collecting geological materials and will undoubtedly involve some lively discussion.

1000 Coffee and registration
1030 Welcome
1040 Ethics, Science and the Trade - let's get together ! - Dr John Nudds, Keeper of Geology, Manche ster Museum
1130 The MA Code of Ethics - Tristram Besterman, Convenor, MA Ethics Committee and Director, Manchester Museum
1215 The Brazilian Fossil Trade: a scientist's perspective - Dr David Martill, University of Portsmouth
1300 Buffet Lunch
1330 Tour of Fossils Gallery
1415 The Rex Files - Peter Larson & Neal Larson, Black Hills Institute of Geological Research, South Dakota
1515 Final speaker to be confirmed
1600 Discussion and draft guidelines
1645 Close

We expect some very lively discussion on this "hot" issue and intend at the end of the meeting to agree draft guidelines to assist and inform curators of geological collections.

Meeting fee: £12.00 (to cover buffet lunch and refreshments)

Please complete the booking form on page 27 and return it to John Nudds, The Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL **by 9 May 2001**

Wednesday 27 June 2001 Mineral Seminar Room, Natural History Museum, London

HOGG/GCG Seminar: 150 Years of the Geological Museum

On Monday 12 May 1851, the Prince Consort, Prince Albert, opened the Museum of Practical Geology in Jermyn Street, Piccadilly, before a crowd drawn from the science's elite. Murchison, De la Beche, and others who had pioneered this new science, saw the museum as marking the end of an age of great personal achievement; it was a celebration but also an immortalisation of an heroic age. The museum had briefly existed in an earlier form under a different government department, as the Museum of Economic Geology, though its remit then was entirely economic and its premises and arrangement were a source of some embarrassment. The new museum, which was a wing of the Geological Survey, was very fine, but not, as its supporters hoped, immortal. Later, with the building in a state of potential collapse, the collections were rescued and rehoused in a new building in Exhibition Road, South Kensington. There they stayed until the Geological Museum passed from the Survey to the Natural History Museum in the mid 1980s. The Survey's collections were then removed from London to a relatively isolated spot in Nottinghamshire; the Survey's great museum was all but lost. However, reclassified as part the Natural History Museum, the building remained, and still remains, the largest exhibition space for the earth sciences in Britain. The Geological Museum lives on, though in very different form! Eclipsed by the splendid architecture of the Natural History Museum, removed from its original home and without its original collections, it is difficult to understand the true significance of Henry De la Beche's great museum. This meeting will celebrate its history, architecture, and current role. A geological walk and tour of the museum are planned, together with a birthday toast.

Contact: Peter Tandy, Department of Mineralogy, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD

8- 12 November 2001 American Museum of Natural History

GCG Study Visit : New York, possibly New York!

Following successful forays into Europe, GCG is now looking at the possibility of visiting the American Museum of Natural History in the Big Apple! The AMNH is one of the world's pre-eminent institutions for scientific research and education, with collections of more than 32 million specimens and artifacts. The museum houses over 100,000 rocks, minerals and meteorites, and four million invertebrate fossils. In addition, the vertebrate fossil holdings include the most comprehensive collection of fossil mammals in the world, with nearly one million specimens. There are also particularly important collections of North American dinosaurs as well as Mongolian fossil vertebrates acquired during expeditions to Mongolia led by Roy Chapman Andrews in the 1920's.

The cost will be finalised when the size of the group is known, but it is likely to be around £499. This will include flights from London Heathrow to New York, and 4 nights accommodation in twin rooms in a centrally-located hotel.

If you are interested in participating in this exciting visit, send an immediate response by email to rosgourgey@hotmail.com or telephone Ros on 01371 811429. Then, to reserve your place, complete the form on page 27 and return it **by 4 April 2001**, with a deposit of £25.00 (cheques payable to GCG) to Steve McLean, The Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT tel 0191 222 6765, fax 0191 222 6753, email s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk

November 2001 Natural History Museum, London
GCG Workshop: Identifying fossils: 1. Bivalves
Fed up of trawling through the *Treatise* playing "match the picture"? Can you never find that fossil in your favourite pocket reference? Forgotten the difference between articulate and inarticulate brachiopods? Getting confused about all those different corals? Do bivalves bring you out in a sweat? Well never fear....GCG is here to help!

This is the first in a series of one-day refresher training courses designed specifically to help geological curators brush up on their identification skills. It is our intention initially to cover all the major groups of invertebrate fossils, beginning with bivalves. The course will be led by palaeontologists at the Natural History Museum in London.

For further details contact : Steve McLean, The Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT tel 0191 222 6765, fax 0191 222 6753, email s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk

5-6 December 2001 Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Parks Road, Oxford
GCG Seminar, AGM and field trip: Geology, art and architecture
For further information or to offer papers, contact: Phil Powell, Geological Collections, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PW tel 01865 272950, fax 01865 272970 email philip.powell@university-museum.oxford.ac.uk

Other meetings

4-8 December 2000 Melbourne, Australia
4th International Conference on Mineralogy and Museums
Contact: Bill Birch, Museum of Victoria, PO Box 666E, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia fax + 61 3 9270 5043, e-mail bbirch@mov.vic.gov.au

2-6 April 2001 University of Oxford
Third International Conference on Trilobites and their relatives

Contact: Dr Derek Siveter, Geological Collections, University Museum of Natural History, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PW tel 01865 272953, e-mail Derek.Siveter@earth.ox.ac.uk

7-17 April 2001 Edinburgh
Edinburgh International Science Festival
Contact: Edinburgh International Science Festival, 8 Lochend Road, Edinburgh EH6 8BR tel 0131 530 2001 fax 0131 530 2002 email esf@scifest.demon.co.uk

4-8 June 2001 Department of Museum Studies University of Leicester BCG /GCG Natural Science Curatorial Course 2001 in association with Leicester City Museums and Leicestershire Museums.
An introduction to the collection and curation of natural science materials. Consisting of a discussion of the modern context of natural science work in museums, sessions looking at recording and managing data, days in the field gathering biological and geological specimens, sessions on identification in the field and in the museum, discussion of systematics, organisation, preservation, and collection management, and finally an examination of the role of connoisseurship. There will also be some extra-curricula sessions bat detecting, currying and hopefully a trip to one of the strangest pubs in England.
Contact: Barbara Lloyd, Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, 105 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7LG or phone 0116 2523962, fax 0116 2523960 or email BL5@le.ac.uk Cost of course £350, excluding accommodation.

21-26 June 2001 California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco
SPNHC 2001: Living collections
Contact: Jean DeMouthe, California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California 94118, USA tel 415 750 7094, fax 415 750 7090 email Jean DeMouthe@calacademy.org

2-7 September 2001 Glasgow
***British Association* for the Advancement of Science Annual Festival of Science**
Contact: British Association for the Advancement of Science, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 2NB tel 0207 973 3055 www.britassoc.org.uk

24 October 2001 Linnean Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London
History of Geology Group and Linnean Society Palaeobotany Specialist Group: The history of palaeobotany
Speakers will include Andrew C Scott, Bill Chaloner, Hugh Torrens, Barry Thomas and Chris Cleal.
Contact: Richard Wilding, 175 Whitton Road, Twickenham TW2 7QZ tel 020 8892 3123 email ricval@lineone.net

29 October – 1 November 2001 Queen Elizabeth II Hall, Westminster, London
Museums Association 107th annual conference
Contact: Conference Office, Museums Association, 42 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0PA tel 020 7250 1836

14-15 March 2002 Geological Society, Burlington House, London
History of Geology Group: The amateur in British geology
Contact: Stuart Baldwin, Fossil Hall, Boars Tye Road, Silver End, Witham, Essex CM8 3QA tel 01376 583502, fax 01376 585960, email sbaldwin@fossilbooks.co.uk

8-13 May 2002 Redpath Museum, McGill University, Montreal, Canada
SPNHC 2002: Collections hazards and mitigations
Contact: Ingrid Birker, Redpath Museum, McGill University, 859 Sherbrooke St West, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2K6 tel 514 398 4086 ext 4094, fax 514 398 3185, email ibirke1@po-box.mcgill.ca

1-6 September 2002 Edinburgh International Conference Centre
18th Quadrennial Meeting of the International Mineralogical Association
For further information: email ima2002@ed.ac.uk or info@minersoc.org or see www.minersoc.org/IMA2002

GCG Seminar, The Manchester Museum
23 May 2001
BOOKING FORM

Title.............Name...
Address..
....Postcode..................................
Telephone.. e-mail..

I will be attending the seminar on 23 May ☐

I enclose a cheque for £12.00 ☐

Please return this booking form with your payment (cheques payable to GCG) to John Nudds, The Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL **by 9 May 2001**

✂ -

GCG Study Visit: New York
8-12 November 2001
BOOKING FORM

Title.............Name...
Address..
....Postcode..................................
Telephone.. e-mail..

I will be attending the study visit to New York ☐

I enclose a deposit of £25.00 ☐

Please return this booking form with your deposit (cheques payable to GCG) to Steve McLean, The Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT tel 0191 222 6765, fax 0191 222 6753, email s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk **by 4 April 2001**

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