



DROPPINGS
FROM THE
GEOLOGICAL
CURATORS
GROUP

COPROLITE

No.5
May
1991

Coprolite is compiled by Tom Sharpe, 49 Kelston Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff CF4 2AG and produced by Monica Price, University Museum, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PW. It will be published three times a year in February, May and November. Any material for inclusion should be sent to Tom Sharpe by the first of the previous month, i.e. by 1 January, 1 April or 1 October.

Coprolite is sponsored by C.J.C. Burhouse Ltd of Huddersfield, wholesale distributors of minerals, gemstones, gemstone products and jewellery components.

GCG Committee

At a meeting on 13 February, the following were coopted onto GCG Committee:
Rosina Down, Biology Department, Medawar Building, University College, Gower Street, London WC1E 6JB (BCG representative)
Mick Stanley, Hull Museums and Art Galleries, 83 Alfred Gelder Street, Hull HU1 1EP (NSGSD representative)
Tom Sharpe, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF1 3NP (Editor of *Coprolite*)

New Members

GCG is pleased to welcome the following new members: C. J. Oldershaw, Natural History Museum; Wendy Simkiss and Tony Morgan, Liverpool Museum; T.D. Badman, Centre for Environmental Interpretation, Manchester Polytechnic.

Musical Curators

Simon Timberlake, Travelling Geology Curator for South East England, has had his post extended for a further five years with continued sponsorship from British Gas. **Tim Riley**, Principal Keeper of Natural Sciences at Sheffield City Museum, has taken early retirement from 1 February. **Tim Pettigrew**, formerly Keeper of Geology at Sunderland Museum, has taken up the post of Registrar at Tyne and Wear Museum Service. He is succeeded by **Steve McLean**, formerly Peripatetic Geologist in Hertfordshire. **Mark Simmons** has joined the North of England Museums Service as Travelling Biology Curator. **Jill Bates**, formerly a temporary assistant in the Ulster Museum Geology Department, has been appointed Museum Assistant at Down Museum, Downpatrick, Co. Down, the first geologist on the staff of that museum.

Geological Society medal for Hugh Torrens

All members of GCG will wish to congratulate Hugh Torrens on being awarded the Sue Tyler Friedman Medal of the Geological Society both for his work on Jurassic stratigraphy and for his many studies of aspects of the history of geology including recent work on the biography of William Smith. Hugh is a former Chairman of GCG and a prolific contributor to the *Geological Curator*.

Award for the John Moore Countryside Museum

The John Moore Countryside Museum at Tewkesbury has won the Gulbenkian Museum and Gallery Award for the Most Outstanding Improvements Achieved with Limited Resources. Since his appointment in 1988, the museum's Curator, GCG Honorary Member Bob King, has redesigned the displays to concentrate on current conservation issues. The major themes of the new displays are woodlands, wetlands, pasture habitats, local reserves, and local geology. Bob invites GCG members who may be passing on the M50 or M5 to call at the museum which is open from Easter to October.

Earth Science Review: Museums and Collections - good news at last!

The saga of the Museums and Collections part of the Earth Sciences Review continues its drawn out progress, but the current news is good! In February letters went out from the UFC to the Vice-Chancellors of the five Collections Centres informing them that, as promised, the first allocation of money would be released from April 1, 1991.

It was announced at that time that the 1991 allocation of funds would be sufficient to cover the building element in the terms of the original bids by the Collections Centres. This will represent a major cash injection to the Sedgwick and Hunterian museums for their new buildings, and smaller, but still substantial, amounts to the Manchester Museum and the Department of Geology at Birmingham University for minor building works to existing premises.

It is still not clear exactly when other funds will be made available for the provision of new storage and research equipment and for the new staff appointments. It might be assumed that the UFC will spread the load over a further 2 or 3 year period, but it is just possible that all of these monies will be released during the current financial year.

If that does happen, then Jim Kennedy must take great credit for his tireless pursuit of this package, especially during the gloomy period of last summer when all, at one point, seemed lost.

John Nudds

The Manchester Museum 26 April 1991

GCG Terminology Working Party

The first meeting of this Working Party, consisting of John Cooper (Booth Museum), Philip Phillips (Liverpool Museum), Nigel Monaghan (National Museum of Ireland)

and John Martin (Leicestershire Museums), was held on 15 March at the Geological Society. Our first objective is to identify those areas of specimen documentation which require standard terminologies and classifications, such as stratigraphy, conservation processes, simple names, etc. We also intend to look at the documentation of geological sites, especially in view of the Group's current involvement with the Nature Conservancy Council (as was) and the British Geological Survey in the development of software for geological site documentation at local record centres.

The Working Party's first meeting identified the broad themes which we intend to investigate and attempted to list the terminologies which we will need to develop. Clearly, agreement between members of the Working Party will not constitute much of a consensus and we will be consulting widely on the results of our deliberations before publishing. Our second meeting is timetabled for 25 June in Liverpool. Any views or comments on our work, even at this early stage, will be welcome.

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

Geological Collector of the Year

GCG, with the support of the Geologists' Association, *Geology Today*, and the Russell Society, has launched a competition to find the Geological Collector of the Year 1991. The aim of the competition is to encourage good practice in the collection, curation, and preparation of geological specimens by amateur collectors. Entrants must be members of a national or local geological society, club or group, and must not make their living from collecting geological specimens. First prize is £250 and a trophy to be presented at the Geologists' Association Annual Reunion in November 1991; there are also three runners-up prizes of £50.

GCG members are asked to draw attention to the application form on the centre pages, and, if possible, to distribute photocopies to any individuals or groups who may be interested.

Entry forms should be returned to The Coordinator, Geological Collector of the Year Competition, Geologists' Association, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 9AG by **30 June 1991**.

Forthcoming meetings and seminars

4-5 June 1991 Perth Museum and Art Gallery, George Street, Perth
GCG Seminar and field trip: More than words and stones: interpreting geology to the general public.

By coincidence, interpretation is the theme of the Museums Association Conference this year. If you can't get to Newcastle why not come to Perth at the gateway to the Scottish Highlands? The meeting will examine the popular interpretation of geology through displays using a variety of case studies.

Tuesday 4 June

10.00 Field excursion to view the geology and geomorphology of the district from Perth northwards across the Highland Boundary Fault and into the Dalradian rocks of Strath Tay. Meet at Perth Museum for coffee and briefing.

Wednesday 5 June Perth Museum

10.00 Coffee

10.15 Introduction and welcome

10.30 Dinosaurs and children at the Ulster Museum: Phil Doughty & Ken James

11.15 Dinosaurs and adults at the National Museum of Wales: Tom Sharpe

12.00 Geology with flair at York: Paul Howard

12.30 Proposed improvements at Glasgow's Fossil Grove: Geoff Hancock

12.45 LUNCH

14.00 Geology as social history: Scottish Oil Shale at Livingstone: R. Chesters

14.45 Interpreting rocks at Steeley Stone Centre: I. Thomas

15.30 Science for all - geology included: Graham Durant

16.15 Meeting closes.

Please complete the booking form on page 15 and send it to Mike Taylor, Perth Museum and Art Gallery, George Street, Perth PH1 5LB (Tel. 0738 32488) by 24 May 1991.

11-15 June 1991 Digne les Bains, France

1st International Symposium on the Conservation of the Geological Heritage

Contact: Guy Martini / Luc Bulot, Reserve Geologique de Haute Provence, Centre de Geologie, Quartier St Benoit, 04000 Digne, France. Tel. 92 31 51 31. Fax: 92 32 40 74.

22-26 July 1991 Newcastle

Museums Association Annual Conference: Disputable facts: innovations in interpretation.

For the first time in many years GCG is making a contribution to the Museums Association Conference. Together with BCG we are organising a seminar which will look at interpretation in the natural sciences:

23 July 1991 The Hancock Museum, The University, Newcastle upon Tyne
The disappearing object; is the orthodox natural history display a thing of the past?

Those of you who have been following developments at the Natural History Museum in recent years will be aware that it has been in the forefront of new methods of natural science interpretation. Without a doubt objects are not as important as they once were. Is this inevitable if displays are to interpret increasingly complex ideas in a popular manner? Or does it represent the visible manifestation of a deep-seated malaise within the subject, a loss of faith in objects upon which our science is based and depends for its long term security? This seminar will consider these fundamental issues and will attempt to look to the future; where do we go from here?

Seminar starts at 14.00, and attendance is open to all.

Chairman: Phil Doughty, Keeper of Geology, The Ulster Museum.

Speakers: Malcolm McBratney, Operations Manager, Department of Public Services, The Natural History Museum

Beverly Halstead, Reader in Zoology, University of Reading

Contact: The Museums Association, 34 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SF

Tel. 071 404 4767

25-31 August 1991 Plymouth

Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

Contact: Michael Robbins, c/o Polytechnic South West, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AA

28 August 1991 Polytechnic South West, Plymouth

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE

GCG seminar: Geological collections and curation in the South West.

The South West of England has for long yielded some of the country's most spectacular geological material, and has played an important role in the early history of mineralogy and geology. Museums in the South West have a long and chequered history, and while present financial constraints are causing special problems for some, many South West museums have nonetheless been at the forefront of tackling core activities such as expanding, documenting and conserving their geological collections.

09.30 Assemble for coffee

10.00 Welcome by Tristram Besterman and introduction by Mike Bishop

10.15 Peter Crowther: What price collecting?

10.45 Roger Vaughan: The Bath Geological Museum collections.

11.15 David Hill: Preparing the Devon rhynchosaur.

11.45 Discussion.

12.15 Tristram Besterman: Dawn of the Dinosaurs exhibition - introduction.

12.30 Tour of Dawn of the Dinosaurs.

LUNCH

14.00 Mike Bishop: The St Aubyn Mineral Collection.

14.30 Dawn Trewella: The Plymouth documentation project.

15.00 Discussion.

15.30 Tea

16.00 Tour of museum store and documentation.

Please complete the booking form on page 15 and send it to Mike Bishop, Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AJ (Tel. 0752 668000 ext. 4378) by 19 August 1991.

2-6 September 1991 Canterbury

MDA Conference: European documentation initiatives.

Contact: Museum Documentation Association, 347 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge CB1 4DH Tel. 0223 242848.

9-15 September 1991 Dresden, Germany

INHIGEO International Symposium: Museums and collections in the history of mineralogy, geology and palaeontology.

The programme for this meeting will include GCG Chairman John Cooper who will speak on the work of GCG.

Details of the programme are available from John Cooper, Booth Museum of Natural History, 194 Dyke Road, Brighton BN1 5AA Tel. 0273 552586 or Sekretariat der GGW, INHIGEO 1991, Invalidenstrasse 43, Berlin.

19-22 September 1991 Birmingham

MPG Annual Study Weekend: Art and life. Bridging the gap between museums and the arts.

Contact: Ann Bukantas, Ferens Art Gallery, Queen Victoria Square, Hull HU1 3RA Tel. 0482 222750

23-27 September 1991 University Museum, Oxford.

39th Symposium of Vertebrate Palaeontology and Comparative Anatomy.

Contact: Dr Per Ahlberg, The University Museum, Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3PW Tel. 0865 272950.

6-18 October 1991 Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

Preventive conservation for geological collections.

In this course, designed for conservators, curators and collections managers who have or share responsibility for the maintenance of mineralogical, palaeontological or petrological collections, participants will learn how to assess and mitigate the risks to a collection from each of the agents of deterioration. Topics to be addressed include collecting, examination and documentation, storage hardware and materials, climate control and environmental monitoring, exhibitions, packing for transportation, and the care of labels, archives and other ancillary materials. The format will include lectures, discussions, exercises and workshops. Accommodation will be available on campus. Fees for the course are anticipated to be CA\$450.

Contact: Director, Art Conservation Department, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N5, Canada.

4-5 December 1991 Dudley Museum and Art Gallery, St James's Road, Dudley

GCG Seminar and AGM: Recent developments at Dudley.

Contact: Colin Reid, Dudley Museum and Art Gallery, St James's Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 1HU Tel. 0384 55433

Early April 1992 University of Manchester

Conserving Britain's mineralogical heritage

This Special Meeting is being held under the auspices of the Geological Society Conservation Committee, the Mineralogical Society and the Joint Nature Conservancy Committee in recognition of the need to conserve mineralogical sites as features of considerable national, regional or local importance as a resource for research, study and

recreational collecting. It aims to bring together all individuals and organisations who use, own or manage mineralogical sites to share their particular interest and concerns, and examine ways of working together. Such sites are a fragile, and sometimes poorly-valued element of our landscape and are coming under increasing threat from a number of directions. They can only be conserved for future generations if the diverse user groups co-operate with planners in developing integrated land-use policies.

Contact: Dr. R. Bevins, Dept. of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF1 3NP Tel.0222 397951; Mr. B. Young, British Geological Survey, Windsor Court, Windsor Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4HB Tel.091 281 7088; Dr .D. O'Halloran, Joint Nature Conservancy Committee, c/o Northminster House, Peterborough PE1 1UA Tel.0733 340345 or Dr. R.F. Symes, Dept. of Mineralogy, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Rd., London SW7 5BD Tel.071 938 8867.

23-25 September 1992 Edinburgh

Joint meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the National Museums of Scotland: Volcanism and early terrestrial biotas.

Contact: Sandra McDougall, Meetings Secretary, The Royal Society of Edinburgh, 22,24 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PQ

Free places at MDA Conference

The Museum Documentation Association is offering GCG members two free places at its conference on European documentation initiatives to be held on 2-6 September 1991 in Canterbury. The offer covers the registration fees for the conference and the pre-conference seminar and exhibition. It does not cover dinner, bed/breakfast or travel costs. Preference will be given to staff who have not previously attended an MDA conference, staff from small museums, or junior staff from larger museums. Any member interested in applying for one of these free places should write to John Cooper, GCG Chairman, Booth Museum of Natural History, 194 Dyke Road, Brighton BN1 5AA by 15 June 1991.

Travelling geological exhibitions

The Museums and Galleries Commission have published the second of their consultation papers, *Towards a National Plan for Touring*, which was circulated with the April 1991 issue of *Museums Journal*. The MGC has approached GCG seeking both comments on their proposals for a cooperative exhibitions strategy and suggestions for appropriate geological subjects for travelling exhibitions. At the GCG Committee meeting in February, it was decided that, as a first step, we should establish what geological travelling exhibitions are currently on tour, and what plans are afoot for such exhibitions during the next few years. If you have any relevant information, comments, or suggestions, please contact Simon Knell, GCG Secretary, Scunthorpe Museum, Oswald Road, Scunthorpe DN14 7BD.

Exhibitions

Mammoth!

Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne until 11 Sep 1991

Monsters of the deep

Yorkshire Museum, York until Oct 1991

The Dinosaur Roadshow

Leeds City Museum 7 May - 28 June 1991

Bradford July - Aug 1991

Manchester Museum Sep - Oct 1991

Dawn of the Dinosaurs

Plymouth Museum 4 May 1991 - 31 Jan 1992

M40 - Travelling through time: the geology of the M40 extension

University Museum, Oxford from Easter 1991

Mineral Shows

11-12 May 1991 Leicester International Gem and Mineral Fair 1991

Holiday Inn, St. Nicholas Circle, Leicester

Contact: John.F.Turner 'Glenjoy', 19/21 Sun Lane, Wakefield Tel.0924 373786

Dawn of the Dinosaurs at Plymouth

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the coining of the name Dinosauria by Richard Owen at a lecture to the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Plymouth, Plymouth City Museum is mounting a major exhibition. Original dinosaur material from Britain, Germany, Africa, America and Mongolia will form the core of this blockbuster exhibition.

Visitors will first enter a Victorian gaslit world to examine some of the first dinosaur bones to be discovered. They will watch Owen make his momentous announcement, surrounded by the fantastic and monstrous beasts that the Victorian scientist imagined from these remains.

Thence through a modern laboratory where the latest techniques are used to provide a more sophisticated means of reconstructing the past. Here the visitor is asked to help explain a mystery fossil discovered in East Devon that still puzzles scientists today; to admire a small furry creature, half rat, half shrew - the first mammal alive at the time of the dinosaurs.

Under a baleful, equatorial sun, the visitor emerges into the desert where the first dinosaurs lived. This ancient landscape is reconstructed with a nimble flesh-eating dinosaur from Wales, dwarfed by the complete skeleton of a lumbering plant-eater from South Africa, ancestor of the later giant brontosaurus. Displayed alongside, preserved in the rocks of the time, is the evidence of climate, and the diversity of plants and animals that fought for survival in that hostile, prehistoric world.

There will be a 'corridor of fame' in which twenty or so of the best known dinosaurs will be shown graphically to scale.

And last, the great dying. Two scientists and a heckler slog it out verbally as they debate the possible causes of the extinction of the dinosaurs. After dominating the world's landmasses for 160 million years, it took more than constipation to finish them off! Whether it was an asteroid impact or volcanoes that triggered it, we may never know - but we do know that the dinosaurs - and a host of other animals beside - gasped their last at a time of global change.

Tristram Besterman, Plymouth's City Curator said, "Following the immensely successful 'Treasures of the Armada' exhibition, 'Dawn of the Dinosaurs' will be the museum's biggest venture ever, which I expect to attract 200,000 visitors during its nine-month run. It will show that entertainment and learning can go hand in hand for all our visitors from youngest to oldest."

The exhibition will be open Tuesday to Saturday 10am - 5.30pm and Sunday and Monday 2pm - 5pm. Admission charges: adults £2.00; children (7 - 16 years) £1.00; pre-booked educational parties 50p; children under 6 years free.

Welsh Geology Week 4 - 14 July 1991

A wide range of geological activities - lectures, recreational walks, field excursions, exhibitions, industrial visits, and competitions - is being organised throughout the Principality during this ten-day 'week'. For the full programme, contact Zoe Moore, Department of Geology, University of Wales College of Cardiff, PO Box 914, Cardiff CF1 3YE. Tel. 0222 874000 ext.5092.

Irish Geology Day 28 September 1991

A day of geological events throughout the island. For details, contact Nigel Monaghan, National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2 Tel. 010 353 1 618811

Wot a Bargin!

The *Geological Curator/GCG Newsletter* Vol.1 No.1 to vol.5 no.5 (August 1990) complete, 43 issues in all, plus *Special Publication* No.1 £25 + postage or collect. Contact Tim Riley / Derek Whiteley, c/o Sheffield City Museums, Weston Park, Sheffield S10 2TP. Tel. 0742 768588.

Proceedings of the Geologists' Association

Like so many curators, my access to the geological literature is rather limited and can involve an hour-long car journey to the nearest university. It is also a problem which affects local amateurs, although they may find access to university libraries less easy. However, I know how rapidly journals build up at home and the problems of storing them, so recently I put an appeal in the *Geologists' Association Circular* asking if any members had journals they might happily donate to museums.

The response has been good, so if you would like a run or part run of the *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, please let me know as soon as possible - first come, first served. I will advertise runs of other journals as they become available in future issues of *Coprolite*.

Newish publications

Geology of the country around Falmouth. Memoir for 1:50000 Sheet 352 by B.E. Leveridge, M.T. Holder & A.J.J. Goode. H.M.S.O., London, 1990, x + 70pp. £12.50

Geology of the country around Bury St Edmonds. Memoir for 1:50000 Sheet 189 by C.R. Bristow. H.M.S.O., London, 1990, ix + 99pp. £13.00

Geology of the Northern Pennine Orefield. Volume 1 Tyne to Stainmore, 2nd edition, by K.C. Dunham. H.M.S.O., London, 1990, x + 299pp.

Graptolites. Writing in the rocks edited by D. Palmer & B. Rickards. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1991, 182pp. £39.50

The guide to resources in environmental education, 11th edition, by P. Berry & C. Lydford. The Conservation Trust, Reading. ISBN 0 907153 37 2.

Systematics. The study of biological diversity is the title of a leaflet published jointly by The Systematics Association, The Linnean Society and CAB International. Copies are available from The Systematics Association, c/o International Mycological Institute, Ferry Lane, Kew, Surrey TW9 3AF.

Microcomputers in palaeontology edited by D.L. Bruton & D.A.T. Harper. Contributions from the Palaeontological Museum, University of Oslo, No. 370, 105pp. ISBN 82 90915 02 0.

Dinosaurs. A global view by S.J. and S.A. Czerkas. Dragon's World, Limpfield, Surrey, 1990, 247pp. ISBN 1 85028 050 9. £25

Glossary of Mineral Species 1991 by M. Fleischer and J. Mandarino can be obtained (price £9 +p&p) from Endsleigh Book Co., Nanette Lowe's new company specialising in mineralogical literature. Her address is 'Endsleigh', 50 Daniell Road, Truro, Cornwall TR1 2DA Tel. 0872 223227. This is the latest edition of Fleischer's *Glossary* a standard reference for mineral names/formulae/references, and a handy checklist for the museum.

Geology conservation happenings

The February edition of *Coprolite* contained several pieces of information pertaining to geological conservation: mention was made of the proposed Training Schedule for Museum Geologists submitted to the Museums Training Institute by the GCG; Martin Warren in his summing up of the December meeting at York urged us to "exploit the urgency and excitement of the conservation movement"; and Mick Stanley gave an account of the launch of the Strategy for Earth Science Conservation in Great Britain. So now that your interest in geological conservation has been aroused, read on. The following is an account of yet another exciting development in geology conservation, now in its second year.

In October 1989, I was appointed to a new one year post of Geology Conservation Intern at the Horniman Museum, under the guidance of Louise Bacon, Head of the

Conservation Department. The post was funded by the Conservation Unit, the Curry Fund of the Geologists' Association, the Area Museum Service for South East England (AMSSEE) and the Horniman Museum. During the year, I worked with all three English Geological Conservators, Chris Collins (Leicestershire Museums), Adrian Doyle (Natural History Museum), and David Hill (Bristol City Museum and Area Museum Service for the South West), visited the other trainee geological conservator, Caroline Buttler (National Museum of Wales), and attended seminars and training courses of relevance, including a study tour of conservation facilities in Canada and attendance at the fifth annual meeting of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections. Conservation work and collection reports were undertaken for the Horniman Museum geology specimens and four AMSSEE museums were selected from those visited by Simon Timberlake, the AMSSEE Travelling Geology Curator, for a pilot scheme of fully-costed conservation work.

As a result of this first year of training, I was able to register as a part-time student for conversion of my Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies into an M.Sc. The thesis, written under the supervision of Geoff Stansfield of the Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, is entitled "Conservation problems encountered in geological collections".

A meeting of interested parties in August 1990 decided that my training period should be extended to two years, followed by three months of work as a geology conservator available through AMSSEE to its members and other museums. This second year has been funded by the Curry Fund and AMSSEE.

The first two months of the second year (up until the end of 1990) were spent on conserving specimens from two AMSSEE museums and in further training. The remaining ten months will be spent working at the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa, Canada. I am based in the Mineral Science Section under the supervision of Robert Waller, the Mineral Conservator. I will also be carrying out a research project which has involved one month at the Canadian Conservation Institute and a survey on mineral collections at the Geological Survey and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. The sixth annual meeting of the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections is being held in Ottawa in May and I have been coopted onto the local committee. I shall also be attending and teaching part of a two-week course on Preventive Conservation for Geology Collections to be held at Queens University in October. I have already attended a two day training course on the Conservation Information Network database and also intend to work with Gerry Fitzgerald, the Palaeontology Conservator. I shall return to the UK in November as a fully trained geological conservator and will be available to carry out conservation work for interested museums.

Geology specimen conservation should no longer be something to be left to one side or worse still, attempted in a do-it-yourself fashion. The field is now established and geology conservators have been properly trained. I urge you all, as geological curators,

to take advantage of the developments in geological conservation by planning preventative and specimen conservation programmes. Unless work is forthcoming, the geology conservation services already in existence and those planned for the future will not be able to operate and those people who lead the field in training schemes will have wasted a large amount of time, goodwill, and sponsors' money.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my grateful thanks to all those people and organisations who have assisted with my training, both as sponsors and as providers of training.

Kate Andrew, Geology Conservation Intern, Mineral Sciences Section, Canadian Museum of Nature, PO Box 3443, Station D, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 6P4, Canada.

GCG / Group for Education in Museums (GEM) Seminar Museums, education and earth sciences

Thursday 14 March 1991 at Haslemere Educational Museum

This was the first joint seminar of these two specialist groups. It was attended by 30 curators, education officers, teachers and interested members of each group.

The morning session of three talks was chaired by Kate Pontin of Leicestershire Museums and the first speaker was Hazel Moffat, from the Department of Education and Science, who has responsibility for education in museums. Hazel gave an introduction to and explained the content of the National Curriculum with particular reference to earth sciences, not only within the earth science attainment targets but also in a cross-curricular context within other sciences and more generally. Hazel suggested that teachers require ideas on how to teach earth sciences in an exciting way and how to progress through topics logically. She also commented that museum staff need to promote the use of museums for topics other than history.

The second contribution was from Peter Brannlund who is on part-time secondment to Royal Holloway and Bedford New College to develop resources to help teachers with earth sciences at Key Stages 3 and 4. Peter outlined some of the problems facing teachers and suggested that museum staff may be able to help them with these difficulties.

Some of the problems are:

1. Teachers don't know how long to spend teaching the earth science content. At Key Stage 3, 26% of the science curriculum statements are directly related to earth sciences;
2. The statements are very open e.g. 'describe the formation of rocks', and teachers need help in understanding what these statements mean.
3. Terminology
4. Lack of resources, particularly with specimens for experimental work. Teachers don't know where to get cheap specimens.

Museums could:

1. offer information sheets on where to buy/collect specimens.
2. motivate teachers and publicise geology.

3. show the relevance of geology in that it is part of our lives much more than any other science.

The morning session finished with Penny Hollow, Schools Link Officer at the Institute of Oceanographic Sciences, describing her work in this the first such post for a NERC research establishment. She explained that the Institute has for many years taken undergraduate students for work experience and given careers advice to sixth-formers, but now contacts are being made with secondary and even primary school children. An early project, with Haslemere Museum, which helped promote the Institute, the Museum and science, was a half-term series of talks/demonstrations on oceanographic topics. She suggested that museums, teachers and research institutions should be working together to improve interest in science.

After a buffet lunch and a chance to see around the Museum, John Cooper, Chairman of GCG chaired the afternoon session.

Kate Pontin began by giving the results so far of the survey she is carrying out to ascertain what museums are doing for earth science education. She is encouraged with the number of replies and by the eagerness of staff to do more. Her findings are not yet complete so we await a final report from Kate with interest.

Next Mary Tolan, Science Education Officer for Reading Museum Loan Service, outlined how the Service operates. Loan boxes are delivered and collected from schools in the county on a three week cycle. There are 2 technicians who carry out repairs and 3 officers, for science, art and history. Mary described some of the loan boxes she had brought along.

The last contribution was from David Curry of the Museum of St. Albans, who described educational activities run by the Museum. Recent projects aim to be cross-curricular, e.g. a Roman mosaic from Verulamium is used and various questions asked, such as: What is it made of? Where did the material come from and how? What is it used for and what has happened to it since the Romans? Other topics involve taking groups out of the Museum to look at buildings and ask what materials have been used, what have they been used for, and what influence has this had on the community.

In the discussion over tea all the speakers were thanked and several issues were raised and points agreed on, for example that teacher training colleges need to show teachers how to use museums and that there should be regional practical meetings of the two Groups where members demonstrate teaching aids and exchange work sheets. Finally it was agreed, unanimously, that a visit to a museum by a class of children, and a talk from a member of staff is a far better experience and more valuable than the teacher attending a seminar or the school borrowing loan boxes.

If anyone has any comments or suggestions please don't hesitate to contact me, Diana Hawkes, at Haslemere Museum, High Street, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 2LA Tel.0428 642112.

Celebrating the 15th Anniversary of Richard Owen's Dinosauria

Jumbo postcard: Richard Owen's dinosaurs: *Iguanodon*, *Megalosaurus*, and *Hylaeosaurus* (in colour) emerging from the quarry in Cuckfield, Sussex with Owen's original restorations on the skyline (sepia print). £33 per hundred, including VAT but not carriage. Recommended retail price 50p.

Commemorative poster (A3) in full colour: Richard Owen (1804-1892), palaeontologist, opening up his World of Prehistoric Life. As well as Owen himself and the original fossil of *Archaeopteryx*, there are 35 restorations in full colour of the animals on which he researched. £125 per hundred, including VAT, but not carriage. Recommended retail price £1.95.

Commemorative mug: Richard Owen's Dinosauria: *Iguanodon*, *Megalosaurus*, and *Hylaeosaurus*, original restorations in sepia, British Association, Plymouth 1841. £2.10 each, including VAT, but not carriage. Recommended retail price £2.99.

Contact: Jenny Halstead, The Red House, 85 Christchurch Road, Reading RG2 7BD. Tel. 0734 871613.

Green Coprolites

Members may have noticed that this year *Coprolite* has 'gone green', not only in its ink, but in its use of recycled paper. It is well known that recycled coprolites are good for the environment.

GJC Burhouse Limited

Quarby Mills, Tanyard Road, Oakes, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. HD3 4YP.
Tel. 0484 655675 Fax. 0484 460036 Telex. 517340

ISIS range of packaged ready to sell, gift products using:
Minerals / Gemstones / Rocks / Fossils



To receive our new illustrated ISIS - *Rock Shop* catalogue and / or to arrange a visit to our extensive showroom / warehouse write to the above address or ring 0484 655675 for an appointment.

**GCG Seminar PERTH MUSEUM 4-5 June 1991
BOOKING FORM**

I will be attending the field meeting on 4 June
I have/will need transport for the field meeting
I will be attending the seminar on 5 June
I would like details of local accommodation

From: Name.....Title.....

Address.....

..... Tel.....

Please return this section to Mike Taylor, Perth Museum and
Art Gallery, George Street, Perth PH1 5LB (Tel. 0738
32488) by 24 May 1991

**GCG Seminar PLYMOUTH
28 August 1991
BOOKING FORM**

I will be attending the seminar
I would like details of local accommodation

From: Name.....Title.....

Address.....

..... Tel.....

Please return this section to Mike Bishop, Plymouth City
Museum and Art Gallery, Drake Circus, PLYmouth PL4
8AJ (Tel. 0752 668000 ext. 4378) by 19 August 1991

GEOLOGICAL
CURATORS
GROUP



Affiliated to the
Geological Society of London
registered charity no. 296050