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**No. 50
June
2006**

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, email Tom.Sharpe@museumwales.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.

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

New members

GCG is pleased to welcome the following new members: **Amanda Valentine** and **Jana Horak**, National Museum of Wales.

Musical curators

Dave Unwin, Curator of Fossil Reptiles and Birds at the Natural History Museum at the Humboldt University in Berlin, will be joining the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester where he will begin work reinvigorating natural science training. One-time GCG stalwart, Simon Knell, remains head of department; at the Hancock Museum, **Eric Johnson**, formerly of the British Geological Survey has been appointed to work on the pack up of the geological collections and **Sarah Glynn** has been appointed Assistant Keeper of Geology.

Richard Wilding

GCG members will be saddened to hear of the death on 21 January of Richard Wilding. He was 83. Richard had been a GCG member for many years and was also active in the History of Geology Group.

Newish publications

The history of meteoritics and key meteorite collections: fireballs, falls and finds edited by G J H McCall, A J Bowden & R J Howarth, 2006. London: Geological Society Special Publication 256, 520pp. ISBN 1 86239 194 7, £95.00.

Bursting the limits of time. The reconstruction of geohistory in the Age of Revolution by Martin J S Rudwick, 2006. London: University of Chicago Press, xxiv + 708pp.

Cabinets for the curious. Looking back at early English museums by Ken Arnold, 2006. Aldershot: Ashgate, xii + 297pp. ISBN 0 7546 0506 X.

A companion to museum studies edited by Sharon Macdonald, 2006. Oxford: Blackwell, xx + 570pp. ISBN 1 4051 0839 8.

Jurassic Mary. Mary Anning and the primeval monsters by Patricia Pierce, 2006. Stroud: Sutton Publishing, xv + 238pp. ISBN 0 7509 4039 5, £16.99.

Agates. Treasures of the Earth by Roger Pabian with Brian Jackson, Peter Tandy and John Cromartie, 2006. London: Natural History Museum, 184pp. ISBN 0 565 09195 6, £16.99

Exhibitions 2006

Dino Jaws Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London 30 June 2006 — 15 April 2007

Dino Jaws at the Natural History Museum

A new temporary exhibition of animatronic dinosaurs opens at the Natural History Museum on 30 June. *Dino Jaws* includes ten new animatronic models from Japan, including *Tyrannosaurus*, *Iguanodon*, *Velociraptor*, *Coelophysis*, *Euoplocephalus*, *Oviraptor* and *Baryonyx*. The exhibition runs until 15 April 2007 and timed admission tickets cost £8.00 for adults, £5.00 for children, with a family ticket costing £21.00.

Agates. Treasures of the Earth

The Natural History Museum publishes the first popular guides to agates on 8 June. Written by Roger Pabian, an agates specialist and formerly a palaeontologist at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Brian Jackson, Head of Mineralogy at the National Museums of Scotland, Peter Tandy Curator of Mineralogy at the

Natural History Museum, and John Cromartie, a collector of Scottish agates it is fully illustrated in colour throughout and includes both an introduction to agates and a comprehensive guide to agates of the world.

Fossil, mineral and gem shows 2006

10-11 June Norwich Showground, Costessey, Norwich
17-18 June Newcastle Racecourse, High Gosforth Park, Newcastle upon Tyne
5-6 August Kempton Park Racecourse, Staines Road East, Sunbury
12-13 August Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells
2-3 September Newton Abbot Racecourse, Newton Abbot, Devon
9-10 September Newark Showground, Winthorpe, Newark
16-17 September Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset
21-22 October Kempton Park Racecourse, Staines Road East, Sunbury
28-29 October Margam Country Park, Neath Port Talbot

For further information contact Rock and Gem Ltd, PO Box 72, Maidenhead SL6 7GB tel 01628 621697 email info@rockngem.co.uk www.rockngem.co.uk

Missing *Coprolite*

There seems to have been some problem with the mailing of the last issue of *Coprolite* (No 49, March 2006). If you did not receive a copy, please let Tom Sharpe know and a replacement will be sent to you.

There are also some spare copies of back issues of *Coprolite* which are available to members free of charge. If you would like any of these, please contact Tom stating the issue numbers you require.
Tom Sharpe, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP tel 029 20 573265, email Tom.Sharpe@museumwales.ac.uk

***Coprolite* index**

This issue of *Coprolite* includes the first part of an index to issues 1 to 50. A second part will follow in a later issue.

Micro-mount Mineral Mission

Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery holds a small and much depleted (in other words lots of lost bits!) micro-mount mineral collection dating, apparently, from 1790-1801. It is part of the larger Sir John St. Aubyn mineral & herbaria collection.

We would be interested to hear from anyone with a vaguely contemporary micro-mount collection to compare notes, be generally nosey about and to make interested noises together! I've never seen similar material and am keen to see if other contemporary collections exist. If anyone would like more information, please get in touch (images of what I'm talking about are available).
Helen Fothergill, Keeper of Natural History, Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery, Drake Circus, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 8AJ tel 01752 304765, email helen.fothergill@plymouth.gov.uk

Nature Collected: an exhibition proposal

The broadest definition of natural history (as used by most museums) incorporates the study of zoology, botany, entomology, mineralogy, petrology and palaeontology. The collecting of natural history items has a long history and the motivations for their collection have varied from collector to collector.

This small touring exhibition, aiming to tour nationally, will be based around both specimens and display panels and will explore some or all of the following themes:

Natural history collecting through time (early museums, cabinets, Grand Tour etc)

Collecting for scientific study and the cataloguing of the natural world

Who were these collectors anyway?

Specimens and the decorative arts

Collecting, conservation and extinction

Ethics of collecting

It will be coordinated by Helen Fothergill (Keeper of Natural History, Plymouth City Museum), email helen.fothergill@plymouth.gov.uk; Kelly Dilks (Assistant Keeper of Natural History, Plymouth City Museum), email kelly.dilks@plymouth.gov.uk; and Matt Williams (Collections

Manager, Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution), email curator@brlsi.org

The focus of the exhibition will be on the 18th and 19th centuries with introductory panels on early collecting. Specimens within the exhibition will be split by subject/topic, with the display boards looking at the motivations of their collectors (not as individuals but in perspective of the ethics and views of their day).

Some collection material will tour with the exhibition and should include: mineralogy, palaeontology, vertebrate zoology (taxidermy and skeletal material), eggs, shells and corals, entomology, herbarium/botany (facsimile bound sheets). As well as handle-able items, a collection of Sawfish rostra to demonstrate over collecting and its detrimental effects and decorative arts (cameos, tortoise shell, polished stones/minerals, etc).

Graphic panels and labels will be designed in such a way that the host venue can easily add or subtract elements as required, such as spirit specimens which would be difficult to transport. Design templates will be provided with the exhibition.

We would like to gauge interest in such an exhibition and understand potential problems, pitfalls, requirements and opportunities. For example, should we aim to provide some display cabinets that can tour with the material? Should we provide basic education resources? (hardcopy or electronic?) What size of gallery would be the best to aim for? Would you add material / re-write labels to fit your house style?

If anyone would like to discuss any of the ideas further please contact any of the coordinators.

Heritage Lottery award for Dorset museums

Dorset County Council's Museums Advisory Service has been awarded a £50,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project called 'Supporting Jurassic Coast Museums'. Over the next two years, museums from Swanage to Exmouth will benefit from improved displays, more events, and better trained volunteers.

The aim of the project is to continue to attract new visitors and volunteers to the World Heritage Site and encourage life-long and family learning. The 95-mile stretch of Dorset and Devon's coast is the first natural World Heritage Site in England and was classified by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) in 2001.

The scheme will reflect the international importance of the site and help visitors understand and enjoy the area. The planned improvements include: supporting events aimed at attracting local people and tourists; training for volunteers actively working in the museums; providing new interpretative panels explaining the geological story of the Jurassic coast; and creating a volunteers pack with the geological story of the coast to help them inform museum visitors.

Dorset County Museum Adviser David Tucker, who led the bid, said, "It is great news that we've received this award from the Heritage Lottery Fund. We have some ambitious plans and will use the money so that our museums can emphasise why our coastline is so significant to local people and tourists. We're very excited about receiving this backing and have already started planning how the project will run over the next two years."

The money was awarded as a 'Your Heritage' grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Bids can only be made up to a maximum of £50,000, but the application is simpler and quicker than for larger grants, with decisions made in just three months. Further funding is now also being applied for from a variety of other sources.

Paul Leivers, head of cultural services at Dorset County Council, said, "It is crucial that we properly reflect the world-wide importance of the Jurassic coast and this grant will help us to do that. It will benefit visitors to Dorset, who will be able to find out much more about the World Heritage Site, and will provide first class resources to educate local school children and residents."

The principal partners are the museums of Dorset and East Devon, most of which are independent trusts, run by volunteers. In addition, the project will involve many other partners, including the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter; East Devon, Purbeck, and West Dorset District Councils; Weymouth and Portland Borough Council; and the South West Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

Forthcoming GCG seminars and workshops

Wednesday 14 June 2006 National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

GCG Workshop: The curation and conservation of rock collections

This one day workshop will cover basic identification, terminology, storage and conservation of rock collections, including useful resources on the web and in the literature. Each session will include a practical element, and handouts for future reference.

1000 Arrive and coffee

1030 Introduction

1045 Igneous rocks

1130 Metamorphic rocks

1215 Storage and tourstores

1300 Lunch (provided)

1345 rocks

1500 Tea

1515 and conservation

1600 Opportunities for further discussion or leave

Meeting fee: £10.00 (including coffee, tea, and lunch)

Please complete the booking form in the last issue of *Coprolite* and return it, with payment (cheques payable to GCG) **by 7 June** to Helen Kerbey, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NP tel 029 2057 3367 email helen.kerbey@museumwales.ac.uk

11 October 2006 World Museum Liverpool.

GCG Workshop: Geological archives

Practical workshop looking at some of the techniques used to conserve and store a variety of archive materials including modern documents, books, maps and prints, and photographs and slide collections.

For a final programme and details of how to book, contact: Tony Morgan, Natural History Centre, World Museum Liverpool, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EN tel 0151 478 4286, email tony.morgan@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

9-11 November 2006 World Museum Liverpool, Manchester Museum and Manchester University

GCG Study Visit

This year we have decided to undertake our study visit on home soil with the hope that this will encourage some more of you to sample what is on offer. There is great value in studying institutions in some detail with respect to their current practices and future direction in both collections management and public programmes, and we hope to continue this process throughout the UK as well as overseas. This year we are visiting World Museum Liverpool not only to look at recent redevelopments there but to have a good look around the facilities and collections and to meet staff. We will also visit the Manchester Museum and the School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Science at Manchester University. There will be an optional fieldtrip on Saturday 11 November.

Thursday 9 November 2006

0900 Arrival at World Museum Liverpool - coffee

0930 Welcome: John Millard, Keeper, World Museum Liverpool

0940 Introduction to the history of the museum and re-developments: John Millard (Keeper) and Sara Hilton (Head of Project Office)

1000 Tour of collections: Wendy Simkiss, Geoff Tresise and Tony Morgan. Palaeontology

1100 Tour of Mineralogy: Wendy Simkiss, Geoff Tresise and Tony Morgan.

1200 Tour of Petrology : Wendy Simkiss, Geoff Tresise and Tony Morgan

1300 Lunch

1400 Collections Management: Anne Fahy (Senior Registrar) and Claire Sedgewick (Registrar)

1500 Tour of displays and exhibitions including a visit to the Planetarium (Wonders of the Solar System)

1700 Visit ends

Evening: Travel to Manchester / pub

Friday 10 November 2006

0900 Arrival at The Manchester Museum - coffee

0930 Welcome: Professor Piotr Bienkowski, Deputy Director, Collections and Academic Engagement, Manchester Museum

0940 Introduction to the history of the museum and new developments. Piotr Bienkowski

1000 Tour of Palaeontology Collections: David Gelsthorpe

1100 Tour of Mineralogy and Petrology Collections: David Green

1200 Academic collaboration and research at The Manchester Museum: Phil Manning, Lecturer in Palaeontology and Research Fellow at Manchester Museum
1300 Lunch
1400 Visit to University School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences: Mandy Edwards
1500 Hour of displays and exhibitions
1700 Visit ends
To book, 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

**4-5 December 2006 City Museum & Art Gallery, Plymouth, Devon
GCG Seminar and 33rd AGM: Learning with geology collections**

One of the current buzzwords: *Learning* underpins the purpose of geological collections whether we like it or not. It may encompass school children digging up fossils and making plasticine volcanoes, a researcher re-assessing type specimens for a new treatise, an exciting and informative gallery or a systematic collection representing early scientific thought. Education in all its forms can be indirect or formal; traditional or new; exciting and innovative or methodical and personal.

The theme of this meeting will allow us to re-explore some of the old favourites we've been doing for years (but re-branded to fit new and popular directives) plus truly new and innovative approaches that might inspire you to re-examine the potential of your rocks. The meeting will be aimed at geological curators, education officers and non-specialist curators with responsibility for geological material.

Contact: Helen Fothergill, Keeper of Natural History, Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery, Drake Circus, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 8AJ tel 01752 304774 fax 01752 304775 email helen.fothergill@plymouth.gov.uk

Other meetings

4-8 September 2006 The Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde, Karlsruhe, Germany. The Sauropterygia: The first European Association of Vertebrate Palaeontology Themed Symposium.

Sauropterygian palaeontology, including preparation, conservation, display, etc.

Contact: Dr Leslie Noè, The Sedgwick Museum, Downing Street, Cambridge. e-mail lnoe01@esc.cam.ac.uk or see <http://eavp.alettra.de/>

24-25 November 2006 Dudley

History of Geology Group and GeoConservation Commission: History of Geoconservation

Through presentations and field visits, this conference will explore the themes of :

1. The origin of geoconservation (sites, landscapes, specimens, documents, art) when can it be argued that it first started?
2. The history of more formalised geoconservation in the British Isles (the efforts of government, academia, voluntary groups, societies and associations)
3. the history of international initiatives that have made an impact in the British Isles (World Heritage Sites, Geoparks etc)
4. A brief look at the current and potential role of geoconservation in contributing to social and economic well-being. In other words how will society benefit from geoconservation in the future? It is anticipated that the proceedings of the conference will be published by the Geological Society.

To offer a paper contact Cynthia Burek cburek@chester.ac.uk or Colin Prosser colin.prosser@english-nature.org.uk , or to offer a poster or register interest in receiving further details, please contact Hannah Townley at hannah.townley@english-nature.org.uk or 01733 455304.

Chairman: Mandy Edwards, Department of Earth Sciences, University of Manchester Manchester M13 9PL tel 0161 275 3825 fax 0161 275 3947 email mandy.edwards@man.ac.uk

Secretary: Matthew A Parkes, Natural History Division, National Museum of Ireland, Merrion Street, Dublin 2, Ireland tel +353 87 122 1967 email mparkes@museum.ie

Treasurer: Helen Kerbey, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10

3NP tel 029 20 573367 fax 029 20 667332 email Helen.Kerbey@museumwales.ac.uk

GCG website: <http://www.geocurator.org>