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Coprolite is compiled and produced by Tom Sharpe, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP (tel +44 (0)29 20 573265, fax +44 (0)29 20 667332, e-mail 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.

New members

GCG is pleased to welcome the following new members: **Sophy Crosby**, London; **Emma Louise Nicholls**, University College London; **Vicky Tunstall**, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke on Trent.

New GCG resources on-line

A wide range of resources from rock and fossil dealers to artists and suppliers is now available on the GCG website geocurator.org/res/res.htm. If you know of any other resources that would be useful please let me know and I can add them. There is a growing archive of information on collectors geocurator.org/arch/arch.htm. Copies of collectors' handwriting and biographies compiled by GCG in the 1980s form the start of a growing resource. Please let me have details of other collectors that would be useful.

David Gelsthorpe

Have you paid your subscription?

At the last AGM it was agreed that subscriptions should increase to the following levels:

UK personal subscription £15

UK institutional subscription £20

Overseas personal subscription £18 / US\$32 / €25

Overseas Institutional subscription £22 / US\$40 / €32

Invoices have been sent out to all members and it would be appreciated if these could be paid promptly. If for any reason you did not receive one, membership forms may also be downloaded from the website www.geocurator.org. Please let us know if any of your contact details change, so that journals and newsletters do not go to the wrong address.

Subscriptions unpaid by 1 August will be deemed to have lapsed. No further issues of the journal or newsletter will be sent out to members whose subscriptions are unpaid.

Standing Orders

Members who pay by standing order are asked to contact their bank to alter their payment to reflect the revised rates. Please advise me when you have done this, so that we do not have to contact you later in the year. All UK subscribers are encouraged to pay by standing order as it reduces administration costs and time. Details of the standing order scheme can be found on the website.

Gift Aid

As a charity, GCG can recover tax at a rate of around 28p for every £1 of the subscriptions it receives from UK personal members who are taxpayers. This costs you nothing, but allows us to claim £4.23 for every £15, thus keeping subscriptions lower than otherwise. This declaration only needs to be signed once and is then valid for all subsequent years. If you haven't ever signed a declaration, please download the form from the internet, sign and return it to Cindy Howells.

JISCMail

All members are encouraged to join up to this mailing list, which can be accessed from the homepage of our

website. It enables us to send out information about meetings, as well as allowing members to circulate items such as job adverts, requests for information, and help with specimen identifications.
Cindy Howells, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, CF10 3NP email cindy.howells@museumwales.ac.uk

World Museum wi-fi

World Museum Liverpool has recently installed a wireless hotspot, covering the Fair Trades Shop, Coffee Shop and Atrium (all on the ground floor). Visitors can obtain a free voucher containing a password from the Fair Trade Shop staff, which will enable free internet access for visitor's with suitably-equipped Wi-Fi enabled devices, such as laptops, PDA's or Smart-Phones". Wi-fi access comes in blocks of 1, 3 or 8 hours.

Advertise in *Coprolite* and *The Geological Curator*

Would you like to advertise your business or products through the newsletter and journal of the Geological Curators' Group? To advertise in *Coprolite*, a full page advertisement costs just £100.00; a half-page £60.00. Sponsorship packages are also available for both publications. For further details contact Mike Howe, tel 0115 9363105 email mhowe@bgs.ac.uk

Newish publications

Hugh Miller: stonemason, geologist, writer by Michael A. Taylor, 2007. Edinburgh: NMS Enterprises Limited, 176pp. ISBN 978 1 905267 05 7, £12.99.

Bonanzas and Jacobites: the story of the Silver Glen by Stephen Moreton, 2007. Edinburgh: NMS Enterprises Limited, 94pp. ISBN 978 1 905267 08 8, £9.99.

Whatever is under the Earth. The Geological Society of London 1807-2007 by Gordon L Herries Davies, 2007. London: The Geological Society, xiii + 356pp. ISBN 978 1 86239 214 4, £25.00.

Myth and geology edited by L Piccardi and W B Masse, 2007. London: The Geological Society, 360pp. ISBN 978 1 86239 216 8, £90.00.

Land of mountain and flood. The geology and landforms of Scotland by A McKirdy, J Gordon and R Crofts, 2007. Edinburgh: Birlinn, x + 324pp. ISBN 1 84158 357 X, £30.00

New Hugh Miller biography

Hugh Miller: Stonemason, Geologist, Writer by Michael A. Taylor (Principal Curator of Vertebrate Palaeontology in National Museums Scotland) was published by NMS Enterprises Limited on 5 April 2007 at £12.99 (contact publishing@nms.ac.uk 0131 247 4083) for further details).

Born in Cromarty in 1802, Hugh Miller, self-educated stonemason turned bank worker, rose to become editor of *The Witness* newspaper. Scathing, lyrical and penetrating by turns he condemned injustice and abuse wherever he saw them attacked the Highland Clearances, and supported the freedom of the Church of Scotland. Miller's writings on making the best of one's life inspired Scots from John Muir to Andrew Carnegie.

A fine geologist, Miller brought many to the joys of science helping to convince worried Victorians that geology was not an unchristian science. Although critical of pre-Darwinian evolutionary notions, Miller asserted that the scientific evidence in the rocks was truth as valid as that in the Bible.

This new biography quoting generous chunks of Miller himself, covers his full range from stonemason through geologist and editor, to husband and father, and reveals the man of whom Professor Sir Archibald Geikie said: 'He clothed the dry bones of science with living flesh and blood.'

New website for Bolton Museum

Bolton Museum has recently launched a brand-new website. The aim was to meet the highest standards of accessibility rather than focusing on flashy graphics and gimmicks. The project was funded by the North West Hub. Staff plan to update collections sections with at least one new article in each section every month. Online exhibition content should also be rolled out in the forthcoming months. If you want to have a look at the site, in particular the revamped geology content, the address is <http://www.boltonmuseums.org.uk>

David Craven, Bolton Museum and Archive Service email david.craven@bolton.gov.uk

Fossil, mineral and gem shows

16-17 June 2007 Newcastle Racecourse, High Gosforth Park, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

4-5 August 2007 Kempton Park Racecourse, Staines Road East, Sunbury on Thames, London.

11- 12 August 2007 Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells, Mid Wales.
8-9 September 2007 Newark Showground, Winthorpe, Newark, Notts.
15-16 September 2007 Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.
22-23 September 2007 Newton Abbot Racecourse, Newton Abbot, Devon.
20-21 October 2007 Margam Park, Neath, Port Talbot.
27-28 October 2007 Kempton Park Racecourse, Staines Road East, Sunbury on Thames, London.

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

Monument Fellowships from the Museums Association

You may have read in *Museums Journal* about the new Monument Fellowships from the Museums Association. These are post-retirement fellowships to enable retired professionals to pass on unrecorded collections knowledge to successors and the wider museum community.

The MA and MLA both hope that this new initiative will be of interest to all specialist groups, as well as to Subject Specialist Networks in receipt of Renaissance funding. There is a requirement that all fellows undertake to spend some of their time working with the wider museum community. Specialist groups could be an excellent vehicle for this and we will particularly welcome applications that have the support of an SSN or specialist group.

Although the closing date for the first round applications is 1 June 2007, there will be a second round of applications next year. Full information is available at www.museumsassociation.org/monument. The MA is happy to discuss proposals informally or to advise on eligibility.

Contact: Helen Wilkinson, Policy Officer, Museums Association, 24 Calvin Street, London, E1 6NW 020 7426 6954

Get your back numbers here

The Manchester Museum holds the early back numbers of the *Geological Curator* and these will be joined in the summer by the rest of the stock which currently resides in Dublin. Together these boxes of back numbers of the journal will take up most of a room in the museum. The back issues have been held very generously, at Manchester, for about 10 years now, after an initial temporary move.

After consideration by GCG Committee, we are offering you a once-only chance to purchase any back copies you might wish, for the price of postage, but orders must be in before 1 September 2007. During September we will complete the process of digitising all of the back issues of *Geological Curator* and will make them available on our web site (www.geocurator.org). Any remaining excess back issues will then be recycled.

We have a complete run of the journal in the GCG archive and we believe that the national museums and libraries hold complete sets as well. Now is your chance to complete your set of the journal. Here are a few selections of the contents through the years:

1976 (Special publication No 1) Proposals for a national scheme for geological site documentation by John Cooper and Michael Jones then at Leicester Museum

1982 A review of the first State and Status Report by Thomas Greenwood published in 1888 complete with 12 rules to keep in mind when visiting a museum and 17 reasons why every town should have a museum

1988 *Chirotherium* – the first finds at Storeton Quarry, Cheshire and the role of the Liverpool Natural History Society

Please address any requests for back numbers to: Mandy Edwards, SEAES, University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL tel 0161 275 3825 email Mandy.Edwards@manchester.ac.uk

GCG Seminar Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, Glasgow 9 May 2007

I think it helped that the sun was shining and the sky was blue but my first impression of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum was the scale and beauty of its red sandstone exterior. The building was originally opened in 1901, one of the last of the great Victorian civic museums. The interior of the museum is

classically simple with an east and west wing leading off from the central halls. These central halls are huge and full of light. I think the ground floor central hall was bigger than the hall at The Natural History Museum in London, and in Glasgow they have a Spitfire to greet the visitors! The basement has been converted from being an area of stores and workshops to an area for temporary exhibitions, a large café and an education wing with lecture and meeting rooms. All of the collections not on display are now stored in the Glasgow Museums Resource Centre (GMRC) a publicly accessible storage facility sited on the south side of the city. Our meeting took place in one of the new lecture rooms in the basement. GCG members had come from Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England for what proved to be, as usual, a stimulating and thought provoking day. There were three speakers from the staff at Kelvingrove: Sue Latimer, Richard Sutcliffe and Alistair Gunning.

Sue Latimer, Senior Education and Access Curator, explained the philosophy underpinning the redevelopment of the galleries and how these principles had been informed by numerous public surveys. It had been a very brave programme to change the way that the galleries were laid out partly brought about by the fact that in the old galleries less than 30% of visitors to Kelvingrove went upstairs to look at the impressive art collection. One of the key opinions revealed in the surveys was that the new displays should be thought provoking. So the idea was developed that the galleries would not be subject based but would focus on telling a particular story on one aspect of an object. The stories are not aimed at experts but aim to inspire and engage visitors with little expert subject knowledge. Even an expert should be able to find something surprising and fresh in the juxtaposition of key objects as well. The design of the exhibits reflect a set of Generic Learning Outcomes and endeavor to be succinct, move from general to specific ideas, repeat key information, really sell the key messages, use simple language but not simple ideas and really sock it to them!

Richard Sutcliffe, Research Manager, Natural History, reported on the nature of the mammoth task that managing the redevelopment of the galleries had been. All of the permanent staff and the temporary staff employed for the duration of the project were managed by a small team to oversee the stories as they were developed and enable communication between the various key professionals, particularly designers and curators. This role was partly undertaken by 4 research managers responsible for Art, History, Technology and Natural History. The Research managers had 4 key aims - To underpin interpretation of the collections with the best current knowledge (this meant allowing curators to spend time with their collections so that they knew and importantly understood what they had in their collections), to develop and support research relating to the collections, to provide the widest possible access to information about the collections and to become a centre of excellence.

Alistair Gunning, Geology Curator, spoke to us about his role in the project and the geological collections held by Glasgow museums. There are between 40-50,000 fossils, with 650 type and figured specimens, 8000 minerals and 3000 petrological specimens. There is a strong Scottish emphasis to the collections highlights of which include Carboniferous invertebrates, Ordovician-Silurian graptolites and Carboniferous plants from the Scottish coalfields. There are 8 geological stories in the galleries, mostly in the Creatures of the Past gallery, but geology is included in 2 other stories - What is Beauty and Looking at Art. All of the curators had to learn to compromise and not be too precious about the stories the objects under their care would be telling. The amount of space devoted to geology in the new galleries is as large as it was in the old displays thanks in part to the central role that geology can play in many stories.

It would take a full day to see all of this museum properly, a luxury we did not have, but some of the stories that struck a note with me included an impressive AV show using a real Botticelli painting to explain the development of perspective drawing in art; a story showing mediaeval helmets and comparing them with various types of armour used by the animal kingdom and a great display of trace fossils, not just footprints but invertebrate trails as well. As the labels are very brief, no more than 30 words on each, there is a study centre and reading room on the 1st floor to help people who want to find out more. This area is staffed by curators, so expert advice is always on hand.

After our gallery wanders we reconvened and had time for questions and discussions. The final question of the day was - Would you do it again? The answer from our hosts was a unanimous "No! But it was good to have been involved!"

You should visit: Glasgow is easy to get to by train or plane and you could time a visit to include the Hunterian Museum which reopens at the end of May with new displays. Would I recommend a visit to Kelvingrove? Absolutely; they are to be applauded for creating a lively, exciting museum that fits in with their city.

Mandy Edwards, University of Manchester

Forthcoming GCG seminars and workshops

12 June 2007 National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff

GCG Training: Understanding and identifying Carboniferous fossil plants

This training session will be led by Dr Chris Cleal, Head of Vegetation History Section, National Museum of Wales. The day will begin with a look at the different modes of preservation of plant fossils and what they can show us, followed by a more detailed examination of the major type of fossil plants found (lycophytes, calamites, sphenophylls, ferns, pteridosperms and cordaites) and the criteria that are used to identify them, as well as understanding diagnostic features and uses in biostratigraphical or vegetational analysis. Finally, there will be practical exercises on identifying fossil plants from the collections at NMW.

The final programme and costs will be distributed by email (through the JISC Mail "GeoCurators" mail list)...so make sure you are registered to find out more.

For further information 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

4-6 October 2007, Dorset Museums, Attractions and the Jurassic Coast (Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site)

GCG Study Visit and Field Trip

This year our plans are to visit the Dorset area to look at local museums, fossil shops and the Jurassic Coast World Heritage site. The 95 mile long site starts at Orcombe Point near Exmouth in East Devon and ends at Old Harry Rocks near Swanage in East Dorset. The site consists of Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous cliffs, spanning the Mesozoic Era, documenting 180 million years of geological history. The Jurassic coast was the first natural World Heritage Site to be designated in the United Kingdom. Not only does the area contain a number of unique geological features (Lulworth Cove, Chesil Beach etc.), but it is also famous for its historical figures such as the 19th Century Lyme Regis fossil collector Mary Anning, and as a result, museum collections reflect the richness of the palaeontology within the area.

The study visit will be over three days from Thursday 4th – Saturday 6th October 2007. We have plans to visit a number of museums, fossil shops/workshops and sites during the visit. There will also be the opportunity to attend a short session on "fossil acquisition and the management of palaeontology sites" led by Richard Edmonds, Jurassic Coast Project Officer. Field work is planned for Saturday 6th but there may be opportunities for short field visits during the previous two days. It is probable that we will base the visit from Lyme Regis. Costs and final details will be circulated to interested parties once they are confirmed.

Outline Programme

Thursday 4 October

Visits to Bridport Museum, Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, and Portland Museum, where there will also be opportunities to look at stored collections. Evening meal.

Friday 5 October

Morning Seminar : Fossil acquisition and the management of palaeontology sites – with staff from the Jurassic Coast Project. Location to be confirmed.

Lyme Regis Philpot Museum (to be confirmed)

Dinosaurland – Museum and Fossil Shop

Lyme Regis Fossil Shops and workshops

Evening meal with local collectors and a chance to view recent finds.

Charmouth Fossil Shops and Workshops.

Saturday 6 October

Field Trip - Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre - Field trip led by Richard Edmonds, Jurassic Coast Project Officer.

For more information 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

7 November 2007 Natural History Museum, London

GCG Training: Identification, Care and Conservation of Sub Fossil Bones

Sub fossil bones are usually found in mixed geology collections and can be some of the most difficult objects to care for. If you have a geology collection in your care, chances are there are some sub-fossil teeth, bones, tusks or antlers in your collections, and some will probably be incorrectly identified. So, take the

chance to find out about them from one of the UK's leading experts on sub fossil bones, Dr Andy Carrant, Curator of Fossil Mammals at NHM, and find out how to ensure that they will last in your collections for generations to come with Chris Collins, Head of Conservation in the NHM Department of Palaeontology. This is a whole day training session and places are limited so book early to avoid disappointment.

Programme

0930 Arrive and Coffee
0955 Welcome
1000 Overview of British Late Pleistocene fossils and localities, including offshore and inland.
1100 Identifying late Pleistocene fossils – practical exercises
1230 Lunch and viewing of stored collections
1400 Conserving sub-fossil bones – common problems and practical solutions – preventative and interventive techniques.
1530 Coffee/Tea
1545 Sub-fossil bones and research – sampling techniques and the impact of conservation procedures.
1615 Conclusions and discussion
1630 End

For further details and to register interest 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

3-4 December 2007 Natural History Museum, Dublin, Ireland GCG Seminar and 34th AGM: Local Heroes

To commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Geological Society of London, the 150th anniversary of the Natural History Museum in Dublin and as a frontrunner event for the International Year of Planet Earth in 2008, the seminar will adopt the theme of Local Heroes which the Geological Society is promoting throughout 2007. We invite members to offer presentations, both oral and posters, on their own geological heroes. Whilst the organisers will address some Irish geological heroes, we encourage offers of contributions on any geological collectors and curators who have made a significant impact on our science. We would anticipate that the focus of any contributions will relate to collections or museums, in keeping with GCG's purpose. It is planned to include a celebratory field visit to Mount Jerome Cemetery, where many important Irish geologists were buried. All contributors will be asked to submit their paper for Geological Curator.

12-13 May 2008 Geological Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London A joint meeting between the Geoscience Information Group and the Geological Curators' Group: Exploiting geoscience collections

CALL FOR PAPERS

Geoscience collections (records, samples and digital data) are a key resource for research of all types. The compilation, management and exploitation of these resources are fundamental to a wide range of work. The conference aims to bring together the users and custodians of geoscience collections of all types to explore in detail the nature of the material being collected, how it is selected for long-term preservation, how collections are documented using metadata (collection-level descriptions), the way in which potential users can discover the information, and the ways in which this information is exploited and reused to advance science.

Contributions addressing the conference themes are welcome from both the users and custodians of geoscience collections. Case studies illustrating the successful exploitation of collections in which users and custodians worked closely together are particularly welcome. A general focus will be on exploiting collections to further knowledge of climate change, biodiversity and sustainable resource use.

Papers are sought that address the following themes:

- Discovery of geoscience resources
- Curation for exploitation
- The application of existing collections to address new issues
- Building long-term bridges between distributed collections
- Preparing geoscience collections for INSPIRE
- Case studies on the successful exploitation of geoscience collections

Abstracts of no more than 400 words for oral presentations and subsequent published paper should be submitted to Jeremy Giles by no later than 1 October 2007. Abstracts for posters should also be sent to the

same address by the same date.

Convenors: Garry Baker, Jeremy Giles, Mike Howe and Leilani Smith

Contact: Jeremy Giles, National Geoscience Data Centre, British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham NG12 5GG, tel +44 115 936 3220 email jrag@bgs.ac.uk

Other meetings

27 August-1 September 2007 Faculty of BioMedical and Life Sciences and the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow

55th Symposium of Vertebrate Palaeontology and Comparative Anatomy & 16th Symposium of Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation

Full details can be found at the website www.svpca.org/years/2007_glasgow/index.php or contact the organiser, Jeff Liston (jliston@museum.gla.ac.uk)

10-12 September 2007 Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London

Geological Society Bicentenary Conference: Earth sciences in the service of society

Contact: Alys Johnson Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BG tel +44 (0)20 7434 9944 fax +44 (0)20 7439 0579 email bicentenary@geolsoc.org.uk

22-24 October 2007 SECC, Glasgow

Museums Association Conference

Contact: Conference Office, Museums Association, 24 Calvin Street, London E1 6NW tel 020 7426 6940 email lorraine@museumsassociation.org

9-13 November 2007, Isle of Wight and London

History of Geology Group: Bicentennial conference, field trip and dinner

9-11 November 2007 Walk with the Founding Fathers: fieldtrip

In an area of outstanding importance for the foundations of our science, this excursion will enable participants to understand the practical difficulties that our forefathers experienced 200 years ago as they tried to make sense of what they saw in the field. It will focus on Thomas Webster, the Geological Society's first salaried officer, whose well-patronised fieldwork on the Isle of Wight in 1811-13, and major paper published by the Society in 1814, first unravelled its stratigraphy and tectonics, interpreted its fossils in palaeoecological terms, and thereby extended to an international level the earlier research of Cuvier and Brongniart on the Paris Basin. The trip will also briefly cover the work of the next generation of geologists, such as Charles Lyell and Gideon Mantell, which included the interpretation of what were later called dinosaurs.

Field Leaders: Professors Martin Rudwick and Hugh Torrens, both of whom have wide knowledge of the contribution made by early nineteenth century workers to the history of British geology.

12-13 November 2007 Talk with the Founding Fathers: conference

The conference will focus on the achievements of the Society, the founders, and some of its members and their activities over the past 200 years. It will cover three themes: the status of geology in comparison to other sciences in the UK and to geology in other countries around 1807; the foundation and founders of the Society; and the first 100 years.

12 November 2007 Dine with the Founding Fathers

A dinner will be held in the Connaught Rooms, which now incorporates the Freemasons' Tavern where the Geological Society was founded. A plaque commemorating the founding of the Society will be unveiled.

For further details **contact:** Cherry Lewis, email cherry.lewis@bristol.ac.uk

Chairman: Mandy Edwards, School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental 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: John Nudds, School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL. tel. 0161 275 7861 email: john.nudds@manchester.ac.uk

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