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**No. 60  
November  
2009**

*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.

### **Notice of Annual General Meeting**

Please note that the 36th AGM of the Geological Curators' Group will be held at the Great North Museum, Hancock, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4PT on Monday 30 November 2009 at 1615. Nominations for the posts of Officers and two Committee Members must be made by two members of the Group and submitted in writing to Matthew A Parkes, Natural History Division, National Museum of Ireland, Merrion Street, Dublin 2, Ireland tel +353 87 122 1967 email mparkes@museum.ie **by Monday 9 November 2009.**

### **2010 subscriptions**

Subscriptions for 2010 are due on 1 January. From December 2009, Cindy Howells, GCG Membership Secretary, will be invoicing members who do not pay by standing order for next year's subscription (rates will remain the same at £15 for subscribers based in the UK and £18 for overseas subscribers), but cheques sent to her now will be gratefully accepted and will help reduce postage costs. Please return the form on page 15 with your cheque, payable to the Geological Curators' Group, to: Cindy Howells, Department of Geology, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff CF10 3NP.

### **New members**

GCG is pleased to welcome the following new members: **Hilary Ketchum**, Natural History Museum, London; **Gordon Neighbour**, Cornwall; **Dennis Gamble**, Leicester.

### **Charles Copp**

GCG members will be saddened to hear of the recent death of Charles Copp who was Assistant Curator of Geology at Bristol City Museum and a GCG member back in the late 1970s and who was very active in developing databases for site documentation and later in the Nature Conservancy Council Geological Conservation Review work.

### **Musical Curators**

**David Craven**, Collections Officer at Bolton Museum is now working with Renaissance Northwest in a regional collections development role, and took up his new post at the end of October; **Richard Bevins**, formerly Keeper of Collections Services at the National Museum of Wales has been appointed Keeper of Geology at the museum.

### **Coprolite at 60**

You may have noticed that *Coprolite* has now reached its diamond jubilee with this, the 60<sup>th</sup> issue. *Coprolite* was first issued in February 1990 when John Cooper took over as GCG Chairman from Mick Stanley. The Committee, under Mick, was concerned about slippage in the publication of *Geological Curator*. As a result, members were not receiving sufficient notice of our forthcoming meetings, so it was felt that a regular newsletter would better keep members up to date with news and notices, while *Geological Curator* developed more as a journal. During 1989, I was asked to prepare a draft newsletter for discussion at Committee. As the previous incarnation of *Geological Curator* had been the *Newsletter of the Geological Curators' Group*, it was felt that, to avoid confusion, we couldn't use the same name, and so early drafts had the working joke title of *Coprolite*. At the Committee meeting in late 1989 when we finally decided to go ahead with its publication, I asked what we should call our new newsletter. No-one could think of another name, and so *Coprolite* it became, by default. The subtitle of *Droppings from the Geological Curators' Group*

was an addition by Monica Price at Oxford who laid out the early issues for the printer. This subtitle was not well-received in some quarters (*cf.* issues no 1 and 2), at least until issue no 16 (February 1995). Monica continued to prepare the camera-ready copy up to and including issue no 27 (November 1998), when I finally had suitable software available to me. Monica also contributed significantly when she persuaded the mineral dealer Clinton Burhouse to sponsor the newsletter which he did for many years.

Since the beginning, *Coprolite* has been printed in Nottingham by Barnes Print (formerly Barnes & Humby) who also distribute the issues to the membership. GCG Committee decided that the most efficient method of distribution was to have the copies sent direct from the printer, rather than relying on the editor or any Committee member stuffing envelopes in their spare time (and hence increasing the potential for delay). The staff at Barnes Print, especially Hugh Barnes in the early days and Rob Hurst more recently, do a great job and have always been extremely helpful and efficient.

*Coprolite* was always meant to be ephemeral – read, and then binned (sorry - recycled), and from issue no 5 (May 1991) has itself been printed on 100% recycled paper. It was also intended only for personal, but not institutional, members. However, a number of institutions seemed to think that they were entitled to it as part of their subscription (they weren't) and when, of course, the copyright libraries asked for issues to be sent to them, Committee decided that it would be sent to institutional subscribers as well. So *Coprolite* became more of a formal publication than it was ever intended to be. It has never had an ISSN as we never planned it to run for long.

*Coprolite* has never been a fancy publication – we can't readily print halftone illustrations, for example – but we have made use of colour, at least in our ink. You may (or not) have noticed that the ink colour changes from year to year, in a regular pattern of blue, green, maroon, and finally a nice coprolitic brown. Individual shades may vary, and I do have to issue a belated apology for issues 40 to 42.

With the development over the last few years of the GCG website and the Geocurators JISCMail list, perhaps the need for *Coprolite* may have diminished somewhat. Members can now get their GCG news more regularly and access the meetings programme more readily than ever before. Committee have discussed several times whether *Coprolite* should come to an end or be issued only as an electronic version, but it seems still to fulfill a need and it looks like a paper copy will continue for the foreseeable future. So *Coprolite* will continue, but this is my last issue as Editor. After editing 60 issues totaling 1000 pages over the last 20 years, I feel it is time to pass the editing pen on. I've enjoyed producing the newsletter from its inception in 1990 and I wish the new editor (to be elected at the Newcastle AGM) every success.

Finally, I'd like to record my thanks to Monica Price, the staff at Barnes Print, and of course, to all GCG members who have contributed their news and meetings reports over the last 20 years.  
Tom Sharpe, National Museum of Wales

### **Newish publications**

*The making of the Geological Society of London* edited by C.L.E. Lewis and S.J. Knell, 2009. Geological Society Special Publication 317, xii + 471pp. ISBN 978 1 86239 277 9, £120.00.

*Archaeopteryx. The icon of evolution* by Peter Wellnhofer, 2009. Munich: Verlag Dr Friedrich Pfeil, 208pp. ISBN 978 3 89937 108 6 €58.00.

*Vesuvius: a biography* by Alwyn Scarth, 2009. Terra Publishing, 352pp. ISBN 978 1 903544 25 9, £24.95.

*Remarkable creatures* by Tracy Chevalier, 2009. HarperCollins, 352pp. ISBN 978 0 00 717837 7, £15.99.

*The fossil hunter. Dinosaurs, evolution and the woman whose discoveries changed the world* by Shelley Emling, 2009. Palgrave Macmillan, xiii + 234pp. ISBN 978 0 230 61156 6, £15.99.

*Pioneers of the Earth sciences* by Gerald Cooray and Deryck Laming, 2010. Terra Publishing, 416pp. ISBN 978 1 903544 24 2, £24.95.

*The Anatomical Record*, volume 292, issue 9 (September 2009) is a special issue entitled *Unearthing the anatomy of dinosaurs*. It is available online, free to download, at [www.interscience.wiley.com/journal/ar](http://www.interscience.wiley.com/journal/ar)

### **Mary, Mary...**

This autumn saw the publication of two new books about Mary Anning, the Lyme Regis fossilist. One is a novel, *Remarkable creatures* by Tracy Chevalier, the author of *Girl with a pearl earring* and the other, by Shelley Emling, is *The fossil hunter. Dinosaurs, evolution and the woman whose discoveries changed the world*, intended as a more factual biographical account. Leaving aside the issue of whether or not you think a novel should make use of real people and events, *Remarkable creatures* is an enjoyable read, especially if you are familiar with the people and the places involved, and if you bear in mind that it is a novel. Coincidentally, another Mary Anning novel (by Joan Thomas) is due out next year.

*The fossil hunter* by Shelley Emling relies heavily on earlier publications, especially those of W D Lang. It covers ground already published in, for example, Patricia Pierce's *Jurassic Mary. Mary Anning and the primeval monsters* (2006, Sutton Publishing) and in Thomas Goodhue's *Fossil hunter. The life and times of Mary Anning 1799-1847* (2004, Academica Press). According to the dustjacket, "Shelley Emling returns Mary Anning to her deserved place in history". This is more than a little presumptuous. Although intended as factual, there are places in the book where you might think that you are, in fact, reading a novel. There is a wonderful description of Henry De la Beche turning up at Mary's house in his "pantaloons and high-waisted jacket", clutching a brown paper parcel which he unwraps to reveal *Duria Antiquior* while Mary makes him a cup of tea! The author does preface this tale with a statement that "there is no firm account as to what happened", but this is just one example in this book of where history is being made up. William Daniel Conybeare, we're told, first met De la Beche in the Assembly Rooms in Lyme (did he?). And apparently the courts gave De la Beche custody of his two daughters after his wife ran off with another man. The courts showed remarkable prescience as it was to be another eight years before his second daughter Rosie was born. I could go on, but won't.

North Americans seem to have a particular fascination with Mary Anning (Chevalier is from Washington DC, Emling is a New York-based journalist, Goodhue is based in Amityville, Joan Thomas is in Manitoba and I think Pierce is also from the colonies). However, if you want the facts about Mary Anning the only really reliable sources are Hugh Torrens' 1995 paper in the *British Journal for the History of Science* (28, pp.257-284) and his *Dictionary of National Biography* article on her. At least until Hugh publishes the definitive biography....

Tom Sharpe, National Museum of Wales

### Exhibitions 2009-2010

*Darwin: a revolutionary scientist* National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff

*Darwin the geologist* Sedgwick Museum, Downing Street, Cambridge

*Simple Beginnings: The Story of Evolution* Bolton Museum until 7 Nov 2009

*Dinosaurs in your garden* Abergavenny Museum 11 January-18 April 2010

### Fossil, mineral and gem shows 2009-10

**14 November 2009 Sussex Mineral Show**, Clair Hall, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath 10.00-16.30. Admission £2.50 (adults) 50p (children). [www.smls.org.uk](http://www.smls.org.uk) tel 01424 870402

**21-22 November 2009 Rock 'n' Gem Show, Brighton Racecourse**, Freshfield Road, Brighton Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00 [www.rockngem.co.uk](http://www.rockngem.co.uk)

**28-29 November 2009 Rock 'n' Gem Show, Margam Country Park**, Neath Port Talbot Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00 [www.rockngem.co.uk](http://www.rockngem.co.uk)

**23-24 January 2010 Rock 'n' Gem Show, The Hop Farm** (near Tonbridge), Beltring, Paddock Wood, Kent Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00 [www.rockngem.co.uk](http://www.rockngem.co.uk)

**30-31 January 2010 Rock 'n' Gem Show, Chepstow Racecourse**, Chepstow, Monmouthshire Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00 [www.rockngem.co.uk](http://www.rockngem.co.uk)

**6 February 2010 Fossil Roadshow - Prehistoric Monsters, Museum of Canterbury**, Stour Street, 10.00-16.00. Family fun/fossil identification day. Discover evidence of prehistoric 'monsters' - from mighty dinosaurs, to mammoths, crocodiles and creatures of the deep! See and touch amazing fossils, take part in the dino dig and free prize quiz, listen to monster stories and enjoy a range of fun, hands-on activities. With a free fossil/mineral for the first 50 children. *Age 2 to adult*. Special entry today only, £1 for all visitors. Please note there is an additional £1 charge for the Children's Activity Zone to cover the cost of materials.

**13-14 February 2010 Rock 'n' Gem Show, Newton Abbot Racecourse**, Newton Abbot, Devon Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00 [www.rockngem.co.uk](http://www.rockngem.co.uk)

**20-21 February 2010 Rock 'n' Gem Show, York Racecourse**, York, North Yorkshire Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00 [www.rockngem.co.uk](http://www.rockngem.co.uk)

**6-7 March 2010 Rock 'n' Gem Show, Brighton Racecourse**, Freshfield Road, Brighton Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 10.00-16.00 [www.rockngem.co.uk](http://www.rockngem.co.uk)

### Bob King's *Minerals explained*

Readers of *Geology Today* will be familiar with the long-running series *Minerals explained*, written by one of GCG's founder members, Dr Bob King. The latest issue of *Geology Today* (volume 25 no 5, September/October 2009) contains the fiftieth article in this series, begun by Bob in 1985 in the first issue of that magazine. Throughout these 50 articles, Bob has dealt with a wide range of minerals, describing not

only their nomenclature, structure, chemistry, genesis and use, but also their curation. This latest article, on the olivines, is also Bob's last as he has decided to retire (again!). The series forms a valuable reference set which should be available to every geological curator. It would be good to see them collated and published together as a single volume, if that would be possible.

### **Hancock under review**

If you plan to attend GCG's AGM this year at the Great North Museum, Hancock, Newcastle upon Tyne, before you go take a look at the October 2009 issue of *Museums Journal* (pages 52-55). Sara Selwood, an independent consultant, gives the new displays an enthusiastic review. Our AGM seminar on 30 November and 1 December will give us an insight into this major project and how this success was achieved.

### **GCG Moulding and casting workshop BGS Keyworth, 12-13 May 2009**

After a welcome by Dr Richard Hughes, the Director of Information and Knowledge Exchange within the British Geological Survey (BGS), Mike Howe gave an introductory talk exploring the ethics of moulding and casting of geological materials, principally fossils. Whilst the MA Code of Ethics broadly supports production of replicas and casts, there are potential pitfalls. These include making sure the museum visitor is not misled by displaying casts without making it clear, and hopefully not disappointing them either, if the real specimen is not on display. In particular, loan conditions that restrict preparation of casts and moulds must be adhered to, and also clearly spelled out for borrowers. Careful assessment of specimens is needed to prevent damage through any replication process.

A double act presentation by Caroline Buttler and Annette Townsend of the National Museum of Wales followed. They speedily examined the different media available and the reasons for choosing one versus another. A very useful sample pack of the various materials was included for each participant. These contained plaster, epoxy resins, jesmonite, latex etc and a detailed list of suppliers and prices of the materials and accessory equipment.

We then headed to our first practical session where Sue Martin of BGS first addressed Health and Safety issues and then gave a demonstration of making a one piece mould in silicone rubber. We then each selected one of the fossils and equipment sets to complete our own. This was all very well explained, with good back up printed instructions, and plenty of well organised and prepared materials to work with.

Before lunch an additional tour of the BGS corestore was squeezed into the programme, with the sheer scale of the collections making a big impression, even on those who had visited before. Lunch, as with all the catering of tea and coffee and biscuits was well above average standards, with diverse options and plenty of it at a very reasonable cost. Interestingly, BGS have their catering as an in-house operation, rather than an external caterer with the concession, as most museums seem to operate.

The next presentation by Mike Howe looked at basic issues for moulding in the field. If the project objectives define moulding in the field as the best solution then the questions of access, permission, geological conservation status (is it an SSSI?) and risk assessments for H&S must all be addressed. A particular project that BGS have completed, to mould and cast some important Precambrian fossils from the Charnwood Forest was used as an example of these issues and how they were approached.

A brief case study of this BGS project was then presented by Sue Martin looking at the real problems encountered and the solutions applied to achieve some excellent results, making casts (which were also shown to us) of fossil material which is at risk. Where landowner sensitivities are involved, the importance of having contingency plans to 'contain' publicity and if necessary respond to adverse public reaction was emphasised.

Another brief field moulding case study presented by Caroline Buttler may be familiar to readers of *Geological Curator* (Vol 6 No 10, 373-376) but the update on subsequent disintegration of the large foundered block and its trackway was a salient reminder of the value of such projects. A cautionary note was sounded though in relation to space requirements for large casts such as trackways.

The last session was the NMGW double act again looking in more details at replicas. These fell into four categories: for exhibition; for research; for conservation record and for educational use. Annette's examples included exotic fish catches, which probably pleased those present with responsibility for natural history responsibilities rather than solely geological collections. It also highlighted the importance of different techniques such as the material choice, dyes and especially painting to achieve the desired result for

exhibition purposes. Also covered were the need for taking casts of specimens subject to destructive research processes like serial sectioning, and those susceptible to pyrite decay or other deterioration, as a conservation record. A valuable conclusion reminded us that replicas may also be made as models rather than as casts. Examples included *Lepidodendron* whole plant reconstructions and wax models of *Cooksonia*.

Reverting to the practical lab, Sue Martin demonstrated making a plaster support for the silicone mould, in order to provide a stable support before a cast can be taken. More fun was had by all getting messy with plaster. For the evening, the group enjoyed a very good buffet meal in the Plough in Normanton.

On the Wednesday morning we started the day dabbling with plaster again – this time each making a cast from the mould and its support that we had worked on the day before, it having set hard overnight. An additional visit to the Geological Survey Museum gave an opportunity to check for specific things of interest for some, or just to absorb some of the vital historic significance of the collection, outlined briefly by Mike Howe.

We then set off for a field visit to Charnwood Forest to see some of the sections discussed in the case study of BGS recent work here. This was an important part of the workshop in bringing home the practical issues brought up in the presentations. It amplified the value of the work done, having seen the quality of the casts in the lab with their detail, and comparing to near invisibility of the Precambrian fossils in the field. There were several private discussions between individuals over the merits of the strategy adopted by the landowners to prevent future damage (by restricting knowledge of and access to a public terrain). Clearly though, Mike Howe and his BGS team have steered a difficult project to success in this case, in partnership with Natural England and the landowner. A fine packed lunch was had, supplemented by tea/coffee in the cafe run by the landowner, since a wild wind was blowing us off the open ground.

On return to BGS, Mike Howe gave a brief presentation on loans. Most specimens loaned by museums have conditions applied restricting preparation of moulds and casts, and these should be applied rigorously to prevent potential damage to unstable specimens. In these days, when we increasingly need to justify our very existence to funding bodies, the area of intellectual property rights is also significant. Conditions on loans to ensure moulds and casts are returned should be the norm.

Overall, I really enjoyed this workshop, and I think that everyone who participated will have gone away equipped with both knowledge and confidence to tackle a wide range of moulding and casting projects. Thanks are due to the BGS team (especially Sue Martin, Mike Howe, Louise Neep, Mark Dean, & Paul Shepherd) and Caroline Buttler and Annette Townsend of NMW for an excellent workshop.

Dr Matthew A Parkes, National Museum of Ireland

### **'Sea Dragons of Avalon' - Strode Theatre, Street, Somerset**

This excellent three day meeting incorporated an informal get-together in honour of Arthur Cruickshank, as well as a more formal Palaeontological Association Review Seminar, and also a day in the field.

Thursday 30 July saw a gathering of over 40 palaeontologists, curators, collectors, preparators and miscellaneous others, to celebrate the long and distinguished career of Arthur Cruickshank. The event was kept secret from him until the last moment, and it seemed to come as rather a shock that so many people were present in his honour!

A buffet lunch was followed by a small presentation of various, and mostly, informal gifts, then two sessions of short but diverse and interesting talks by Mike Benton, Simon Carpenter, Adam Smith and David Norman, followed by Mike Taylor, Richard Forrest, Richard Edmonds, John Hudson and Tom Kemp. The afternoon was well rounded off with the cutting of the cake – an exceptional replica of the famous plesiosaur - *Thalassiodracon hawkinsi*.

For those who don't like to be away from real fossils too long there was a real treat upstairs, with various displays put on by Simon Carpenter, Paddy Howe and Chris Moore. The star of this display for me was an ichthyosaur prepared by Chris, showing a large section of preserved skin, as well as the fine detail at the edges of the paddles. The local Gillett Collection of marine reptiles from Street was opened especially for us, and a steady stream of visitors was ferried to and fro in a minibus and cars!

Later in the evening ichthyosaur expert, Ryosuke Motani, from the University of Toronto spoke to an audience of around 200, both public and professionals, and managed to entertain all with 'Street's symbol: The Ichthyosaur – two centuries since its discovery'.

The Palaeontological Association Review Seminar day attracted around 100 delegates who enjoyed a

fascinating programme of 9 talks, taking in local geology and marine reptiles, as well as Triassic/Jurassic invertebrates, fish and tetrapods, which seemed to cover almost all interests.

Unfortunately the lovely weather experienced over these two days was not enough to dry out the sites planned for the field-trip, and with rain threatened for the weekend, the organisers re-scheduled the trip to take in Lyme Regis, Charmouth and Chris Moore's workshop! I believe that almost 30 brave souls ventured forth on the Saturday to experience the best of western Dorset.

In all, this was a very varied and interesting seminar, held in a town which has long associations with geology. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet and share views with other like-minded geologists from all aspects of the profession.

Cindy Howells, National Museum of Wales

### **Conserving Geodiversity in a changing climate.**

#### **A seminar convened by the Geoconservation Commission of the Geological Society and the UK Conservation agencies.**

**4 June 2009. Burton Manor (University of Chester), Burton, Cheshire**

This seminar was called to consider the best options for conserving geodiversity in a changing climate. Around 80 people attended the meeting, most being Geoconservation practitioners from the national conservation agencies, RIGS groups, Geology Trusts, geodiversity academics, conservation bodies and other organisations.

After the usual welcome and introductions from the hosts, Dr Colin Prosser outlined the programme and the objectives for the day. The seminar and the associated workshops were to be the start of a process that would eventually lead to the development of a United Kingdom Geodiversity Action Plan (UKGAP). Keynote speakers would introduce areas of concern, which would be covered in more detail by the participants during afternoon workshop sessions.

The main areas to be discussed were:

The impacts of climate change and how they will affect sites that are valued for their geological and geomorphological interests.

The implications for the future management of sites.

How geomorphological processes in the wider landscape will adapt under this changing regime.

The Keynote speaker was Paul Bowyer, Science Officer for the United Kingdom Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP), a government funded body established in 1997. Bowyer outlined what UKCIP is doing to model, measure and predict the effects of climate change on a range of activities in the UK. These themes include not just conservation, but also economic and financial services, transport, planning and resources.

The second session was titled *The Potential Impacts of Climate Change*. In this section we were introduced to some of the possible effects in three areas:

Conserving Biodiversity in a changing Climate (John Hopkins, Natural England).

Social and Economic Changes (Alison Darlow, Natural England).

Changing physical processes (John Gordon, Scottish Natural Heritage).

These speakers introduced some of the issues we would discuss in the afternoon workshop sessions. Each attendee had to choose two out of four topics (each workshop ran twice). These were:

Exposure sites (including quarries).

Active processes in the wider landscape (coasts, rivers etc).

Integrity and finite sites (caves, karst, fossil landforms, mine dumps).

Soils.

Each workshop had to answer the following:

What are likely to be the direct impacts of climate change on sites and Geodiversity?

What are likely to be the impacts of human responses to climate change on those sites?

What are the conservation responses and adaptation strategies required to manage the site resource?

What are the evidence gaps that need to be filled in order to understand the likely impacts of climate change and to develop strategies to manage and conserve geodiversity of sites under a changing climate?

As you would expect from such a diverse group of participants, the answers and ideas from the workshops varied greatly. Better public education and communication about climate change and its possible effects were some of the main themes that were mentioned in all the reports from the workshop sessions. From a

geological perspective, mention was made of increased opportunities for collecting. This could come about as new exposures develop due to possible storm surges and increased erosion – especially at coastal sites; and as new mineral species develop on mine tips and areas exposed to increased weathering. The need to support museums as storehouses of material and data, and for their role in education also got a mention, although all of these themes may have got precedence in one workshop attended by four current or former geology curators.

In summing up, Colin Prosser (NE) promised that all of the points raised during the day would be circulated as an official report, and will be used when drawing up the plans for the UKGAP. There was also a need to make the rest of the scientific community aware of the work earth scientists are doing and to make links to those working in biodiversity, not only as these aspect is more developed than the earth science version, but also as we need to consider whole system in future planning.  
Tony Morgan, Clore Natural History Centre. World Museum Liverpool.

### **Meeting Report: Vertebrates and Preparation**

The 57<sup>th</sup> annual Symposium of Vertebrate Palaeontology and Comparative Anatomy (SVPCA) and 18<sup>th</sup> Symposium of Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation (SPPC) were held jointly with the 69<sup>th</sup> Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP) annual meeting in Bristol from 23-26 September 2009. This was the first time SVP had been held outside North America, and the combined meeting was huge with around 1,200 delegates travelling from across the UK and all over the world to attend.

The meeting provided an exceptional opportunity to catch up with the latest research in vertebrate palaeontology as well as palaeontological preparation and conservation techniques. The meeting offered extended networking opportunities for all those who attended, although sometimes finding the person you were looking for amongst the crowds was a bit of a challenge! The format of the meeting was very much that of an SVP, with 8am starts; three parallel sessions at any one time; dedicated early evening poster sessions; displays by artists, publishers, model makers, museological companies and individuals; an auction; a prize giving; and an after hours party.

GCG was represented by a number of ordinary and committee members. A special edition of the Geological Curator will run many of the papers resulting from the pre-meeting 'adhesives seminar' and the preparators session of the main meeting, both of which were informative and enjoyable – we look forward to seeing these in print.

Next year, SPPC and SVPCA will take place in Cambridge and will revert to the more usual format. Bursaries are available to attend SVPCA or SPPC for those with no institutional financial support courtesy of the 'Jones Fenleigh Memorial Fund' (the JFMF, administered by the Palaeontological Association). Details of the meeting and how to apply to the JFMF will appear early next year (see <http://preparator.org/> and <http://www.svpca.org/>). The 2010 SVP meeting will take place in Pittsburgh, *Pennsylvania* at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, with details available from the SVP web site as they become available.  
Leslie Noè, Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum

### **Forthcoming GCG seminars and workshops**

*Check our website [www.geocurator.org](http://www.geocurator.org) for updates to our seminar programme*

**30 Nov–1 Dec 2009 Great North Museum, Hancock, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4PT**

#### **GCG AGM and seminar: The Great North Museum : Hancock – the inside story!**

The Hancock Museum closed its doors to the public on 23 April 2006, to be transformed into a world-class visitor attraction as part of the £26 million Great North Museum project. The project was led by Newcastle University in partnership with Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, The Natural History Society of Northumbria, The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne and Newcastle City Council.

The new Museum brings together the North East's premier collections of archaeology, natural history, geology and world cultures under one roof. It incorporates collections from the original Hancock Museum, and Newcastle University's former Museum of Antiquities and Shefton Museum.

The creation of the Great North Museum: Hancock is part of the wider Great North Museum project involving the redevelopment of the Hancock Museum itself, the management of the Hatton Gallery and the development of The Great North Museum Resource Centre at Discovery Museum.

This seminar will outline the development of the entire project. It will look in detail at the planning and decant of the museum, the building work and the exhibition fit-out, and of course the new resource centre. There will be a guided tour of the museum (including the new fossil and mineral displays), a planetarium show, and a visit to the resource centre.

### **Programme**

#### **Monday 30 November**

- 1030 Arrival and Coffee
  - 1100 Welcome to the Great North Museum: Steve McLean, Senior Manager
  - 1105 The Great North Museum project – outline of the development: Steve McLean, Senior Manager, GNM
  - 1145 Decanting and “re-canting” the collections: Joanne Anderson, Storage Project Coordinator.
  - 1215 Conserving the collections and preparing them for display: Rachael Metcalfe, Conservation Officer, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.
  - 1245 Lunch (A buffet lunch will be served at the Museum)
  - 1400 The interpretation strategy and consultation programme: Gillian Mason, Interpretation Coordinator, GNM
  - 1430 Multiple contracts – managing the interactive developments and model makers: Sarah Glynn, GNM Manager
  - 1500 The new GNM learning programmes – using a new resource: Roy Bearpark, Stephen Kelly and Becca Morgan (GNM Learning Team)
  - 1530 Branding, Marketing and Opening: Caireen Hart, Communications Officer Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
  - 1600 Tea
  - 1615 GCG 36th AGM
  - 1715 Tour of Museum with Steve McLean and Sarah Glynn
  - 1815 Close
- There will be an opportunity to attend an evening meal.

#### **Tuesday 1 November**

- 1000 Visit to the GNM Planetarium – View “Dawn of the Space Age”. As the Planetarium can only seat 25 guests, we will probably require 2 shows. Delegates can therefore take some more time to look around the museum when they are not in the Planetarium.
- 1200 Lunch at Local Pub (payable on the day)
- 1330 Visit to GNM Resource Centre (Discovery Museum) and tour of collections stores. Joanne Anderson and Steve McLean
- 1530 Meeting Ends.

Meeting fee: £15 (includes tea/coffee and lunch on 30 Nov)

To book your place please complete the booking form on page 15 and return it, with payment, to Steve McLean, Great North Museum: Hancock, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT **by 20 November**.

### **11 May 2010 British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham**

#### **GCG workshop: Digital imaging for geological collections**

Contact: Mike Howe, British Geological Survey, Kingsley Dunham Centre, Keyworth, Nottingham

### **28 June–3 July 2010 London**

#### **Third International Palaeontological Congress**

#### **GCG Seminar: Symposium on collecting, curation and conservation of palaeontological collections**

This GCG seminar will take place within the third meeting of the IPC which is being held at Imperial College and the Natural History Museum, London. IPC is a major international meeting held once every 4 years under the auspices of the International Palaeontological Association. The meeting provides a showcase for all that is exciting and new in the fields of palaeontology and palaeobiology. IPC3 in 2010 is hosted by the Palaeontological Association and partner organizations. The full meeting programme will comprise field trips, plenary lectures, workshops, contributed talks and posters, and thematic symposia. A conference dinner will be held in the Central Hall of the Natural History Museum. For more information go to [www.ipc3.org](http://www.ipc3.org)  
Contact: Dr Sarah Long, Department of Palaeontology, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD tel 0207 942 5558 email [s.long@nhm.ac.uk](mailto:s.long@nhm.ac.uk)



**23-24 July 2010 Strode Theatre, Street, Somerset**

**GCG Seminar: 200 years of West Country Sea Dragons**

Following on from the highly successful PalAss review seminar 'Sea Dragons of Avalon', GCG have teamed up with three of the meeting organisers to run a similar event to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Thomas Hawkins, the eccentric collector of Street and Lyme Regis marine reptiles. It is anticipated that the meeting will take place on Friday 23 July 2010 followed by a field excursion on Saturday 24 to some of the modern Lias quarries in the Street area. The meeting will focus on Thomas Hawkins, his collections, legacy, and modern collecting. Topics will include current locations and state of Hawkins's specimens, including issues of acquisition, mounting methods and conservation as well as restoration/forgery. We will investigate Hawkins's life and work, his contemporaries, and Hawkins's (metaphorical) heirs – the modern collectors, preparators and curators, as well as site conservation.

Contact: Dr Leslie Noè, Curator of Natural Science, Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum, Millennium Point, Curzon Street, Birmingham B4 7XG email.Noë@thinktank.ac tel202 2327 fax 0121 202 2337

**Late September 2010 Cambridge**

**GCG Workshop and Seminar jointly with SVPCA and SPPC**

Contact: Lyall Anderson, Department of Earth Sciences, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3EQ tel 01223 333417 email land07@esc.cam.ac.uk

**October 2010 Field Museum, Chicago**

**GCG study visit**

There is a proposal for a visit to the Field Museum in Chicago. More details to follow, but it would be help us to gauge interest if expressions of interest could be sent to Helen Fothergill.

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

**7-8 December 2010 Ulster Museum, Belfast**

**GCG seminar and AGM**

This meeting will include an opportunity to explore the Ulster Museum, closed and emptied in September 2006, reopening in October 2009, with state of the art displays throughout.

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

**Chairman:** 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

**Secretary:** David Gelsthorpe, Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL tel 0161 2752660 fax 0161 2752676 email david.gelsthorpe@manchester.ac.uk

**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