COPROLITE

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DROPPINGS FROM THE GEOLOGICAL CURATORS GROUP

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Notice of Annual General Meeting

Please note that the **39th Annual General Meeting** of the Geological Curators' Group will be held at **Leicester Museum on Tuesday 4th December 2012 at 4:15pm.** Nominations for the posts of Officers and two Committee Members must be made by two members of the Group and submitted in writing to Helen Kerbey, National Museum Wales, CF10 3NP email hkerbey@museumwales.ac.uk. By 13th November 2012.

Proposed changes to GCG Constitution

At this year's AGM in Leicester on 4 December 2012, GCG Committee plans to propose a number of changes to our constitution which was last updated in 1996. They are mainly administrative changes, relating to Committee posts and to the requirement to seek approval for constitutional changes from the Charity Commission. The proposed revised constitution will be placed on the GCG website shortly. If you wish to receive a hard copy of this document, please notify the Secretary.

PROPOSED GEOLOGICAL CURATORS' GROUP CONSTITUTION

1. Name

1.1 The name of the Group shall be the Geological Curators' Group.

1.2 The Geological Curators' Group is affiliated to the Geological Society of London.

Definitions

2.1 In this Constitution:

"**The Group**" means " the Geological Curators' Group".

"**The Committee**" means "the Committee of the Geological Curators' Group".

"**Individual Member**" means any person who has requested to be a Member of the Geological Curators' Group and who has paid the annual subscription.

"**Institutional Member**" means any organisation which pays a subscription to receive the Group's journal.

3. Aims

3.1 The purpose of the Group shall be to advance the education of the public in geology in particular by improving the standard of geological curation and by improving displays and information in public museums and other institutions.

3.2 In furtherance of the above objectives but not further or otherwise the Group shall have the following powers:-

3.2.1 to hold meetings of persons and bodies concerned with the subject for the exchange of advice and information;

3.2.2 to survey collections and draw up a code of practice to ensure that they are maintained and presented to the best advantage;

3.2.3 to further the documentation and conservation of geological sites;

3.2.4 to conduct surveys for the promotion of the aims of the Group;

3.2.5 to do such other lawful things as may from time to time be necessary.

4. Membership

4.1. Membership of the Group is open to all with an interest in, or responsibility for, the collection, conservation and interpretation of geological specimens and information and/or the conservation of geological sites.

4.2 All members, with the exception of Honorary Members, shall pay an annual subscription.

4.3 Honorary Membership of the Group may be conferred at the discretion of the Committee with the approval of the Annual General Meeting.

5. Committee

5.1 The management of the Group shall be vested in a Committee consisting of a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Programme Secretary, Minutes Secretary, Editor of the journal, Editor of the newsletter, Collections Officer, Web Officer, and three Committee Members. The Committee may in addition co-opt for a specified period, up to four non-voting members, one of whom shall normally be nominated by the Natural Science Curators' Association (NatSCA) as their representative.

5.2 Officers and Members of Committee shall be elected annually. The Chairman will serve for not more than three consecutive years in that capacity and Members of Committee for not more than three consecutive years.

5.3 Officers and Members of Committee for the ensuing year shall be elected at the A.G.M. of the Group, when those present shall vote by means of a ballot on a list of candidates each of which shall have been nominated by at least two members of the Group; such nomination having been received by the then Secretary, in writing, at least 21 days prior to the A.G.M.

5.4 A member of the Committee shall represent the Group on the Science Committee of the Geological Society.

5.5 The Committee shall have the power to fill casual vacancies as they occur.

5.6 The Committee, of whom four or one-third of the members, whichever is the greater shall form a quorum, shall meet when summoned by either the Chairman, the Secretary, or the Treasurer, or any three members of the Committee, three weeks notice in writing being given.

5.7 The Committee shall have the power to make Bye-Laws and Regulations consistent with the Constitution.

6. Annual General Meeting

6.1 The Annual General Meeting (at which ten shall be a quorum) shall be held in the period of November to January.

6.2 The right to vote at an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting shall be restricted to Individual Members and Honorary Members.

6.3 Institutional Members shall not be entitled to vote.

7. Finance

7.1. The Group shall incur no financial obligation chargeable to the Geological Society.

7.2 The Treasurer of the Group will be responsible for the keeping of proper accounts and at least once a year, normally at the Annual General Meeting, will present a Balance Sheet for the inspection of Members. This Balance Sheet will have been examined and its correctness ascertained by two Auditors appointed at the A.G.M.

7.3 All cheques drawn on the Group's account must be signed by at least two members of the Committee.

8. General

8.1 The Group shall not take any action which may conflict with the terms of the Charter and Bye-Laws of the Geological Society.

9. Amendments to the Constitution

9.1 The Group may amend any provision in this constitution provided that no amendment may be made that would have the effect of making the charity cease to be a charity at law; no amendment may be made to alter the objects if the change would undermine or work against the previous objects of the charity; amendments to the Constitution can be made only at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting specifically convened for this purpose. Members must be notified of the proposed changes, in writing, at least 21 days prior to the date of the meeting. Changes to be approved by a simple majority. A copy of any resolution amending this Constitution shall be sent to the Charity Commission within twenty-one days of it being passed.

Committee news

After being on asked to temporarily fill the role of Programme Secretary Jeff Liston has had to step down due to moving abroad. Many thanks to Jeff for (slightly unwillingly) taking on this role over the last year. This leaves us without a Programme Secretary. If you are interested in joining the Committee (in any role) please contact the Secretary helen.kerbey@museumwales.ac.uk. Members attend three meetings a year, mostly in London, and work on preparing meetings and workshops, our publications, and helping geological collections in need of care.

Musical Curators

Neil Turner, Keeper of Geology at Wollaton Hall, Nottingham has retired and **Adam Stuart-Smith** has been taken on as Collections Access Officer (Natural History) **Peter Crowther**, Head of Natural Sciences at National Museums Northern Ireland has retired. **Paul Smith** is now Director of the Oxford Museum of Natural History. **Sue Martin** is retiring from BGS after 10 years as Conservator. **Jon Clatworthy** is now Director of the Lapworth Museum of Geology, Birmingham. **Simon Harris** has joined **Michela Contessi** and other BGS staff on the JISC GB/3D online type fossils project at Keyworth, and **James Jepson** is working on it in Cardiff. **Dean Lomax** and **Alistair Bowden** are working on an Esmée Fairbairn Foundation funded project at Doncaster Museum. **Jeff Liston** is now off to the Moravské Zemské Museum in Brno, Czech Republic, followed by the Yunnan Key Laboratory for Palaeobiology, Yunnan University, China, to set up a new vertebrate palaeontology lab. **Alan Bowden**, formerly Head of Earth and Physical Sciences and Curator of Geology at National Museums Liverpool, has taken voluntary severance during the

most recent round of staff cuts and has left NML. This leaves **Wendy Simkiss** (Assistant Curator) as the only Geology Curator at NML. She also has responsibility for the Physical Sciences collections and the Horology collections. **Jon Radley** is now Curator of Natural Sciences at Warwickshire Museum since the old post of Keeper of Geology has been deleted.

Stan Wood

Members will be saddened to hear of the death of Stan Wood in September 2012. Stan was a largely self-taught fossil hunter with a list of impressive discoveries to his name. 'Lizzie' (Westlothiana lizziae) possibly the worlds oldest reptile is probably the most well known, though there were many more. Stan supplied many museums with specimens and also ran a shop "Mr Wood's Fossils" in Edinburgh (still in existence today). He appeared in several TV shows, one as Stan the Fossil Man.

Arthur Cruickshank

The palaeontologist Arthur Cruickshank, died in December 2011 aged 79. After time spent researching extinct amphibians in South Africa he took up a post with Leicestershire Museums in 1985. There he changed tack to work on the Jurassic plesiosaurs in the museums' collections and travelled the world making comparisons with plesiosaurs from Australia and elsewhere.

Fossil, mineral and gem shows 2012

3rd Nov Cheltenham Racecourse. Rock & Gem Show
17-18 Nov Brighton Racecourse. Rock & Gem Show
24-25 Nov Farnham Maltings, Farnham. Rock & Gem Show

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

10 Nov Haywards Heath Mineral Show. Sussex Mineral and Lapidary Society http://www.sussexmineralandlapidarysociety.org.uk/smlsshow.htm

Saturday 23 February 2013 Fossil Roadshow : Rocks to Riches
Beaney Art Museum and Library, High Street, Canterbury, CT1 2RA
Rock on down to the newly reopened Beaney Art Museum and Library in Canterbury to discover amazing rocks, minerals and fossils from Kent and around the world. Find out how they have been transformed into beautiful objects and items of jewellery. Investigate how geology has fuelled the growth of civilisation. Take part in fun hands-on activities including panning for gold. Event led by Canterbury Museums in partnership with the Oyster Coast Fossil Society, Medway Fossil & Mineral Society, Geoconservation Kent, the Sheppey Fossil Study Group and other local societies. 10am to 4pm Phone 01227 378100 www.thebeaney.co.uk Free entry.

Exhibitions past and present.

Sedgwick Museum Olympic Display

We have been very lucky to have been involved in the amazing Olympic and Paralympic games held in London this year. Working with Cambridgeshire Competes, a local partnership of museums and sports centres, the Sedgwick Museum put on a small display with a unique angle on the games, using our mineralogical collection to focus on some of the materials used in the sports.

On display we had the metal ores used to manufacture iron, titanium and aluminium, and examples of hydrocarbons used to create plastics and carbon fibre. We displayed the metals used to make the medals, including pieces of gold and silver, and we revealed some surprising facts about their composition. Also on display were some of the pieces of equipment used in the games, such as a discus, a shot put and a tennis racquet. We touched on how the museum's fossil collections link with the town of Wenlock in Shropshire, birthplace of the modern Olympic Games, with examples of fossils from the Silurian Wenlock Limestone and a new piece of artwork by Palaeoartist Bob Nicholls. Lastly, banners and photographs of Cambridgeshire Olympic and Paralympic athletes that were supplied by Cambridgeshire Competes were placed around the museum.

To complement the display we ran a successful hands-on Saturday family event in August. The event acted as an introduction to minerals, with visitors learning about different minerals in everyday life, and tied into the Olympic theme with visitors designing their own medals using the coloured streaks from various minerals, and posed doing various sports whilst being silhouetted in gold or silver paper.

We were also delighted to have had the special honour of hosting England's Paralympic flame on its journey to Stoke Mandeville to be united with flames from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, before the combined flame was taken to London for the start of the Paralympic Games. Contained in a miner's lantern, it was brought to the Sedgwick by former paralympic record breaking cyclist Dan Gordon. Visitors were invited to have their photo taken with the lantern, and also with an Olympic torch, in the museum's building stones gallery, which is usually closed to the public. The building stones come from over 60 countries taking part in the Olympics, which we highlighted with their flags.

The museum is still working hard to set up an exhibition space for the promotion of the research work taking place in the University's Department of Earth Sciences. The first exhibition will be based on research being carried out by Dr Tom Harvey on 500 million year old microfossils from Canada. These shed new light on the 'Cambrian Explosion' of ancient life.

Rob Theodore, Collections Assistant: Documentation and Display

Geology in Tate Britain

Two meteorites have been on display in the Tate Britain as part of an installation by Patrick Keiller. The Launton meteorite fell in Oxfordshire on 15th February 1830 and was described at the time by a local Doctor: "Its descent was accompanied with a most brilliant light, which was visible for many miles around, and attended with a triple explosion, which was described to me, by a person who heard it at the distance of four miles, as resembling the rapid discharge of three ordinary guns." It is on loan from the Natural History Museum. The second meteorite displayed fell in Yorkshire in 1795.

Geology in Artis Mundi

The international Art Competition Artis Mundi (held every two years at National Museum Wales) includes geological material this year. The exhibition has only just opened as this newsletter goes to press but contains an ichthyosaur and a number of trilobites as part of one of the installations.

Geological collections care in the West Midlands

The West Midlands Regional Geology Stewardship project was established in 2009 to offer advice and curatorial assistance to museums across the region that hold geological collections, but may not have geology or natural science specialists on staff. This three-year project has been funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, with an additional grant from the Geologists' Association Curry Fund. Based at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, initially Vicky Tunstall and subsequently Holly Sievwright have been working with staff and volunteers at more than 40 sites to offer advice, assistance and training in caring for geology collections.

Along with practical assistance with curation and producing a comprehensive database of West Midlands geology collections, one of the aims of the project was to preserve and improve knowledge of previous work on collections in the region. To achieve this, Vicky and Holly facilitated the centralisation of conservation records into a regional centre at the Lapworth Museum of Geology at the University of Birmingham. Jon Clatworthy, the museum director, prepared space for archival material relating to the assessment, conservation and curation of geological collections over the last 30 years. Much of this curatorial work was carried out by Rosemary Roden, a now retired regional peripatetic geological curator, and Kate Andrew, Principal Heritage Officer at Herefordshire County Museums Service, whose work has focused on specimen conservation and collections care. Both Kate and Rosemary identified material they wished to be held in the archive, including copies of reports and conservation records, photographs and documentation on displays, curation and conservation projects.

More information about the Regional Geology Stewardship project and the Archive for Geological Collections Care is provided on the website of the West Midlands Natural Sciences Curators Group, http://naturalsciencewm.wordpress.com/. Through the website, the group aims to promote and gather together information about natural science collections held at institutions across the region. It is hoped

that by developing knowledge and promoting the long term care of geology in the West Midlands we can reduce the risk of collections becoming neglected or forgotten. Moreover, this network of support will allow those caring for collections to feel more confident in curating and using natural science specimens for public displays and events.

Holly Sievwright, Assistant Collections Officer (Reginal Geology) The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

Requests for help and information

Dust off your fossil types..... the JISC funded GB/3D type fossils online project would like to visit you

The Geological Curators' Group is a partner in a JISC funded project GB/3D type fossils online (JISC was previously known as the Joint Information Systems Committee, and it runs the JANET computer network to which all .ac.uk domains belong).

Other partners include:

- British Geological Survey
- National Museum, Cardiff
- Oxford University Museum of Natural History
- Sedgwick Museum, Cambridge

Other collaborating organisations to date include the Natural History Museum, London and a number of local museums.

The ICZN and the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi and plants require that every species or subspecies of organism (living & fossil), should have a type or reference specimen to define its characteristic features. These specimens are held in collections around the world and must be available for study. Many of the UK type fossil specimens were first described over a century ago, and with the passage of time and the transfer and amalgamation of collections, their present location is uncertain.

The project partners are busy photographing all their UK macro-fossil type specimens, including close-ups and labels. In most cases they are also taking stereo-pairs for anaglyph production. They are laser scanning about 10% of the specimens to produce downloadable digital models. Please see the project blog for the background to the project and for some free downloadable digital models - http://gb3dtypefossils.blogspot.co.uk/ . Next year a web portal will be released, linking all the fossil registration details (including identification, locality, age, registration number, repository, etc.) to the images, stereo-anaglyphs and 3D digital models.

The Geological Curators' Group is now trying to track down the UK type macro-fossils held in other collections and museums around the country. We would like to visit as many collections as possible with our mobile cameras and laser scanner to

photograph and record all the available types, and make them available through the web portal. All the material will be clearly badged with the holding institution's logo, which will link to contact details and access information, thereby helping to open up the collection for worldwide study. At a time when collections are being increasingly required to justify their existence, this is a good way of raising their profile and demonstrating the international scientific importance of material they hold. All collections will be provided with copies of the photographs and digital models of their material to do with as they wish; the images and models on the web portal will be available for free download under a Creative Commons – Attribution – NonCommercial – ShareAlike licence.

We would like to hear from any museums and collections interested in joining the project. We also have a budget available to help cover the cost of the collection staff involved (£200 per day, on a first-come first-served basis). Please email me (GB3D-Fossils@bgs.ac.uk) with information about the types you hold, including the approximate number of specimens, or if you wish to receive further information. Where a collection has just a few types, and they are considered safe to travel, we would ask you to consider loaning the material to BGS for the work to be done in Keyworth. Please consider joining what is becoming a very exciting development.

Mike Howe, Project leader & Chairman GCG.

Predicting which specimens are likely to suffer from pyrite decay/oxidation – your help please!

Non-specialist curators often want to know which specimens in their geology collection are likely to suffer from pyrite decay so that they can keep an eye on them or, even better, round them up to provide a suitably low RH microclimate. It is easy enough to give general advice based on experience, but ideally there would be a definitive guide one could turn to that lists sites yielding specimens likely to be problematic if storage conditions are less than ideal.

Therefore I would like your help to put together some guidelines that could be published in the Geological Curator or somewhere similar. If you have had specimens decay badly please get in touch (see below) and give me the details. Also, tell me about sites and/or geological horizons that you know yield specimens that suffer particularly badly or easily from pyrite oxidation, even if you know of only a few examples. This includes minerals as well as fossils. A locality name is essential (as detailed as possible, but if all you have is 'Whitby area' that will do) and include as much stratigraphic information as you have. It would be useful if you could indicate the sort of material, i.e. 'ammonites' or 'marine reptiles' etc and (it is usually unlikely one would know the following) whether the pyrite decay is active only in the matrix surrounding the specimen, or only within the specimen, or both. Also, please send me references for all the papers you know of relating to pyrite decay.

Please ask ex-curators and other relevant colleagues for their input. The more people that contribute, the more reliable the end result will be.

I will put all the information together and will publish a list of sites known to produce particularly susceptible material. This would be a useful starting point for curators either wanting to round up material to put in better storage or those wanting to check targeted parts of their collection once a year. Many thanks for your help.
Nigel Larkin. Email: nrlarkin@easynet.co.uk

Thomas Sopworth—information please
I've been back in the UK again and on my quest to track the work of Thomas Sopwith (see GCG late 1970s). With changes in status of many U.K. Museums and universities over the years, I am finding that items such as his geological models have moved or comets light. If any curator has information about Sopwith boxed sets or even big models in their collection(and not already noted in earlier papers, see e.g. Turner & Dearman refs on Academia.com) then please would they get in touch with me at **sue.turner@qm.qld.gov.au** or join me at The Thomas Sopwith Appreciation Society on Facebook. Many thanks. **Dr Susan Turner FGS, FLS, Founder Member GCG**

Hugh Miller (1802-1856): ephemera and museum visit reports sought
Michael Taylor (mat22@le.ac.uk) and Lyall Anderson (euproops@aol.com) are writing an account of the dispersal, curation, and display of the collections of Hugh Miller. Miller was of course author of *The Old Red Sandstone* and much else, besides his work as an important newspaper editor, helping to found the Free Church of Scotland, banging the drum for self-help and hard work, and generally being one of the great Scots of his time. Thanks to Graham McKenna and Mike Howe of the British Geological Survey's library and curatorial staff, we have been able to obtain copies of (a) the leaflet for the second phase of the public appeal, c. 1858, to buy his collection for what is now National Museums Scotland (http://www.edinburghgeolsoc.org/edingeologist/z_40_04.html), and (b) the little guide by James G. Goodchild (1844-1906) to the geological displays in the Birthplace Cottage at Cromarty, for the 1902 centenary of Miller's birth.

However, we have so far been unable to locate
1. Any other copies of the above, especially if annotated
2. Any other circulars for the collection appeal
3. Circulars for the appeal to build Hugh Miller's Monument at Cromarty, c. 1858-9
4. Circulars, etc., for the 1902 centenary celebrations at Cromarty
Any other guide leaflets, etc., for Hugh Miller's Cottage/Museum etc. at Cromarty, before the 1950s redisplay by Charles Waterston and his booklet *Hugh Miller: the Cromarty Stonemason* (1961)

We are also keen to learn of published or unpublished accounts of visits to the Miller displays in the museum at Edinburgh and to the birthplace cottage in Cromarty up to about 1950, including securely dated photographs. We already

have a few general tourist reports from David Alston's local history *My little town of Cromarty* (2006).
Michael Taylor (mat22@le.ac.uk) and Lyall Anderson (euproops@aol.com)

Hugh Miller (1802-1856): a lost catalogue of his fossil collection

We have observed that one of the specimen numbering systems applied to Miller's fossil collection was started while the collection was still in family hands – though we are not certain whether this was before his death. We have never been able to locate a primary register or list for this system, and do not even know whether such a list even existed. Does anyone have an orphan list rich in Scottish fossils, and especially in, for instance, Old Red Sandstone fishes from Cromarty, which might be a candidate?

The system in question is stratigraphically based, using parallel number series distinguished by the colour of the paper dots used as labels; thus for instance 'red' 451 and 567 are Old Red Sandstone fossils, but 'green' 234 a Carboniferous specimen. However, the catalogue need not explicitly indicate the colour coding.
Michael Taylor (mat22@le.ac.uk) and Lyall Anderson (euproops@aol.com)

Hugh Miller (1802-1856): lost papers

Michael Taylor (mat22@le.ac.uk) and Lyall Anderson (euproops@aol.com) have been considering the fate of Hugh Miller's manuscripts as part of a wider study of his collections. Absurdly few MSS survive, given his literary output; some are in the National Library of Scotland, and his letter-book for the years to 1840 survives in New College Library (University of Edinburgh).

Seemingly, the bulk of Miller's papers went to Australia with, or sent to, his daughter Harriet (1839-1883; herself a significant early Australian writer) and her husband the Rev. John Davidson (1834-1881) on his 'call' to become minister at Chalmers Church, Adelaide; he later became a founding professor at the University of Adelaide. They apparently intended a biography, presumably to replace the badly flawed *Life and Letters of Hugh Miller* (1871) written by Peter Bayne under the supervision of Harriet's mother Lydia. Those papers included, for instance, an extensive correspondence with Robert Dick of Thurso, the geologist and naturalist, as Smiles complained in his 1878 biography of Dick. In the event, the Davidsons died early, Harriet in 1883, and their three daughters came back to the UK, while their only son worked up country as a surveyor.

Those papers were soon noted as missing, in W. K. Leask's *Hugh Miller* (1896) and again in 1902 in *The centenary of Hugh Miller being an account of the celebration held at Cromarty on 22nd August, 1902* (Glasgow University Press) and press reports of the event.

A few papers turned up in the hands of an Adelaide dealer and were mostly sold in 1960 to the National Library of Scotland (but most NLS Miller MSS are in fact on deposit from the National Trust for Scotland's Hugh Miller's Cottage and Museum at Cromarty). A very few more are in the University of Adelaide library. But the

bulk of Miller's papers remains missing. We would be interested to know of any evidence as to these Australian papers' fate, or indeed any references in contemporary publications or MSS to Miller's manuscripts other than those noted above.

Michael Taylor (mat22@le.ac.uk) and Lyall Anderson (euproops@aol.com)

Corsi's decorative stones go online

The Corsi collection of decorative stones can now be explored online at www.oum.ox.ac.uk/corsi. All 1,000 polished stone slabs are illustrated, and a database of modern information about the stones complements the original published catalogue. The website also includes tips for identifying decorative stone and lots of other sources of information.

The collection was made in the early 19th century by Roman lawyer Faustino Corsi, and presented to the University of Oxford by student Stephen Jarrett in 1827. It is now in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Corsi first collected stones from the ruins of ancient Rome that were quarried all over the ancient Roman empire. He then acquired stones from contemporary quarries, mainly in Italy but also from further afield including Russia, Afghanistan, Madagascar and Canada. He enjoyed visits by many of the patrons of art and archaeology of the time, including William Cavendish, 6th Duke of Devonshire, who added a fine suite of Derbyshire decorative rocks and minerals to the collection.

Corsi's collection is almost certainly the first of its kind to be organised in a geological order, and it includes a very diverse range of rock types, including marbles, travertines, serpentinites, jaspers and granites. Development of the website was generously funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and for the museum community, we hope it will be a helpful resource for identifying and researching stone samples and artefacts in collections, and for answering public enquiries. It will also help anyone developing urban geology trails, especially when it comes to identifying the marbles used in churches and public buildings.

I'm very interested to know about other collections of polished decorative stone samples in museums. If you have any, I'd really like to hear from you!

Monica Price, Assistant Curator, Mineral Collections. Oxford University Museum of Natural History monica.price@oum.ox.ac.uk

Forthcoming seminars and workshops

Check our website www.geocurator.org for updates to our seminar programme

22 November 2012 ICON Hazardous Substances in Collections

Weston Theatre, Museum of London.

Icon Metals & Care of Collections groups are joining forces to produce a one day conference for this autumn on Hazardous Substances in Collections. The aim is to tackle issues of identification, storage and disposal on a range of hazardous

materials, in addition to highlighting recent changes in HSE legislation with regards to radiation and asbestos. See http://www.icon.org.uk for more information.

4th – 5th December 2012 'Displays and Visualisations' GCG Meeting and 39th AGM

New Walk Museum & Art Gallery, 53 New Walk, Leicester LE1 7EA

Programme

Tuesday 4th December

1030– 15:45 Talks about the displays at Leicester and elsewhere.

16:15 39th AGM of the Geological Curators' Group.

Wednesday 5th December

Field trip, possibly to see the British Geological Survey Geological Walk and then to see items in the collections from Bradgate Park.

Registration Fee for Tuesday: £25 (includes lunch, teas and coffees) Cost for the field trip on Wednesday to be determined. To book your place and find out more contact John Nudds email: john.nudds@manchester.ac.uk@museumwales.ac.uk or check our web site at geocurators.org. See the booking form at the end of this newsletter.

19 December 2012 Shell London Lectures: Incoming: Learning to Love the Meteorite

The Geological Society (Burlington House)

Meteorites have been the stuff of legend throughout human history, and since 1980 the idea that dinosaurs were wiped out by a meteorite strike 65 million years ago has become one of the most widely known scientific ideas of all. However, the causes of the end Cretaceous mass extinction were complex, and the idea that major meteorite strikes are always bound to be bad news for life on Earth is being challenged by fresh discoveries. New research is suggesting that 470 million years ago, a stupendous collision in the Asteroid Belt (whose débris is still falling, to this very day) bombarded the Earth with meteorites of all sizes. A revolutionary idea is emerging that the resulting ecological disturbance may have been responsible not only for massive worldwide submarine landslides, but for the single greatest increase in biological diversity since the origin of complex life – the hitherto unexplained Great Ordovician Biodiversity Event.

The talk will be given twice on the same day, once at 3pm and once at 6pm – please note that if you would like to attend the talks, the 3pm matinees generally have more availability. The talks will be exactly the same in the afternoon and evening. Entry to the lectures is free to all, but by ticket only. To obtain a ticket please contact Naomi Newbold (naomi.newbold@geolsoc.org.uk) and state whether you would prefer to attend the 3pm or the 6pm lecture. Visit website for more details: www.geolsoc.org.uk/gsl/events/shelllondonlectures12/meteorite

25th—26th April 2013 'Doing More with Less'
Geological Curators' Group Meeting
Guernsey Museums & Galleries, Guernsey

A chance to visit the natural history collections of Guernsey Museums and Art Galleries (GMAG) before the current (and first) Natural Science Curator and Geologist, Alan Howell, retires in May 2014.

It is hoped that this meeting will include a discussion session on the demise of specialist curators. The first day will include visits to the new museum storage units and the second day will include a field excursion. Please see our web site www.geocurators.org for updates.

Collections to (re)visit

Clitheroe Castle Museum

Clitheroe Castle Museum was redeveloped in 2009 to complete much needed repairs and renovations. Previously the museum had a strong geological theme and it looks like this has continued through to the present displays. The web site at http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/acs/sites/museums/venues/clitheroe/?siteid=4185&pageid=22612&e=e states "You will be able to discover how the landscape (glaciated valley) we see today was formed and how people have lived and worked within it. You will have the chance to explore the natural world of the area and find out why it is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Special Protection Area. Our displays cover geology, archaeology, natural history, folklore and industrial and social history. There are rocks and fossils, photographs, paintings, coins and medals, and finds from the site and the surrounding area" It's good to see 'rocks and fossils' first on the list. If any readers have visited the newish developments I welcome their comments.

Elgin Museum

The museum in Elgin (http://elginmuseum.org.uk)has "Recognition" by the Scottish Government as a collection of National Significance for its fossil collection and archive. The museum specialises in fossil fish from the Old Red Sandstones, and an archive including Hugh Miller material. There are Permian reptile footprints from the Hopeman sandstone and later Triassic reptiles include Saltopus, which may be Scotland's earliest dinosaur. Some of the fossils in the Hopeman sandstone are merely casts and have to be scanned and 'filled' to create the original skeleton. The most famous fossil is that of a Dicynodont skull. See www.hmag.gla.ac.uk/neil/elgin/Rotating.swf for a 3D model of the internal cast. There are nine type fossils which are being scanned for the JISC 3D fossil project.

Editor's Note

Thanks to all those who sent me articles and reports for this edition of Coprolite. Please keep sending information you think may be of interest to our members.
Helen Kerbey, National Museum Wales.

GCG Seminar and 39th AGM
4th & 5th December 2012
New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester
BOOKING FORM

I will be attending the seminar and AGM on 4th Dec ☐

I will be attending the visits on 5th Dec (price to be confirmed) ☐

I would like details of local accommodation ☐

I enclose payment for £25 (which includes seminar, a buffet lunch , teas and coffees on Tuesday 4th)

Title.....Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone.....e-mail.....

Please return this booking form with a cheque for £25, made payable to "Geological Curators Group" **by 21 November** to : 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

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