



COPROLITE

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DROPPINGS FROM THE GEOLOGICAL CURATORS GROUP

Coprolite is compiled and produced by Helen Kerbey, Production Editor, *Mineralogical Magazine*, 12 Baylis Mews, Amyand Park Road, Twickenham, TW1 3HQ. (e-mail hkgeology@btinternet.com, tel +44 (0)2920 513901). It is published three times a year in March, June and November. Any material for inclusion should be sent to Helen Kerbey by the first of the previous month, i.e. by 1 February, 1 May or 1 October.

Chairman: Giles Miller, Senior Curator, Micropalaeontology, Department of Earth Science Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD. Email: g.miller@nhm.ac.uk

Secretary: Sarah King, York Museums Trust, Yorkshire Museum, Museum Gardens, York, YO1 7FR. Email: Sarah.King@ymt.org.uk

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Notice of Annual General Meeting of the Geological Curators' Group

Notice is hereby given that the 43rd Annual General Meeting of the Geological Curators' Group will be held at The M Shed, Princes Wharf, Wapping Road, Bristol on Tuesday 6th December 2016 at 4pm. All Committee posts (except Chair) are renewed annually. Nominations for the posts of Committee Members must be made by two members of the Group and submitted in writing or by email to the Secretary, Sarah King (sarah.king@ymt.org.uk), by 15th November 2016. Items proposed for inclusion on the Agenda should be submitted to the Secretary as above.

Agenda

Apologies

Acceptance of the minutes of the 42nd AGM held at the Natural History Museum, London

Matters arising

Committee Member Annual reports

Election of Committee Members for 2017

Received nominations (as of September 2016)

Chairman: Matthew Parkes (National Museum of Ireland)

Secretary: Sarah King (incumbent) (York Museums Trust)

Treasurer: Rachel Walcott (National Museums Scotland)

Membership Secretary: Cindy Howells (incumbent) (National Museum Wales)

Programme Secretary: Zoë Hughes (Natural History Museum)

Minutes Secretary: Tony Morgan (incumbent) (National Museums Liverpool)

Journal Editor: Matthew Parkes (incumbent)

Newsletter Editor: Helen Kerbey (incumbent) (Mineralogical Society)

Collections Officer: Mike Howe (incumbent) (British Geological Survey)

Web Officer: Simon Harris (British Geological Survey)

Ordinary Member: Luanne Meehitiya (incumbent) (Birmingham Museums Trust)

Ordinary Member: Emma Bernard (Natural History Museum)

Ordinary Member: Alex Peaker (Dinosaur Isle)

Co-opted member (NatSCA representative; blog editor): Isla Gladstone (Bristol Museum and Art Gallery)

Retiring Members

Giles Miller, John Nudds, Hannah-Lee Chalk, Tim Ewin

Any other business

Date and venue for next Annual General Meeting

Events

Seminar and 43rd Annual General Meeting

From the shore to the store - The ethics of UK fossil collecting and collections

The M-Shed, Princes Wharf, Wapping Rd, Bristol BS1 4RN

6-7 December 2016

Tuesday 6th December 2016

10.00 Arrivals - please take this opportunity to pay your meeting fee and any unpaid subscriptions if you have not already done so.

10.15 Tea/Coffee

10.45 Welcome to The M-Shed

11.00 **Morning talks session**

Keynote 1 - *Disposals and Acquisitions: Ethics and the Law*. Janet Ulph, University of Leicester

Bones on the beach, bones in the cliff, the ethics of collecting dinosaurs on an eroding coast. Martin Munt, Dinosaur Isle

"Most important fossil discoveries have, in fact, been made by dealers or enthusiasts". Discuss. Errol Fuller, Summers Place Auctions

Fossil Protection Legislation: Science, Politics, Money and Anthropocentrism.

Jeff Liston, Yunnan University

13.00 Lunch

14.00 **Afternoon talks session**

Keynote 2 - *The new Museums Association Code of Ethics*. Alistair Brown, Museums Association Policy Officer

40 years of collecting on the Jurassic Coast. David Sole, Fossil Collector

A Fossil Acquisition Strategy for the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. Sam

Scriven, Earth Science Manager, Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site

15.30 Tea/Coffee

- 16.00 AGM, to include the announcement of the newest recipient of the Brighton Medal
18.00 onwards - Drinks and evening meal at the Hope and Anchor, 38 Jacob's Wells Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1DR

GCG members and attendees have been cordially invited by Simon Cohen, GCG member and proprietor of "Fossils" (www.fossilsandgemstones.co.uk/) to visit his warehouse in the Avonmouth Docks to enjoy a few drinks and nibbles from 19.00 onwards.

Wednesday 7th December 2016 - Field trips

Redcliffe Caves Visit - those who have booked onto the caves visit will meet our guide, Alan Gray, at the entrance to the caves just before 10.00. Please take note of the advice provided regarding clothing and torches at the webpages:

<http://www.redcliffecaves.org.uk/>

<http://axbridgescavinggroup.wikidot.com/redcliffecaves-access>

Bristol Museum Geology Stores - all are welcome to take a guided tour of the stores in The Bristol Museum - many wonderful things are housed there. If you have not already seen the museum, there is also an excellent geology display, a collection of local "Sea Dragons" and a cafe for drinks and refreshments.

Cost: Fees will be as follows (remember that you can join GCG for just £20 per year!)

Tuesday seminar and AGM (£30 members / £45 non-members)

Wednesday morning Redcliffe Caves £10 (TBC) Maximum number of 25 people on the caves trip, so places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Wednesday afternoon museum visit FREE

Booking: Please fill in the form at the back and return to Simon Harris: simhar@bgs.ac.uk or use the booking form at <http://www.geocurator.org/meet/docs/GCG%20AGM%20Booking%20Form%202016.pdf>

A Commemorative Meeting to Celebrate the Life and Work of Robert F. Symes OBE, 1939-2016

Thursday 8 December, 2016 at Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, UK

This one-day meeting has been convened under the auspices of Geological Society and History of Geology Group (HOGG) in association with the Geologists' Association, The Ussher Society, The Russell Society and The Harrow and Hillingdon Geological Society.

The contributions reflect Bob's contribution to mineralogical research, museum activities, earth science education, public outreach and the mineralogy of the Mendip Hills, the minerals and geology of Cornwall and Devon and the North of England.

<http://russellsoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Bob-Symes-Call-for-Papers.pdf>

2016 Sussex Mineral Show 12th November 10.00-4:30

Clair Hall, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath

Displays on agates, minerals of Scotland, fluorescent minerals

www.smls.org.uk

Meeting reports

Joint SPPC/GCG meeting, John Moores University, Liverpool 22nd August 2016

Once again, this meeting failed to disappoint. Held as part of the much larger Symposium for Vertebrate Palaeontology and Systematic Anatomy, it always attracts a good international set of speakers and audience. If you've never thought about presenting at, or attending, this meeting, then do think again. Although the rest of the week is vertebrates through and through, the Symposium on Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation is just what it says, with no necessary emphasis on four-legged or finned creatures. It would be lovely to see more talks about invertebrates as well.

This year, the speakers included GCG member Frank Osbaeck (Denmark), talking about Miocene vertebrates and the particular problems he's had during their preparation. From across the Atlantic, Don Henderson (Royal Tyrrell Museum) continued his yearly update of how to record and take peels from a particularly impressive set of dinosaur trackways located in steep river valleys several hundred miles away from the museum. Richard Forest (Leicester) spoke about the recording and excavation of a juvenile *Cryptocleidus* (plesiosaur) in persistent heavy rain. Finally, Emma-Louise Nicholls of the Horniman Museum, told us about their collections, and issues involved with reconciling four previous attempts to curate the same collection. A problem many of us have had to face in the past!

This was followed by a few lightning talks by poster presenters, including GCG member Nigel Larkin, then a chance to check out the posters themselves. The afternoon was scheduled with a trip into the stores of the World Museum, Liverpool. It was lovely to meet up with long time GCG members Geoff Tresise and Wendy Simkiss who showed us round the Palaeo stores, whilst their colleague Tony, did the same in Zoology. Who knew that the World Museum held the holotype of the Kiwi bird? If you'd like to see my photo of this one, you can find it on my Instagram account (palaeofossil).

It's certainly a lovely chance to meet up with colleagues every year and I urge more to try to come along to Birmingham on 12th September 2017 for the next symposium. Don't forget we'll publish papers given at these meetings, in our journal, if you'd like to submit them.

Cindy Howells (National Museum of Wales)

Museums and Exhibitions

Worlds largest blue topaz exhibit at NHM

A 9381 carat cut blue topaz is now on show in the Natural History Museum. Described as the size of a rugby ball and with a value of millions, it was discovered in its rough form in Brazil in the 1980s by explorer Max Ostro.

New Mary Anning Wing

Lyme Regis Museum has recently been awarded £798,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the construction of the Mary Anning Wing, the museum's much needed £1,400,000 extension.

Just What Is The Mary Anning Wing?

The Mary Anning Wing will provide our 113 year old museum with the services it needs to bring it into the 21st century. The Mary Anning Wing will include:

- A new accessible geology gallery telling the story of Mary Anning and Lyme's fantastic fossils
- A state-of-the-art Learning Space, where we can welcome schools, run exhibitions and events
- A lift, ensuring all our visitors can visit the museum's first floor
- An extended shop
- Visitor toilets – so we no longer have to send people across the road to the public loos!

What Will The Mary Anning Wing Look Like?

The Mary Anning Wing will stand on the museum's small terrace, on the seaward side of our building. It will look very different from our current building and will be built of zinc and glass. Zinc is an ideal material for coastal locations, it doesn't slowly dissolve like the local limestone nor does it rust, as it has no iron content. Our zinc will be the colour of the 'blue lias' the local stone visible in the cliffs that dominate Lyme Regis. And glass? Well, we want to ensure that as many people as possible to enjoy the fantastic view of Lyme Bay.

Can You Help With Our Fundraising?

Currently, we have £1,250,000 pledged to our project, but we still need to find another £150,000 to ensure our project succeeds. We're working very hard to find this money. Our activities range from approaches to major grant giving trusts, to approaches to local authorities to running cake and book sales all over Lyme Regis. So far, our donors range from an Exeter schoolgirl who gave us her £10 pocket-money after visiting the museum, to the great generosity of the Fine Foundation, which has pledged £100,000. If you would like to make a donation, please click on the JustGiving icon:

For more details, please contact David Tucker, Director
on director@lymeregismuseum.co.uk or 01297 443370 Ext. 2

New Museum to open in Folkestone

In 2017 a new museum supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund will open in Folkestone. The original museum was established by Folkestone Natural History Society in 1868 with the Samuel Mackie fossil collection. The collection was greatly expanded with the work of the society and following Victorian fashion it moved into a purpose-built museum and library on Grace Hill in 1888.

Notable persons who provided materials for the old museum included Lord Rothschild of Tring museum fame. The archives of the museum testify that the collection has experienced a history of disposal but also sadly, neglect. A great deal of work therefore needs to be done to conserve and document it to a high standard.

The remaining collection is being gifted by Kent County Council to Folkestone Town council and is currently in the process of being prepared for transfer to its new home at the Town Hall. The geology collection still contains a fine selection of local fossils which was greatly added to over the years. Of particular note are the remains of Pleistocene mammals and an exceptionally fine collection of fish from the Gault clay.

The museum project is somewhat ground breaking as it is the first such lottery funded project to be delivered by a Town Council. The work to bring the museum into reality is being generously supported by a growing cohort of volunteers but

we are always looking to expand the team. Anyone interested in working with us should contact Phil Hadland.
phil.hadland@folkestone-tc.gov.uk

Journal offer

I have a complete run of the Tertiary Research Group journal available. You would just need to cover postage or collection from Birmingham. Email me on Luanne.meehitiya@birminghammuseums.org.uk if you're interested.

Be a Curator stand available for public outreach events

Two years ago the GCG developed a public outreach event called Be A Curator, using funding from the Curry Fund of the Geologists Association. The activity has since been enjoyed at the Lyme Regis and Yorkshire fossil festivals in 2015 and 2016. We are now offering to loan the activity to other organisations for geological outreach.

The stand helps to explain what curation is and to encourage people to curate their own geological finds. People use the board and magnetic labels to build up a label of a fossil or other geological specimen covering when, where and who discovered it and its age and ID. People can then take a photo with their curated fossil display and perhaps tweet it using a hashtag to build up an online collection for the event. The board is also versatile enough to adapt this activity if you have any ideas.

You only need to cover the cost of collecting the stand from the Natural History Museum in London and later returning it. The stand when in its carry case is 1m tall and 80cm by 45cm across. It fits in most cars, although please check in advance! Email Giles Miller at g.miller@nhm.ac.uk and Luanne Meehitiya at Luanne.meehitiya@birminghammuseums.org.uk for more information.

Erratum

The first editions of Coprolite 79 contain an image of Cairngorm quartz, not Quartz from Calton Hill, Derbyshire.



Cairngorm quartz



Calton Hill quartz



Fish coprolite from Folkestone grey chalk - see Folkestone museum news p.5

GEOLOGICAL
CURATORS
GROUP



Affiliated to the
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