



News and forthcoming Events from the Sedgwick Museum & the Friends of the Museum

Change of Leadership

We start this Issue of Trilobite by featuring a change in leadership of the Museum. Our first Director Dr. David Norman has relinquished this post after twenty years. Below he has given us some thoughts about the evolution of the Museum during his twenty years. He has been replaced by Dr. Ken McNamara, and we provide an article on his career so far. Both are continuing in their University teaching and research positions.

David Norman

My twenty years as first Director of the Sedgwick Museum.

The Sedgwick is a truly great museum with extraordinary collections that chart so many of the steps forward made by real giants in the subject



and cataloguing, largely of fossil material, were rightly given priority over general geological education of the public of all ages. Through much of this time, funding for the Museum was very limited, and its role in research, as opposed to general education, was tending to become narrow.

The "Oxburgh Review" of University Earth Sciences Museums made a strong case for the standing and importance of the Sedgwick Museum. It was agreed to improve its staff funding and to move stored material from the Downing Site in central Cambridge to a new purpose-built store in West Cambridge, now called the "Brighton Building", after the curator who had made the collections his life-long concern. The Building includes a conservation and preparation laboratory, the only academic lab dedicated to geological materials in the UK. The revised budget also allowed new staff appointments to be made, resulting in the recruitment of the first Director (myself), a Conservator (Chris Collins), a Documentation officer (Pamela Phillips) and an Exhibition developer (Chris Hall) to supplement the three curatorial posts and four technical-level posts that then existed.

Developments in the Museum:

Below, I list some of the many developments that have occurred in the Museum since all these changes began (along with a key to the acronyms of the funding

1990-2, Building of Brighton Building (UGC)

1995-9, Conversion of Catalogue System (UFC)

1994, Jurassic Pond Display (MGC, Newton Trust)

1995, Whittington room (for research visitors) built (UFC)

1996, Museum Shop Refit (AHRC and CUDEPT)

1997, Whewell Gallery (Mineralogy) reconstruction (Trinity College etc.)

1998, Museum technician's room refitted (CUDEPT)

1999-2, Oak Wing renovation (including Education Resource Area,

and new Education Officer post (MLA)

2001, Friends of the Sedgwick Museum founded as Charity to

support Museum's educational role

2001, Conversion into SnBase system of catalogue (AHRC)

2003, Director's Office conversion into labs and offices

2003-4, Mahogany Wing Restoration (MLA-DCF)

2004, Educational Resources development (MLA-DCF)

2006-8, Darwin Exhibition, jointly with Zoology Museum (MLA- DCF)

2007-10, Darwin Exhibition Development, Storage Upgrade, Educational Resource.

Upgrade (HLF, Trinity College)

2008-10, Museum Access improvements (MLA-DCF)

2009-11, Mahogany Wing Information Panel (Trinity College)

2007-9, Darwin Research Fellowship (Newton Trust)

2010-11, Archive Development post (MLA-DDF)

2011-12,

Acronyms:

AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council), CUDEPT (Cambridge University through Department of Earth Sciences), DCF (Designation Research Fund), DDF (Designation Development Fund), HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund, MGC (Museum and Galleries Council), MLA (Museum and Libraries Association), UFC (University Funding Council), UGC (University Grants Committee)

In this issue.....

David Norman P.1-2

Ken McNamara P.2

Alan Dawn, Roger Bishton &

Gail Brown P.3

All Forthcoming Events P.4

Friends' Committee P.5

Join the Friends' P.6

In handing over my position as Director of the Sedgwick Museum to Dr. Ken McNamara, I am taking this opportunity to review some of the developments in the life of the Museum over the twenty year period.

The Museum has occupied its present building since 1904. The funding of the Museum and the arrangement of the exhibits owed much to Thomas McKenny Hughes, who was the successor to Adam Sedgwick as Woodwardian Professor of Geology. In the ninety years, or so, that have followed, only minor changes in the layout took place, and the key research function of curation

The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3EQ

Opening hours: Monday – Friday 10 am – 1 pm and 2 pm – 5 pm Saturday 10 am – 4 pm

Telephone: (01223) 333456 **Fax:** (01223) 333450 **Email:** sedgwickmuseum@esc.cam.ac.uk

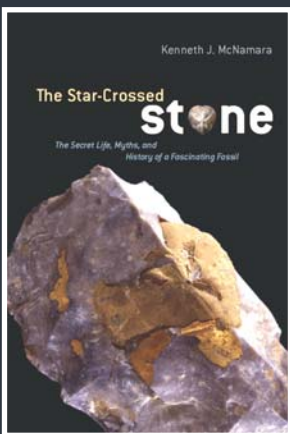
Website: www.sedgwickmuseum.org & **Friends of the Sedgwick Museum Website:** <http://friendsofsedgwickmuseum.com/index.htm>

“Since 1991 the Sedgwick has been transformed by these developments into the dynamic and vibrant place that we see today”

New Museum Director

Dr Ken McNamara

What struck him was that these adult trilobites, all different species, looked like different stages in the growth of this type of trilobite. From then on his interest in the relationship between evolution and development change was established.



*The Star-Crossed Stone:
The Secret Life, Myths,
and History of a
Fascinating Fossil*

(Continued from page 1) The cost has been high. Museum staff have been under great administrative and management pressure brought about by the increased responsibilities that come with all this new activity. As older members have retired, new staff appointments have also increased the professionalism of staff, who previously had no formal museum training at all. Present staff feel the tension that arises from their wish to maintain their focus on their professional training (collections maintenance, documentation and care), and the additional duties they have to perform in relation to the newer, wider scope of museum involvement in educational and outreach activities as well as the management of large and varied projects.

The Museum is nothing like the place it was when I was appointed Director in 1991. Most of the change has been for the good (though not all, of course!). It is true to say that The Sedgwick is well respected in the museum community at large, because it is recognised as one of the great collections in the UK, and exists to foster an encouraging image of what purely science-based museums stand for in the present day. It is also wonderful to see that the Department of Earth Sciences now values the Museum, and expects its undergraduates, postgraduates and staff to support and use it.

Long may this all continue. Our Museum also has a truly great community of staff whose ability to work together as a team is unrivalled in Cambridge (and indeed anywhere else I can think of – now that I stop and actually think about it!)

So here is a toast to another two decades of progress at the Sedgwick – a great museum. And a second toast to our “Friends” who add so much value and support to all that we are trying to do.

David Norman (Director 1991-2011)

Born August 14, 1950 in Brighton.

In his youth he used to explore quarries and the cliffs of the South Coast collecting fossils and following the footsteps of early geologists like Gideon Mantell and even earlier collectors of fossils back in the Neolithic. Most people grow out of this juvenile habit. Ken never did.

After finishing school, rather than staying in southern England, he headed north for his first degree, spending 4 years at the University of Aberdeen, acquiring a first class honours degree in geology and mineralogy. Much of the time was spent out in the field, discovering the geological delights of Scotland. And it was on one of these field trips that he was to find some fossils that were to affect his research for the next 30 odd years. Having been in a department that was a 'hard' rock department he expected to become a mineralogist or mining geologist.

But one day on a field trip on the west coast he found himself in a little quarry containing early Cambrian mudstones. “There are meant to be trilobites in these rocks” said the lecturer. Within 5 minutes he found his first one, a species of *Olenellus*. He returned a couple of times and collected a fauna of four species.



After Aberdeen, he came to Cambridge for three years, obtaining his Ph.D. for research on Ordovician trilobites from the Lake District. In 1976 he took off for Australia, teaching at the University of Queensland. After two years the position disappeared so it was time to move on again.

A position opened at the University Sydney, doing postdoctoral work with Graeme Philip, working on Cenozoic echinoids. After just a year a job came up in the Western Australian Museum for a Curator of Palaeontology where he was to spend the next 28 years.

W.A. was a great place to do palaeontology as so little research had been done on many of the faunas. A lot of his work was on echinoids, but also some amazing Ordovician-Silurian arthropod trackways, and Devonian trilobites from the Kimberley region, all of which he is still working on. One of the things he is proud of was the establishment of the Dept of Earth & Planetary Sciences at the WA Museum as a vibrant department with a world renowned reputation. Another great achievement was the development, with colleagues John Long and Alex Bevan, of the Earth sciences display, 'Diamonds to Dinosaurs'.

After living for a long time in one of the most isolated parts of world it was time for a change, and his life turned full circle when he was offered a position in the University of Cambridge. He is now a Senior Lecturer in the Earth Sciences Department, and Fellow and Dean at Downing College. He continues to focus his research on the importance of the fossil record in allowing us to understand the processes of evolution, especially the role of developmental change. In recent years he has also got very interested in what people have thought about fossils for hundreds of thousands of years. He has been looking at the archaeology, mythology and folklore of fossil echinoids and had a book, *The Star-Crossed Stone*, published on the subject by the University of Chicago Press in November last year. He feels quite in awe of the fact that his interest in fossils, particularly fossil echinoids, is mirrored by the interest in these self same fossils by early humans up to 400,000 years ago.

ALAN DAWN

Many members will remember excursions to the spectacular Jurassic outcrops at Ketton Quarry, west of Stamford, and the King's Dyke brick works near Whittlesey, Peterborough, led by Alan Dawn. His death in November 2010, in his 87th year, leaves a great gap in the ranks of those who know and understand the geology of our parts of Eastern England.

Alan came from a farming family in the Sheffield area and he retained the characteristic accent all his life. He studied geography at Sheffield University and spent the war-years in the Navy. After the war Alan became a secondary school teacher, eventually moving to Stamford in 1961, and then Bourn, as head of science. When he retired in 1982, Alan joined local WEA classes in geology, and was soon asked to teach the classes himself! Alan rapidly became an expert in the local clay and gravel pits and their fossil and mineral content. Between them, Alan and his wife, Pauline, set up the Stamford and District Geological Society and ran it for almost thirty years. Alan had an incredibly active and productive retirement during this period. Apart from his tireless work for local geology and education, he has many lasting memorials. As a volunteer in the Peterborough Museum, he was responsible for the redevelopment of the geological exhibits, particularly the marine vertebrates. Many of these unique fossils resulted from Alan negotiating access to the local brick pits, allowing the Museum to acquire and display several magnificent Jurassic 'sea monsters', many of which Alan painstakingly collected and reconstructed.



Alan combined huge energy and enthusiasm with a delightful personality and he was determined to share his knowledge and enthusiasm for geology with people of all ages. His other interests were wide and varied, from the local Stamford Cricket Club, to the growing of orchids and chrysanthemums. He will be greatly missed, but his influence and work will live on.

Peter Friend

ROGER BISHTON



Service.

Roger Bishton died in May 2009, leaving a marvellously generous bequest to the Friends of the Sedgwick Museum. After National Service, he came to Cambridge and began there the medical studies that eventually led to his spending his later career in North Wales in general practice and surgery in the area around Tywynn, Gwynedd.

Whilst at Cambridge, Roger Bishton was awarded a half-blue in athletics, and through most of his life, he was unusually physically active and energetic. Even in his later years, he covered great distances in the hills of North Wales, and did much to develop and support the local running club.

Before settling in North Wales, Roger Bishton had a remarkably varied medical career, involving medical and surgical work in the west country of UK, in many parts of Africa, on cruise ships, and in many remote parts of Australia, including work with the Flying Doctor

Comments from his wife, Diane, and his medical colleagues, make it clear that he was a highly original man who enjoyed life to the full, and was greatly enjoyed. My regret is that we in the Friends were not able to invite him to tell us about some of his adventures. His wife comments that his interest in geology and the natural world was a life-long hobby. Wherever he went, he took photographs, collected stones and shells, searched for fossils and studied rock formations. We are truly grateful that he decided to lend his support to our Museum and its work for geology.

Peter Friend

My Work Placement

As a child I loved the Cambridge museums, a hushed atmosphere and the feeling that knowledge was gently ebbing out the displays, I remember wandering around in awe of the ancient age of the objects behind the glass. Now I'm a second year undergraduate studying Archaeology at Durham University (how time flies!) and I was faced with the prospect of finding a practical placement. I wanted to get a feel for what it would be like to working a museum and I know the Sedgwick isn't really concerned with Archaeology but it was the experience and not the subject which was important. I was lucky enough to be given the opportunity to spend two weeks at the museum over Easter.

I've only been here a couple of days but what an eye opening experience those days have been! I had no idea the diversity and complexity of the work that goes on behind the scenes. The conservation, documentation and cataloguing which must be done to preserve and record the collections is a seriously large undertaking. I spent my first day in the museum itself and was impressed by the sheer scale of the collection, only to be even more amazed by the size of the Brighton Building stores on the following day. Revelations so far have been the thought of a Hippopotomus in Barrington, how recent human life is in the grand scale of things and the physicality of a museum job (there are some pretty heavy specimens around!).

From my few days the museum team couldn't have been friendlier and more helpful, exciting projects have been thrown at me from left, right and centre. For example today I got to read and help with the archiving of the notebooks written by geologist William Alexander Deer, it's fascinating! The placement is giving me an insight into the pros and cons of museum life as well as inspiring me to learn more about earth sciences



Gail Brown

"I haven't had a dull minute as there's always a new draw to be opened and something interesting to be seen inside..."

"I can't wait to see what my second week brings!"



The Sedgwick Museum
of Earth Sciences

News of Forthcoming Museum Events:

Annette
Shelford,
Museum
Education
Officer.

Trilobite – Museum News & Forthcoming Events

Sat., 23 July, “Talking Treasures” in partnership with the Fitzwilliam Museum
10 am to 2 pm, at the Sedgwick Museum, 12 pm to 4 pm at the Fitzwilliam Museum. Help some of the objects in the Cambridge University Museum tell their extraordinary stories

Wed 3 Aug. to Thurs. 18th Aug. “Sedgwick Storytime”, with Marion Leeper from Cambridge Storytellers. Children must be accompanied by parent or carer. Limited places, so must be booked in advance for both adults and children, Tel 01223 333456. £2 for child, adults free.

Wed 3rd Aug. (for ages 6-11)
10.15-11.45 am. She sells sea shells on the sea shore
2.30-4 pm. She sells sea shells on the sea-shore

Fri. 5th Aug (for ages 6 and under)
10-11 am, Boy
11.30-12.30 Oscar and Arabella are Hot, Hot, Hot!
2.30-3.30 The Amazing Mr Darwin

Tue. 16th Aug (for ages 6 and under)
As for 5th Aug

Thu. 18th Aug (for ages 6-11)
As for 3 Aug

FORTHCOMING FRIENDS' EVENTS

Unless otherwise stated, events will be held in the Department of Earth Sciences (entrance below the Sedgwick Museum steps, on the Downing Site, Cambridge). Parking is available on the Downing Site during these events. At most events we will invite donations of £1 per head towards expenses, tea/coffee and the support of Museum projects.

Talks etc will not normally require pre-booking. In contrast, visits and other events will require pre-booking, and the name and address of a contact person will be listed below. The outside door of the Department will be locked at the start of each talk. The Friends' mobile phone (07754 592439) will be switched on for ninety minutes before the start of each event and kept on for two hours.

The Department Reception office may be telephoned during office hours on 01223-333400.

Visit to the Volcanic Landscapes of the Haute Loire, S. France

Thursday 26th –Tuesday 31 May.

Leader: Professor Jean-Jacques Cocheme (University of Marseills)

This Visit is now fully booked with forty participants.

Contact person is Ian Scholey (ischoley@aol.com, 22n Fairfax Road, London W4 1EW)

End of summer Meeting, Department of Earth Sciences,

Tuesday 14th June.

AGM and Short Talks/Slides.

Local members please try to come to help us discuss future activities.

Talk on “Taiwan: erosion and weathering in extreme conditions”

Tuesday 11th October 2011

Dr Robert Sparkes and Caroline Martin will present some of the findings of this ongoing Department research in this dramatic island.

Talk on “A microscopic view of the dawn of animal life”

Tuesday 15th November 2011

Dr Tom Harvey will describe some of the results of his new discoveries.

Friends' Christmas Party, with student talks

Tuesday 6th December 2011

The next Newsletter will ask people to pay for tickets for this traditional feast of good refreshments and stories.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE GEOLOGY CLUB

Monday 9th May: “Change and Decay”, Dr. Robert Sansom.

Sat. and Sun 11th-12th June: Open Farm and Vintage Weekend at Park Farm, Sand Road, Thorney, Peterborough PE6 0SY. Stands by CGC and Leicester University.

Monday 13th June: “Roddons of the Fens”, Dr Dinah Smith.

Thursday 16 June: CGC Dinner and Talk, booking essential: “Turning up the Heat on the Late Permian mass extinction”, Dr Richard Twitchett.

Saturday 10th September: One day seminar on “The Geology and Landscapes of Cambridgeshire. Main Lecture Theatre, Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge – **booking essential!**”

New Circulation Arrangements

Starting with this Issue (22, Summer 2011)

The Newsletter will be type-set using some colour, and circulated by E-mail to all members of the Friends for whom we have E-mail addresses.



It will also be put on the web-sites of the Sedgwick Museum (www.sedgwickmuseum.org) and the Friends of the Sedgwick Museum (www.friendsof_sedgwickmuseum.com).

Further hard-copy versions will be copied in the Department and sent to members who have no E-mail, and also placed in the Museum for visitors.



Part III research project at the Sedgwick Museum Dominic White

As part of my fourth year of the undergraduate geology course at the University of Cambridge, I investigated an unknown dinosaur that was stored in the Sedgwick Museum. The dinosaur was found in Australia several years ago but had since lain almost untouched in the Sedgwick Museum's store; most of the bones were still covered with rock.

I spent three months in the Museum's conservation laboratory carefully removing the rock using dilute acid, small saws and tiny dental drills. Once I could see enough of the bones, I began comparing them to other dinosaurs that are already known. This comparison revealed that this dinosaur was very similar to the Australian ankylosaur *Minmi* but has some subtle differences. Could it be a new species? More detailed comparison with specimens in Australia is needed to answer this question.

FRIENDS' COMMITTEE

The Friends' Charity is run by a volunteer Committee, with other members who join to help with specific matters:

Jean Currie(President), Peter Friend (Chairman), Mike Tuke (Vice-Chairman), Margaret Sanderson (Secretary), Paul Rutter (Treasurer), Ken McNamara (Director of the Museum), Dan Pemberton (Collections Manager) Jennifer Maddock, Ken Rolfe, Susie Sinclair, Hilda Stoneley and Marjorie Veale.

The Friends of the Sedgwick Museum exists to support and encourage the development of the Sedgwick Museum and promote the collections to a wider audience (Charity no 101911393).

APPLICATION FORM

Please use block capitals and return the form, with your cheque, to the membership secretary.

Name (Dr, Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms) *(delete as applicable)*

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Telephone.....

E-mail:

Age (if under 18).....

Subscriptions (please tick)

- Individual:** £12 per annum (Over 18 years)
- Family:** £18 per annum (Two or more members living at the same address)
- Young person:** £6 per annum (members under the age of 18)
- Concession:** £8 per annum (Full time students, unemployed or over 60s)

Membership is for one year and expires on 31 March. Members joining after 31 December will have the last quarter's membership included in the following year.

- I attach a cheque for £... ..made payable to The Friends of The Sedgwick Museum.

Signed.....Date.....

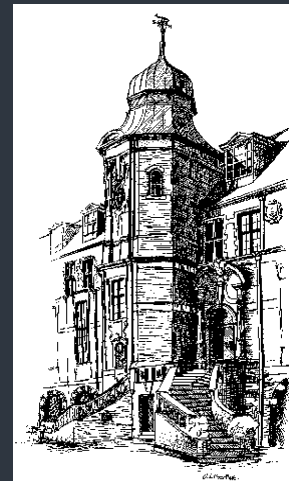
Gift Aid Scheme. Because the Friends is a registered Charity (No 101911393) we can claim an additional amount (currently 28%) on any subscription or donation, provided you are a UK tax payer. Your signature below will allow us to increase the value of each payment you make for the benefit of the Friends.

Gift Aid Declaration. I am a UK taxpayer. I would like the Friends of the Sedgwick Museum to treat all membership fees and donations as Gift Aid donations from the date of this declaration until I notify otherwise.

Signed:.....Date:.....

**JOIN THE
FRIENDS...**

**Membership is
open to
anyone!**



The Friends of the Sedgwick Museum

The Friends exists to support and encourage the development of the museum and promote and publicise the collection to a wider audience.

Membership of the Friends is open to anyone and members will benefit from:

Talks about the Earth Sciences and on topics relevant to the museum and its collections.

Tours behind the scenes at the museum and its conservation unit to see natural treasures not normally accessible to the public.

Visits to places of geological interest.

Social events such as an annual dinner with a reception in the museum.

Newsletters to keep members informed about events and activities.

Exclusive previews of exhibitions.

Opportunities to become a volunteer and be involved in the work of the museum.

Friends of the Sedgwick Museum Website:

<http://friendsofsedgwickmuseum.com/index.htm>

Thank you to Sandra Jackson

We wish to say a sincere thank-you to Sandra, who has moved on to another position in the University of Cambridge. Over the last ten years she has cajoled, type-set and arranged the printing of material offered for inclusion in twenty issues of "Trilobite", this Newsletter of the Sedgwick Museum and its Friends.



Photograph gallery

