

Connecting Through Collecting

A series of community workshops looking at Museum and personal collections has resulted in a new artwork on display at the Sedgwick Museum.



Participants examine fossils during a workshop at the Cherry Trees Age Concern Centre

This new exhibition by interdisciplinary artist Catherine Watling is principally about collections, collectors and the act of collecting, inspired by the collections focus of the *Darwin the Geologist* exhibition (opening July 2009).

Workshops with elderly people at the Cherry Trees Age Concern Centre in Cambridge allowed the artist and the Museum's Collections Assistant in Palaeontology, Matt Riley, to undertake reminiscence and story telling work incorporating the Museum's handling collection. The participants were encouraged to participate and contribute to the *Collect* installation by bringing in and sharing their own personal collections.

Catherine Watling said, "I wanted the installation to seamlessly blend in with the rest of the Museum in order to surprise visitors and pique their curiosity. Every object in the Museum was selected for some reason by a human being and each has its own story. I want this installation to highlight this."

Collect will be on display in the Sedgwick Museum until Saturday 13th March 2010 and was funded by the Designation Challenge Fund of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

Events and Exhibitions

Unless otherwise stated, events are free with no booking required and take place in the Sedgwick Museum. Full details are available on: www.sedgwickmuseum.org

COLLECT

14th March 2009 to 13th March 2010

Collect is a new artwork by interdisciplinary artist Catherine Watling which explores the secrets that hide within a bank of objects (for more details, please see story opposite).



Sedgwick Storytime

Tuesday 26th May and Thursday 28th May 2009

Times: 10:00am – 11:00am and 11:30am – 12:30pm

An event for pre-school children and their families. Cost: £4 per child, accompanying adults free. Places are limited and must be booked in advance. For further information and bookings please contact Marion Leeper of Cambridge Storytellers on 01223 510756 or email marion_leeper@ntlworld.com

Darwin The Geologist

From Tuesday 7th July 2009

Darwin the Geologist is a major permanent exhibition of the geological specimens collected by Charles Darwin during the voyage of the HMS *Beagle*. It will chart how Darwin collected, recorded and analysed the specimens and how they were used in his scientific publications.

Under the Floorboards

Saturday 11th July 2009, 12:30pm and 2:30pm.

A family-friendly, 30 minute show about important figures in 19th-century geology associated with the Sedgwick Museum (including Darwin). It will take place on the lawn area near the Museum. Free, no need to book.

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



Cambridge Collectors Cards

Visitors to University of Cambridge museums have an opportunity to hold 28 treasures in the palms of their hands.



This year the traditional University Museums Summer Trail is being replaced by Cambridge Collectors Cards: 28 cards featuring quirky and fascinating objects from the University's collections. Visitors will be able to collect a random set of four cards each time they visit one of the University museums (plus the Botanic Garden) throughout the summer.

Each card has an image of an object and a short description, including details of the object's age, size and original distance from Cambridge and rarity. The values in these categories allow the cards to be played as a trump-style game. The Sedgwick Museum's objects include two very ancient individuals (one of which is also very large) and an object that has travelled from beyond Earth's orbit. In other words, very competitive and worthy of collection!

Visit www.cam.ac.uk/museums for more information about all the University Museums and the Cambridge Collectors Cards.

Darwin in Cambridge - July 2009

2009 sees the bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his seminal work, *On the Origin of Species*. Darwin graduated from the University of Cambridge in 1831 and Cambridge has been hosting a number of events to commemorate his life and work.

The largest of these events, the Darwin 2009 Anniversary Festival, takes place from 5 - 10 July and will celebrate science, society, literature, history, philosophy, theology, art and music arising from the writings, life and times of Charles Darwin presented through talks, discussions, performances, workshops, exhibitions and tours. Full details can be found on the Festival website: www.darwin2009.cam.ac.uk

The Sedgwick Museum will open a new, permanent exhibition, *Darwin the Geologist*, on Tuesday the 7th of July. There will be two free, outdoor performances of *Under the Floorboards* by street theatre company Pif Paf on Saturday the 11th of July. A conference, *Darwin in the field: collecting, observation and experiment*, will take place on 11th - 12th July. Full details of these events is available on the Museum website: www.sedgwickmuseum.org

My Favourite Object

Our *Darwin the Geologist* Exhibition Assistant explores the humanity behind the Darwin collection with her favourite object.



It's spring time on-board HMS *Beagle*, a survey ship mapping the coast of South America. The year is 1833 and you've been sailing for just over a year now. You've just tucked into your share of the day's ship's rations when you hear a familiar voice asking, "Have you finished with that sauce bottle?"

It isn't hard to imagine scenes like this during the journey that took Charles Darwin around the world and into scientific renown and that's partly because of objects like these sauce bottles.

Used by the young scientist to carry part of his collection of rocks, shells, fossils, animals and plants, we treat these pieces of 19th century junk with the utmost care and reverence and are about put them on permanent display in the Museum.

The samples of shells and sand inside the bottles are important too – along with hundreds of other specimens and observations over the course of the voyage – they gave Darwin evidence for his theory of continental uplift. His catalogue notes for the sample, 1312, read: "Shells from bed of mud. Beneath [crossed out] above [inserted] level of fresh-water lake & now several miles inland."

The fact that shells might be found metres above the level at which they must have been deposited led Darwin to believe that the South American continent was slowly rising. But that's not what makes me love this sentence – it's the inadvertent mistake in the crucial detail of the level of the bed that gives me a thrill. This insignificant, hastily corrected error reveals a side of Darwin that we're not familiar with, reminding us that yes, Darwin was once young, impetuous and even fallible.

Katherine Antoniwi,
Exhibition Assistant, *Darwin the Geologist*



Recent Friends’ Events



Friends at Low Force waterfall in the Durham Pennines.

Cambridgeshire Geology Club

Talks take place at The Friends Meeting House, 91-93 Hartington Grove, Cambridge CB1 5UB at 7.30 pm. For more information, contact Alan Murphy on 07768 821385 or email cambs.geology.club@hotmail.co.uk

11th May 2009

Talk: Cambridgeshire’s Victorian Fossil Hunters

8th June 2009

Talk: How the Earth’s surface topography can reveal exciting and previously unrecognised geological features

14th September 2009

Talk: The Pleistocene geology and Fauna of the River Trent

19th September 2009

Visit: Suffolk Crag- Sutton Knoll and surrounding area

12th October 2009

Talk: Early Devonian Rhynie Chert Hot Springs

9th November 2009

Talk: The Fossils of Barrington

14th December 2009

Talk: The Woodwardian Collection

Scarborough Rotunda Museum

The museum was re-opened in May 2008 by Lord Oxburgh, who gave a brief but definitive, outline of the scope of geology. He commented that any student of geology could satisfy his varied interests by studying the stratigraphy of the local Yorkshire coast, or the sedimentary features within the beds, or even the origins of the particles that made up the sediments.

Entering the geological gallery one finds that the continuous scenes of curved coastal profiles, matching the curvature of the whole Rotunda building, now link beautifully again to the geological display cases. All have been restored and the portraits of the men and women who built the museum gaze down on you. The education galleries on the floor below have the latest type of interactive displays that will thrill the younger geologists.

This “oldest” purpose-built geological museum in the North, in England, if not the World, is well worth a visit.

Peter Fuchs

First Chairman, Friends of the Sedgwick Museum

Events – Winter 2009/Spring 2010

(Continued from page 4)

Talk: The star-crossed stone – the archaeology, mythology and folk-lore of fossil echinoids

Tuesday, 24th November 2009, Department of Earth Sciences, 7 pm. doors open 6.15 pm for refreshments

Dr. Ken McNamara, Department of Earth Sciences, and formerly of Western Australian Museum, has been writing a book on this remarkable topic

Friends’ Christmas Party

Tuesday, 8th December 2009, 6 - 8 pm

A lively programme of short talks, mainly by students, will be interspersed with mulled wine, bread, cheese and other snacks, for which we will ask for a donation of £5 at the door. *Please book a few days ahead.*

Experimental Geology Class: Understanding earthquakes

Tuesday 19th January 2010, Department of Earth Sciences, 7 pm. doors open 6.15 pm for refreshments

Dr Mike Tuke will run another of his practical classes. Numbers will be limited to twenty. Please telephone Mike on 01480- 457068 to book.

Talks: Human evolution and migration

Tuesdays 9th or 16th, February, and 2nd or 9th March 2010 Department of Earth Sciences, 7 pm, doors open 6.15 pm for refreshments

Details of speakers and dates will be announced in the next Newsletter.

Sedgwick Birthday Dinner

Saturday, 20th March 2010, Christ’s College, 7.30 pm

The after-dinner speaker will be Professor David Hodell who is the new Cambridge Woodwardian Professor, and works on environmental change. Menus and prices have not yet been decided, but prices should be between £35 and £42/head depending on whether soft or alcoholic drinks are taken. Menus, prices and a booking form will be sent to those who have registered by 28th February.

Visit: Wandlebury and Linton

Saturday, 24th April 2010, 11 am

A traverse across the Chalk Edge, along the Granta (Cam) valley, to see the relationship of the landscape to the Chalk bedrock, and the Pleistocene gravels and sands. Led by Peter Friend and others.

Visit: the Suffolk Coast

Saturday, 8th May 2010, 11 am

It is planned to visit the fossiliferous Crag and earlier deposits and show how sea-level change has influenced this coastline.

Visit: Fossiliferous Oxford Clay, near Peterborough

Saturday, 22nd May 2010, 11 am

Dr. Mike Tuke will lead us. Fossils will certainly be found!

AGM and Museum Showcase

Tuesday 8th June 2010, 6.00pm, doors open for refreshments and to meet other members, 5.15 pm

Weekend Visit to Derbyshire

Friday 11th to 13th June 2010

This visit is still being planned, and will certainly provide an enjoyable weekend in this fascinating area.



Forthcoming Friends' Events

Unless otherwise stated, events will be held in the Department of Earth Sciences (entrance below the Sedgwick Museum). Parking is available on the Downing Site during these events, with access from Tennis Court Road. Before talks and experimental classes held in the Department, tea, coffee and biscuits will be available from 6.15 pm, and the event will start at 7.00 pm. At most events we will invite donations of £1/head towards expenses and the support of the Museum.

Contacting the Friends

Some of the events listed require pre-payment and/or pre-booking. Prepayment should be by cheque posted to Friends of the Sedgwick Museum, Department of Earth Sciences, Downing St., Cambridge CB2 3EQ. Registering, booking or sending any message should be ideally by email to swri07@esc.cam.ac.uk, with a copy to pff1000@esc.cam.ac.uk. If you cannot access email, please phone **01223 333400**, or write to the above address. If you have had no acknowledgement within two weeks, kindly repeat your communication.

Events - Spring/Summer 2009

Visit: Sediments and shells of the North-west Norfolk coast

Saturday 9th May 2009, 11 am

This day visit, led by Peter Friend and Liz Harper, will visit beach localities around Wells-next-the-Sea, to examine the processes that move pebbles, shells, sand and mud, on this attractive area of unspoilt coast.

Please register by 25th April, so that we can plan for numbers and send out locality details.

Visit to the Great Ouse Valley at St Ives.

Saturday 23rd May 2009, St Ives, 11 am

St Ives is one of the most attractive market towns in Cambridgeshire. This visit will include a walking tour of the town, lunch and a talk in a local hostelry, a visit to the Norris Museum, and a walk along a small section of the Great Ouse Trail to illustrate the way the evolution of the Great Ouse has created the landscape, and influenced the growth of St Ives. **Please register by the 9th of May**, so that we can plan for numbers and send out locality details. Leaders: Nick Barraud, Peter Friend, Bob Burn Murdoch.

Weekend Visit to the Mendips and North

Somerset

Friday 12th to Sunday 14th June 2009

This year we will be visiting the Mendip area, and will be led by Dr Martin Whiteley who has wide experience of leading parties around the varied geology and landscape of this fold range of hills extending between Cheddar and Wells. Because of the complex pattern of narrow lanes, we are planning to rent mini-buses for the field visit programme, which will occupy Saturday and the morning of Sunday. As usual, **we have asked people to make their own accommodation arrangements**. Our "centre" will be at the White Hart Hotel, Wells (01749 672056), though this is now fully booked. Tourist Information and other accommodation possibilities can be sought through the Wells Tourist Information Office (01749 672552).

We have had such an enthusiastic registration for this weekend visit, that further registrations can only be accepted if we have cancellations.

AGM and Museum Showcase.

Tuesday, 16th June, Department of Earth Sciences, 6 pm, doors open 5.15 pm

Doors open, tea and coffee available from 5.15 pm. We specially appeal to local members to attend this meeting. In addition to voting for the Committee for 2009 - 10, this is the opportunity to review the way the Friends have been supporting the work of the Sedgwick Museum, particularly the Student Prize Placements, Museum staff conference support, and various improvements that are being carried out in the Museum, including work on the Darwin celebration materials.

Midsummer Tea Party

Saturday 20th June 2009, 3 - 5 pm, Bullard Laboratories, Madingley Rd, West Cambridge.

Cakes and strawberries etc. will be provided for this celebration of the summer to come! Garden games will be available for children and grandchildren. Local visits to nearby buildings of Earth Science interest will be arranged. Donations towards costs will be invited.

If possible, please register ahead to help us estimate numbers.

Events - Autumn 2009

Talk: Arctic fieldwork, sand studies and oil reservoirs under the Atlantic

Tuesday, 13th October 2009, Department of Earth Sciences, 7 pm, doors open 6.15 pm, for refreshments and meeting other members

Dr Andy Whitham, Chief Geologist of CASP, will describe an exciting successful research project.

Talk: Icelandic volcanism and the growth of the Atlantic Ocean).

Tuesday, 27th October 2009, Department of Earth Sciences, 7 pm, doors open 6.15 pm for refreshments and meeting other members

Dr John McLennan, Department of Earth Sciences, will describe some of the volcanological research that has been helping us understand processes active under Iceland and the Mid-Atlantic ridge.

(Programme continues on page 3)

Join the Friends

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. Membership is open to anyone. Annual subscriptions are: £6 (under 18's), £8 (full-time students, unemployed or over 60's), £12 (individual) or £18 (family).

For further details and an application form please ring the Department of Earth Sciences on 01223 333400 or write to Reception (Friends), Department of Earth Sciences, Downing St., Cambridge CB2 3EQ or visit the Museum website www.sedgwickmuseum.org