

59th Symposium of Vertebrate Palaeontology and Comparative Anatomy
20th Meeting of the Symposium of Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation
Geological Curators' Group
Lyme Regis – 12th to 17th September 2011
Final Circular

Thank you

It's all over, and I'm back in my office trying to tie up the loose ends.

Many thanks to all those who contributed to the great success of the symposium. Much of this comes from the delegates themselves. We had an excellent standard of presentations, the session chairs kept a tight rein on the schedule, and the relaxed and informal spirit of the SVPCA gave the conference its unique flavour. It is astonishing that it has been held every year since 1953 without any formal organisation.

We had good luck with the weather, and some serendipity in finding such a wonderful venue in the Marine Theatre. We owe much to the inestimable Nigel, the theatre manager, who ran the AV smoothly, allowed us to plaster the walls of the theatre with posters, responded to every request cheerfully and seemed to enjoy the event as much as the delegates.

Dorchester Museum provided another interesting venue for talks – it must be another first for this (and perhaps any) conference that the floor of the auditorium was a series of genuine Roman mosaic floors nearly 2000 years old! This also gave the opportunity to see the magnificent Weymouth Bay pliosaurus skull which has attracted so much media attention, and will be the focus of research in the future. It is good for the public profile of our science that such iconic specimens still turn up, and helps to apply political pressure to develop the infrastructure for acquiring such specimens into public collections.

Thanks to the hard work of Richard Edmonds in reaching out to local collectors, we had the chance to see some superb fossil collected within sight of the venue – surely a first for an SVPCA – as well as others from the Heritage Coast and further afield. Thanks also to Paddy Howe and Chris Andrews, whose excellent local knowledge made such a great contribution to the success of the various field trips, and of course Steve Etches for allowing us to see his wonderful collection.

Thanks to Mary Godwyn at Lyme Regis museum who hosted a reception for us, and gave delegates free admission during the conference. This allowed us to see in particular the Anning ichthyosaur skull, down in Lyme Regis to mark the 200th anniversary of its discovery and the pretext for holding the SVPCA there.

It was a great asset to the meeting to have exclusive use of the Skittle Alley behind the Pilot Boat. These occasions always work better if there is social focus for the evenings. Mind you, perhaps they should be thanking us: in the words of the landlord overheard in passing "*that lot don't half drink!*"

West Dorset fossil collecting code of conduct Consultation

Richard Edmonds gave a presentation on the collecting code which showed that although it has achieved considerable success, there is still a long way to go in setting

up the infrastructure which will allow more specimens from the coast to be acquired into public collections.

Please take the time to comment on the code.

It is a real opportunity to make your views heard by those with influence on policy at the highest level of government, and one which is unlikely to be repeated. Consultation is open only until the end of September, so make your comments *now* in case you forget!

On-line response questionnaire:

<http://tethys.org.uk/dorsetCodeQuestionnaire.php>

The official web site:

<http://www.jurassiccoast.com/299/managing-the-site-37/whs-management-167/fossil-code-review-803.html>

The West Dorset fossil collecting code of conduct has been running for 12 years and was developed through a working party of interested groups with wider consultation. The code was accepted by UNESCO as appropriate management for a rapidly eroding coastline. As part of the Dorset and East Devon Coast Management Plan review, it was agreed that now is the time to undertake a review of the code.

The aim of the review is to examine the effectiveness of the code and to consult widely with organisations with an Earth science and Geoconservation interest although views are welcome from individuals with any background.

As academics with a considerable interest in the fossils which come from the coast, your views will be particularly relevant.

Please take the time to make a contribution.

T-Shirt

Most of the T-Shirts have been sold, but due to a mistake in ordering, a number of delegates have asked for smaller sizes than were available. A number of people asked for smaller T-shirts, and I'll confirm these by email. If anyone else is interested, please let me know and I'll make sure we have enough for everyone.

http://svpca.org/years/2011_lyme_regis/tshirt.php

Cost will be £10, including P&P to UK addresses.

Receipts

I think I've sent out as pdfs or printed receipts to all those who have asked, but please get in touch if I've missed you.

Auction

Thanks to the sterling efforts of Jeff Liston, the auction managed to raise £461.50 despite a rather low number of contributions. This goes back to the Jones-Fenleigh Memorial Fund to help delegates with no institutional support attend future conferences.

Mary Anning Day – 24th September

Tickets for Mary Anning Day at Lyme Regis are now on sale. It will be a great day for anyone interested in the life and times of Mary Anning, the History of Science, Fossils and Creative Writing! In fact there's something for everyone!. Free museum entry and creative family fun activities.

See www.lymeregismuseum.co.uk for the full programme and booking info.

Organisers

Richard Forrest (Electronic ether)

Richard Edmonds (Dorset)

Steve McLean (GCG)