

Annual Report for 2023

For presentation at the 2023 AGM



www.geocurator.org

The Geological Curators Group is a UK-based membership organisation and charity (no. 1198339), founded in 1974 to improve the state and status of geological collections and curation. The Group is run for its members, by volunteers elected from the membership. It is affiliated to the Geological Society of London as a Specialist Group and recognised as a Subject Specialist Network by Arts Council England. Our mission and vision are available [here](#).

1. View from the Chair 1.1 The Committee 1.2 Membership Offer 1.3 Roadmap 2023-2025 1.4 Relationships with other Groups 1.5 50 th Anniversary Year 1.6 Acknowledgements of Support	<i>Dr Emma Nicholls</i>
2. Accounts	<i>Rob Lowther</i>
3. Membership	<i>Cindy Howells</i>
4. Events 4.1. SPPC	<i>Mark Evans</i> <i>Lu Allington-Jones</i>
5. Publications 5.1. <i>Geological Curator</i> 5.2. <i>Coprolite</i> Newsletter	<i>Dr Duncan Murdock</i> <i>Cinzia Ragni</i>
6. Collections Support	<i>Dr Mike Howe</i>
7. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	<i>Meghan Jenkinson</i>
8. Online 8.1. Website 8.2. Blog 8.3. Social media and JISCmail	<i>Simon Harris</i> <i>Rob Theodore</i> <i>Lu Allington-Jones</i>
9. GCG – SPNHC Rep	<i>Andrew Haycock</i>
10. GCG information	

Previous years' Annual Reports can be found at:

<https://www.geocurator.org/committee/management-documents/60-annual-reports-and-accounts/>

1. View from the Chair

1.1 The Committee

I am so proud of those on the Geological Curators Group Committee. They all support GCG in a voluntary capacity, carrying out their roles on top of full-time jobs, PhDs, families, and everything else life in general throws at them. Volunteering on a committee for an SSN isn't an easy existence, as I know many of you will empathise with, and I get emails at all times, from weekends to the middle of the night, as they work to fulfil their roles. With so many plates spinning in everyone's spheres, the Committee are a marvel and I want to ensure they all know that we see that and recognise their, often gargantuan, efforts. When, at very short notice, I had to convene a couple of *ad hoc* time sensitive meetings, the whole committee prioritised GCG in their otherwise already hectic schedules and came together to address the situation at hand. It is my pleasure and honour to be the Chair of this group of individuals, with their enthusiasm, professionalism, dedication and combined work ethic.

1.2 Membership Offer

Once you log into the GCG website using your membership details, there is a plethora of resources! Please do make sure you take some time to familiarise yourself with everything that GCG has to offer, and benefit from these resources whenever you need them.

Having said that, it is also extremely important that GCG continues to deliver new and exciting benefits, including programming, the journal, the newsletter, the blog, social media, and more. Looking back, the winter AGM in 2022 saw what could be described as the dawn of a new era for GCG, emerging from the pandemic, finding its feet as a CIO, and beginning 2023 with a largely new committee, all under the leadership of a brand-new Chair who was moving jobs, houses and cities at the time. Inevitably there is a settling in period for anyone fulfilling a new role, myself as Chair included, but we have been able to deliver five events throughout 2023, one online, two hybrid, and two in-person (see section 4.0 for further details), the last of which will take place on 11th December 2023 at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. The journal team has been working extremely hard to successfully overcome problems and finalise the overdue 2022 issue (**11,7**), on top of completing the 2023 issue (**11,8**). Both are due to arrive in your inbox before Christmas, with the physical versions in hot pursuit. We sincerely apologise for the delay to the guest edited Special Ethics Issue of *Geological Curator* (**11,7**), please see section 5.1 for further details.

I'll conclude this section with the promise of a golden 2024, as we ramp up plans to celebrate our 50th anniversary. We have been working hard behind the scenes on increasing our membership offer for 2024 and I am really looking forward to seeing the fruits of our labours, as we work together to serve our members, over the coming months and beyond.

1.3 Roadmap 2023–2025

Hopefully you will all have had a chance to read the Roadmap 2023–2025 which summarises where GCG was at the start of the new Chair's tenure (December 2022) and looks ahead at the next three years. One of the primary goals for 2024 is to celebrate the 50th anniversary with all the pomp and ceremony we can muster!

Not wishing to repeat what you can read in the Roadmap, there is one element which I feel needs some elaboration, which is the rebrand from Geological Curators Group to Geological Collections Group. This new name will mean that we will remain “GCG”. In addition, the journal will remain *Geological Curator*. The rebrand reflects the acknowledgement that many people that work or volunteer with geological collections require the same skills, utilise the same resources and provide or rely on the same community that those of us who label ourselves solely as curators do. We have garnered opinion from members, non-members, and other SSNs that have curator in the title, and there is much to suggest that rebranding to ‘collections’ is the right thing to do.

The Geological Curators Group exists to support geological collections and those working or volunteering with them. We are not currently reaching a lot of those people and the near-unanimous answer as to why is always the same “I’m not a curator, so I didn’t think I was your audience”. I understand and sympathise with the natural instinct that change is not always for the better, but the Committee and I strongly believe that to fulfil our number one goal – to serve geological collections and those who work or volunteer with them – we need to implement a change that brings more people within our sector together. I hope you will agree that the change from Geological Curators Group to Geological Collections Group is a really positive and exciting move. However, please do get in touch with me if you would like to discuss this further.

1.4 Relationships with Other Groups

The Geological Society of London

We extend thanks to The Geological Society of London, of which we are an affiliated group, for continuing to be a wonderful partner. One of the many perks of our affiliation is being able to hold our in-person meetings at Burlington House. Not only is it an incredible venue but the IT facilities allow us to hold good quality hybrid meetings, meaning we are able to benefit from having Committee members hailing from the international community. At present, this includes colleagues as far away as Australia.

The Geologists’ Association and Reading Geological Society

The Geologists’ Association and Reading Geological Society have also recently been extremely helpful to us this year, helping us navigate a new insurance policy as we finally, and gleefully, return to field trips with the first Field Workshop having taken place in October 2023.

Sister-SSNs

The Geological Curators Group is extremely lucky to benefit from Committee members who have strong personal or professional connections with individuals in other Subject Specialist Networks. The Geological Curators Group has a Memorandum of Understanding with both the Natural Sciences Collections Association (NatSCA) and the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC). There is a specific role on the GCG committee for a SPNHC Rep which has been fulfilled over the last few years by Andrew Haycock. We used to also have a representative on the Committee for NatSCA, as well as strong ties to the Palaeontological Association (PalAss), however these roles are not or are not presently recognised roles. It comes as no surprise that SSNs within the geological and natural sciences face similar issues and I firmly believe that we should galvanise to support each other, celebrate each other’s successes, provide support when things get difficult, and

partake in regular knowledge exchange. To this end, I have recently been in conversation with the Chairs of NatSCA and the Society of Mineral Museum Professionals, a member of the PalAss Council, as well as representatives of SSNs in a number of other countries, to see how we can best provide and benefit from support. I am a great believer in unity and the strength it gives us. As the Committee continues to work towards forging links, we would greatly appreciate your feedback on any particular groups you feel it could be of mutual benefit to approach. This is in no way to replace or encroach on the Subject Specialist Network Consortium which is a much larger organisation, but rather to ensure that GCG is linked, to an appropriate level, to those SSNs around us to whom we can be of most mutual benefit.

1.5 50th Anniversary Year

It is with great excitement and anticipation that we look forward to 2024 and our golden anniversary! There will be several announcements at the 2023 AGM with regard to our celebrations, but plans for 2024 include a packed events programme, a special golden anniversary issue of *Geological Curator*, a new logo and name, and most important of all... A WHOPPING BIG CAKE.

With so many plans afoot, it would be sensible to take on some 50th anniversary volunteers to help with the organisation of one or more of our events. If you would like to help, please get in touch with our Programme Coordinator Mark Evans events@geocurator.org

1.6 Acknowledgements of Support

First and foremost, huge thanks must go to the Committee who keep GCG going and are responsible for our success. Huge thanks go to Lu Allington-Jones, our Secretary, who has fulfilled and exceeded the already high expectations I had of her. As Chair, the most important way to guarantee success is to have a reliable Secretary with an incredible work ethic and that is Lu from start to finish. I have been incredibly grateful to her for keeping us on track, organising us in a plethora of ways, and being an incredible source of support through both rough times and smooth.

A number of Committee members have remained in their roles from Sarah King's tenure as Chair, proving their ongoing enthusiasm and commitment to serving GCG and its members. Rob Lowther and Rachel Walcott as Treasurers, Mike Howe as Collections Coordinator, Sherri Donaldson as Collections Coordinator Assistant, Nigel Larkin as Conservation Officer, Meghan Jenkinson as Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator, Andrew Haycock as SPNHC Rep, Simon Harris as Web Coordinator, and Cindy Howells as Membership Officer. A huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes and my heartfelt thanks goes out to this group of people for their ongoing dedication.

New to our Committee for 2023 have been Rob Theodore as Blog Editor, Duncan Murdock as Journal Editor, Cinzia Ragni as Newsletter Editor, and Mark Evans as Programme Coordinator. All four have settled in really well to their roles, despite the difficulties of finding your feet when you have to hit the ground running on an aspect of work that is above and beyond the day job. Our focus in the coming months is to support them to develop in their roles, by facilitating training where necessary and expanding teams where required. Enormous thanks go to all of them for everything they have done and achieved this year.

Huge thanks also go to our incredible editing team; Lu Allington-Jones, Neil Adams and Jess McCoy as Associate Editors and Jordan Bestwick, Alexandria Gour as First Stage Production Editors, and

Emily Carlisle as Second Stage Production Editor. It is a colossal amount of work to produce a journal, and we couldn't be more grateful to them for their herculean efforts.

Finally, but importantly, our thanks go to you, our members, for making GCG the supportive and dynamic community that it is. A recent request from the Sedgwick Museum on the Geo-Curators JISCMail was extremely pleasing to read – a request for other museums to club together to decrease the price of resources. Whilst this may seem like a small thing, to me it represents our community working together to create a brighter future for geological collections and those working with them. Requests for specialist advice are always met with numerous responses from around the world and it is gratifying to see.

2. Accounts

The Geological Curators Group has remained financially healthy this year.

With the switch to CIO status the opportunity was taken to set up new bank and PayPal accounts for the group. CAF bank accounts, cash and savings, were opened and are working well with CAF providing great service and help when needed. A new PayPal account was opened, and various advance features activated, such as the ability for us to take card payments online via a virtual card terminal. The new bank and PayPal details can be found on the website.

If you pay by standing order, it is very important that you update your bank with our new account details before 31st December 2023, for the 2024 membership fees.

We are also looking at adding PayPal annual subscriptions for the 2024 membership fees, more information will follow on this in due course.

The 2022-2023 accounts will be released before the AGM, once they have been audited.

Rob Lowther

3. Membership

The first thing you'll notice from the figures below is that our membership figures have decreased slightly this year. Around 40 members have failed to pay their subscription (or notify us of their wish to leave), and have subsequently, been deleted from our database. Very sadly, a further four of our members passed away during the year.

If you do decide to leave GCG, please do let me know so that I don't have to send out reminders.

Subscribers are about to receive the overdue guest edited ethics issue of our journal (Volume 11 Number 7), as well as the 2023 journal issue (Volume 11 Number 8). We will also be making several exciting announcements at the 2023 AGM regarding multiple events planned for 2024, meaning our membership offer going forward should be very attractive indeed. We have so far welcomed 11 new members for 2023 and I really look forward to meeting more of you at face-to-face events very soon.

We are delighted to have members from 20 countries across the world, including: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Columbia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland,

Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, USA and the UK, and will ensure some events are online or hybrid in order to accommodate our global audience.

This year we have opened a new bank account in order to achieve compliance with our new CIO structure, and so those of you with existing Standing Orders will have received a letter requesting you to cancel your old one and open a new one, which will pay into our new account. If you would like to take advantage of this recurring payment system then please just get in touch with us. Otherwise you can continue to pay through our website on Paypal, or by direct BACS, or by cheque.

Breakdown of membership figures for this year (up 13 Nov 2023)

Full individual members paid to date	165 (136 UK, 29 OS)
Concessionary members paid to date	32 (28 UK, 4 OS)
Honorary members	7
Institutional subscribers paid to date	35
Total	239

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Personal UK	164	170	159	169	173	175
Personal Overseas	33	37	45	39	34	28
UK Institutions	19	24	19	26	37	38
Overseas Institutions	16	19	16	19	20	21
Honorary	7	8	8	8	7	7
Total	239	258	247	261	271	269

As always, I thank those who pay promptly each year, and also those who let me know when their address, email or place of work changes. I love to hear from members, and especially when you write offering an idea, a talk, an article, or offer of a meeting venue. Do continue to promote GCG to your work colleagues. GCG is relevant to anyone who deals in any way with geological collections, whether you are a student, volunteer, curator, conservator, illustrator, preparator, dealer, photographer, collections manager, or any of the other types of geological roles that professionals and amateurs work within.

Finally, I'd like to thank Rachel and Rob for their hard work during the year to ensure that the bank accounts run smoothly, and helping me with identifying payments that have no reference codes!

Cindy Howells

4. Events

As my first year as Programme Coordinator draws to a close, I would like to start this report by thanking my predecessor Zoë Hughes for providing a suite of documents to help the incoming novice. Although we are slowly getting back to holding in-person events, there are still advantages to holding virtual or hybrid meetings. With fewer geographical or financial obstacles, we can appeal to a wider and more diverse range of participants and communities. We also now have members from over 20 countries around the world, which is fantastic, and we are keen to ensure we include an

offer that is relevant to them as well as those more able to attend in person events. This is one reason why we are holding the 2023 Winter Seminar 'Building bridges between collectors and museums' and the 50th AGM online.

In March we marked Neurodiversity Celebration Week with a Neurodiversi-Tea virtual 'coffee' morning. This on-line event, organised by Meghan Jenkinson and hosted by Duncan Murdock, was an opportunity to discuss and celebrate the wide range of neurodiversities in the geological collections sector.

The 32nd Symposium on Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation (SPPC) was held at the University of Lincoln in September and was also available online as a hybrid meeting; see the separate report for further details. My thanks to the organising committee of Lu Allington-Jones, Kieran Miles and Nigel Larkin.

In October we held our first field-based meeting for several years with a Dinosaur Trackways Field Workshop organised by Emma Nicholls, and to the instructors Emma Nicholls, Duncan Murdock and Simon Harris for lending their time and expertise. This popular event was fully-booked, and the party examined, cleaned and documented Middle Jurassic sauropod dinosaur footprints at an Oxfordshire quarry.

Our final event of 2023 will be the Digital Morphology Workshop in December at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. I would like to extend my thanks in advance to Emma Nicholls for organising the workshop, and to the instructors Duncan Murdock and Frankie Dunn for sharing their time and technical know-how.

As we have started holding in-person and field-based meetings again it was important that we reassess our insurance arrangements for our events and other activities. We are now covered under the Geologists' Association schedule, like many other UK-based geological groups and societies. Finally, we are currently planning our events programme for our 50th anniversary year of 2024 with a number of both in-person and online meetings in the pipeline.

Mark Evans

4.1. The Symposium on Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation (SPPC)

The 32nd Symposium on Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation took place on 6th September at Lincoln University (UK), immediately preceding the 69th Symposium on Vertebrate Palaeontology and Comparative Anatomy (SVPCA).

The morning consisted of SPPC platform presentations, with six talks of 15 minutes each, plus five minutes for questions and handover. Six posters were displayed in the refreshment area. One speaker presented remotely, and another used a prerecorded presentation, the remaining four speakers presented in person. The subjects were wide-ranging and included microfossils, analysis, support-making, solvent gels, career development and hazards. The afternoon consisted of tours of the Lincoln Conservation laboratories. Posters and talk abstracts are available [here](#).

The meeting was our first hybrid SPPC and it went very smoothly, apart from some minor issues with sound. Many questions came from both the live and virtual audiences, implying good levels of engagement. The hybrid aspect was only found to be a disadvantage when live audience members wanted to have a discussion, but everything needed repeating for the virtual audience.

The organising committee are very grateful to Dr Manabu Sakamoto, our SVPCA host at Lincoln.

Lu Allington-Jones

5. Publications

5.1. Geological Curator

11(7) December 2022

Special Ethics Issue, guest edited by Dr Jeff Liston.

This issue was due to be published winter 2022. After some unavoidable delays, the entire issue, comprising seven papers, was published digitally and distributed to members as a pdf in October 2023. The physical edition is with the publishers and will be distributed to subscribers by the end of 2023.

- **Publication pressure threatens the integrity of palaeontological research** *Nussaibah B. Raja and Emma M. Dunne*
- **"Missionary lizards" - Palaeontological exhibits and the creationist agenda** *Glenn W. Storrs*
- **Creative compliance, neutralization techniques, and palaeontological ethics** *Donna Yates*
- **The politics of palaeontology: the creation, reduction, and restoration of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears national monuments** *David P. Polly*
- **Upholding research ethics and reproducibility standards in paleontology research publications: Perspectives from PLOS ONE** *Nicola Stead and Renee V. Hoch*
- **A MAP to manage palaeontology** *Scott E. Foss*
- **Ubirajara: The dilemma of the Brazilian fossil curator** *Caiubi Emanuel Souza Kuhn, Ismar de Souza Carvalho, Fábio Augusto Gomes Vieira Reis, André Luis Spisila, Marjorie Csekö Nolasco, and Abdelmajid Hach Hach*

Following a review by the Geological Curators Group Committee, *Crying Ubirajara: Bad faith actors & weaponizing outrage in post-Trump palaeontology* by Jeff J. Liston was withdrawn online on 27th October 2023, prior to publication in print. The peer review process used in the preparation of this article was found to be in contradiction of the journal's policies and guidelines. The author has been invited to resubmit on this topic to a future issue of *Geological Curator*.

11(8) December 2023

This issue is due to be published winter 2023.

Three articles have been released in digital format to members only, as early online access:

- **Sorting a sticky situation: Engaging students in sorting and identifying microfossils from La Brea Tar Pits** *Christine M. Mazzello, Elizabeth R. Ellwood, Aisling B. Farrell, Nathaniel S. Fox, Stephany Potze, Cornelia A. Clarke, Gary T. Takeuchi, Molly Porter, Emily Lindsey*
- **Archives in lockdown: The curious case of the BGS 'Wilson Collection'** *Graham Tulloch, Beverly P. Bergman, Philip Stone, and Michael Togher*
- **Collection security: low-cost measures for mineral collections** *Erika B Anderson*

The remaining articles will be published online in December, with the print version distributed early in January 2024.

Editorial Team

Huge thanks go to the current editorial team: Duncan Murdock (Editor); Lu Allington-Jones, Neil Adams, Jess McCoy (Associate Editors); Jordan Bestwick, Alexandria Gour (First Stage Production Editors); and Emily Carlisle (Second Stage Production Editor).

Many thanks also go to Jeff Liston (Guest Editor of the Special Ethics Issue, 11(7)), Nicolas Baird and Hannah Bird (former Production Editors).

Submitting a manuscript

All submissions should be sent to journal@geocurator.org and should follow the [Instructions for Authors](#). They should be in English, appropriately structured, clear, concise and fully referenced. Please carefully read through our [Journal Policies and Guidance](#) before submitting a manuscript for consideration.

Issues of Geological Curator

The most recent three issues can only be accessed by current members through logging in to the website. Issues older than 2 years are made freely available via the website. Back issues of most printed editions are also still available [here](#).

The [Journal Policies and Guidance](#) are currently undergoing a revision, and will be published on our website in the new year.

Dr Duncan Murdock

5.2 Coprolite Newsletter

As the new Editor for the newsletter, there was a necessary settling in period and the year 2023 brought several challenges to the production of the *Coprolite* Newsletter. Numerous international collaborations were sought, with authors of articles from numerous countries, including France, Italy, and Switzerland. In particular were external collaborations (of text or images) with (alphabetic order):

- Prof. A. El Albani (Professor at Université de Poitiers: article)
- Dr Simon Jackson AMA FGS (AMA FGS, Collections and Learning Curator (Natural Sciences), Colchester and Ipswich Museums member, article)
- Fabio Magnani (Fossil preparator Museo Cantonale di Storia Naturale di Lugano: coprolites' photo)
- Massimo Umberto (Curator of MAGMAXarticle)

Internal collaborations for the production of articles were (alphabetic order): Lu Allington-Jones (GCG Secretary); Cindy Howells (GCG Membership Officer); Nigel Larkin (GCG Conservation Officer); Dr Emma Nicholls (GCG Chair); Robert Theodore (GCG Blog Editor).

Summary of recent issues

Issue 104 (Spring 2023)

Events (Robert Theodore, GCG Blog Editor)

MAGMAX (Massimo Umberto, Curator of MAGMAX)

Ipswich Museums Awarded Designated Status for Post-Cretaceous Geology Collection (Dr Simon Jackson AMA FGS, Collections and Learning Curator (Natural Sciences), Colchester and Ipswich Museums member)

IN MEMORIAM (Cindy Howells (GCG membership secretary))

Subscription (Cindy Howells (GCG membership secretary))

Guess the coprolite photo (Nigel Larkin (Conservation Officer))

Issue 105 (Summer 2023)

Events (Robert Theodore, GCG Blog Editor)

Roy Starkey has been honoured by King Charles with the British Empire Medal for 'Services to Mineralogy' in the King's Birthday Honours List. (Cinzia Ragni, GCG Newsletter Editor)

Subscription (Cindy Howells, GCG membership secretary)

Guess the coprolite photo (Nigel Larkin, Co-opted GCG Member: Conservation Officer)

Issue 106 (Autumn 2023)

Upcoming Event Deadline & other events (Cinzia Ragni, GCG Newsletter Editor)

The origin of life (Cinzia Ragni, GCG Newsletter Editor *with the cooperation of Prof. A. El Albani*)

Ipswich Museums Awarded Designated Status for Post-Cretaceous Geology Collection (Dr Simon Jackson AMA FGS, Collections and Learning Curator (Natural Sciences), Colchester and Ipswich Museums member)

Subscription (Cindy Howells, GCG membership secretary)

Guess the coprolite photo (Fabio Magnani, Fossil preparator Museo Cantonale di Storia Naturale di Lugano)

Future targets:

To be improved in terms of layout

For InDesign training and support to be provided to the Editor as required

Increase the number of new collaborations in order to better describe both new exhibits (UK and non-UK) and methods to simplify or give those working with collections new insights into the handling and display of exhibits.

Special thanks:

Special thanks to Lu Allington-Jones, Cindy Howells, Emma Nicholls and Rob Theodore for their corrections, cooperation and support.

Cinzia Ragni

6. Collections support

The safety of local museum collections remains a key concern, especially with the general move away from subject-based specialist expertise to more general outreach staff and co-curation. The **Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro** and its world class Rashleigh mineral collection is a matter of increasing anxiety. The museum has undertaken a tendering exercise to select consultants to undertake the gallery redesign. There is good news with **Ipswich Museums** being awarded Designated Status for their Post-Cretaceous geology collections.

The Museum Association's collections disposal database is being reviewed as the current system is too "hit or miss". It is hoped that the GCG website "Lost, Stolen, and Strayed" pages, coupled with JISC mail, could provide a more practical alternative for geological materials.

DISSCO-UK <https://www.dissco-uk.org/>, the project to digitise UK natural history collections, remains an area for optimism. At a steering group meeting on Friday 29th September, the Natural History Museum confirmed that the outline bid had been submitted to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for consideration by the UKRI Infrastructure Committee later in the year. This provided a number of options related to differing levels of funding. They hoped to hear informally later in the year if they were to be invited to prepare a full business case for submission to the Treasury, and the result would be announced at a DISSCO-UK community meeting in December. The

DISSCO-UK Life Sciences portal is functioning well - <https://data.dissco-uk.org/> - and the current view is that GBIF should be asked to design a geosciences portal. Another potential source of funding to watch out for is the AHRC **RICHeS** (Research Infrastructure for Conservation and Heritage Science - <https://www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/what-we-do/riches>) programme.

The amateur collection community is becoming increasingly aware of the need to plan for the future of their collections. The Russell Society held its April meeting on the subject, with a panel of curators from the major national UK museums, including BGS. The meeting was oversubscribed, with all 100 seats being taken by a UK and international audience, but a recording is available on YouTube - <https://russellsoc.org/follow-up-to-what-should-we-do-with-our-mineral-collection/>. Various options were explored from auctions to dealers and private sales to museum donation. As museums struggle for resources and lack specialist curators, this route is becoming increasingly problematic. GCG can assist by providing guidance on minimum metadata standards, but the Collections Trust Spectrum Standard is seen as a growing problem. Following the Spectrum standard is generally taken as necessary for museum accreditation, but many museums apply the rigorous standards more appropriate for works of art than the minimum standards more suited to geoscience samples. The 2023 GCG seminar and 50th AGM, titled 'Building bridges between collectors and museums', continues this initiative.

Dr Mike Howe

7. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

This year has been slow within the EDI role, despite many challenges being faced across the sector. Progress in the EDI role has been hampered by starting my PhD, which is a huge undertaking, and at the end of the 2023 term, I am moving to another role on the Committee that better suits my work pressures.

At the beginning of the year the GCG registered for Neurodiversity Celebration Week and hosted the virtual event NeurodiversiTea: Celebrating Neurodiversity in Geological Collections. This provided a safe space to discuss the challenges faced by neurodiverse members, as well as celebrating the strengths that neurodiversity brings to the sector. Although only attended by a small number of people, this event helped us test whether there was a desire for themed virtual coffee-morning style discussions and realise how best to lead them in the future.

Further discussions have been undertaken about improvements and revisions to the journal policy under guidelines set by the Committee on Publishing Ethics (COPE). Changes will be reviewed to improve transparency and brought into effect in 2024.

Meghan Jenkinson

8. Online activity

8.1 Website

This year the website has continued to perform well, serving the purpose of promoting GCG to a diverse worldwide audience. We have successfully held a number of hybrid committee meetings,

and anticipate continuing to do so, as they enable committee members to participate remotely from anywhere on the globe, as well as reducing the cost of holding committee meetings substantially.

The table below shows the now customary summary of page impressions from the start of 2023 until 6th November – you can compare this with approximately the same period last year in the previous report which you can find [on our website](#).

Rank	Page Title	Hits
1	GCG homepage	39097
2	News from the 48th GCG AGM: CIO progress, membership changes and DiSSCo developments	10572
3	SPPC 2007 Glasgow	10338
4	Article search results	9655
5	The GCG blog	2568
6	Committee Profile: Nigel Larkin	2274
7	Thumbs-up leaflet	2218
8	The Geological Curators Group mission statement	1950
9	SPPC 2010 Cambridge	1638
10	Coprolite 93 - Summer 2020	1341
11	Committee Profile: Dr Emma Nicholls	1233
12	Geological Curator 11(6)	1132
13	Privacy Policy	1024
14	Brighton Medallist 2022: Dr. Matthew A. Parkes, 1961-2020	978
15	Brand new Natural History Museum opening in Sheffield	905
16	Make a donation	873
17	Notice of increase of membership fees	804
18	Geological Curator 10(8) : RTI paper extra content	770
19	SPPC 2008 Dublin	719
20	GCG useful links listing	657
21	Committee Profile: Robert Lowther	621
22	Current Vacancies at the GCG	616
23	The A G Brighton Medal	566
24	Committee Profile: Lu Allington-Jones	564
25	Committee Profile: Mike Howe	521

A significant amount of time this year has been spent upgrading **Joomla!**, our content management system, to the newest version. The previous version reached “end of life” status in late August and continuing to use it past this point would have exposed us to potential security exploits. The upgrade path was a little more complicated than first hoped, and users may have noticed a few visual changes in the layout. We are working on the last few minor points as time permits.

One new feature we are trialling with the upgraded website is a dedicated “downloads area”. This will gather together all of the resources on our website that are not web pages in the strictest sense – so for example PDF files or zip files. From here, they can be browsed in a similar way to files on your desktop computer or linked to in a web page. In the long term, this should make it easier for us

to ensure we supply up-to-date and correct versions of documents from the site.

[Geological Curator](#)
 GC online first articles
 Volume 11
 Categories: 2 / Files: 6

[Coprolite](#)
 Categories: 0 / Files: 7

[Events](#)
 Upcoming events
 Past Events
 Categories: 2 / Files: 0

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 - Member downloads area
- Thumbs-up leaflet

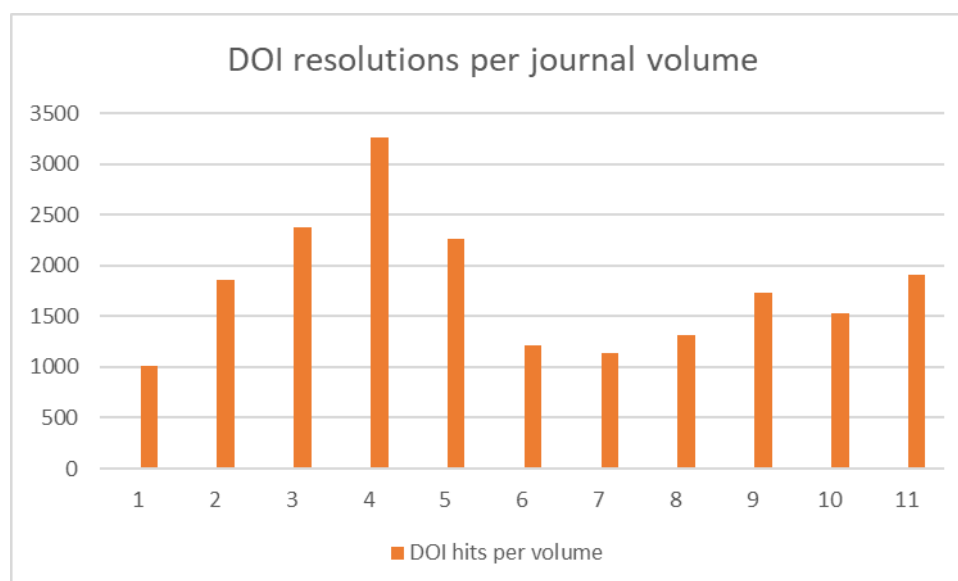
Most downloaded files

- [Coprolite_104](#) (Coprolite)
- [Coprolite_100](#) (Coprolite)
- [Coprolite_101](#) (Coprolite)
- [Coprolite_103](#) (Coprolite)
- [Coprolite_102](#) (Coprolite)

Powered by [Phoca Download](#)

The downloads area is accessible to all website visitors, but if you are logged in with a paid membership, then you will also see extra content, for example, the latest version of our newsletter. You can access it from the “Quick Links” section visible on the righthand side of every web page.

In conjunction with the Journal Editorial Team, we have also been monitoring the uptake of DOI’s on our journal articles. Each time a DOI is resolved we are able to record the date, time and issue number, and from this we can see that, for the period 1/11/2022 to 31/10/2023, demand is strong not only within the more recent volumes but also in our earlier volumes as well:



Investigating more deeply, we can see the ten most popular articles which span a wide time period and set of subjects. Three articles from our most recent journal appear in the top ten, likely because they were promoted on our website ahead of publication. Note that this is simply the number of times that a DOI has resolved to an article on our website, not the number of times it has been read or cited, and also for this analysis we left in web “crawlers” partly because they are increasingly difficult to distinguish from humans, and also because it stands to reason that popular articles are likely to be crawled more frequently than less popular ones.

Hits	Issue	Article_title
585	11(7)	Publication pressure threatens the integrity of palaeontological research
339	4(9)	Palaeobotany in Museums
314	9(3)	The virtual and physical preparation of the Collard plesiosaur from Bridgwater Bay, Somerset, UK
227	10(1)	Preserving carbonatite lavas
220	11(7)	Creative compliance, neutralization techniques, and palaeontological ethics
185	6(5)	Lost & Found: 237. Plant fossils from the Keele Formation, central England described by Emily Dix (1935)
176	11(7)	The politics of palaeontology: the creation, reduction, and restoration of Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears national monuments
138	3(9)	Marine reptiles from the Upper Lias of the Yorkshire coast
73	8(5)	Continental trace fossils and museum exhibits: displaying organism behaviour frozen in time
72	7(2)	The work and type collections of the Australian Palaeontologist, Professor Dorothy Hill (1907-1997)

As always, offers of content or technical assistance for the website are always welcomed – please get in touch via e-mail.

Simon Harris

8.2. Blog

2023 has been a year of change and with a new Blog Editor taking over from a very well established system. It has taken time for the new Blog Editor to embed themselves. This change has been reflected in a significant decrease in posts and hits compared to 2022. A total of 12 articles have been published on the blog (<https://geocollnews.wordpress.com/>) since 1st January 2023. The blog received 6,347 hits - much closer to 2021's total. 2022 also included the fantastic and incredibly popular [Rutland Sea Dragon](#) post. It is interesting to note that the views per visitor in 2022 and 2023 are the same, at 1.44. This indicates there isn't a drop in engagement, which is positive, and that an increase in post frequency in 2024 will only be beneficial.

The blog has been visited by people in 95 countries. The top five countries being the UK (3,847), USA (1,932), Australia (192), Canada (176) and Ireland (121). These are the same five countries as our all-time top visitors.

Two regular slots continue to feature on the blog: A monthly contribution from a committee member (on a rotating schedule), and the monthly *News from the Sector* (a round-up of forthcoming exhibitions, events, conferences, and workshops) written by Blog Editor Rob Theodore. The Blog Editor has taken their time re-establishing the monthly committee post and building relationships with committee members, with just two contributions so far, but this content should begin to take root in 2024.

Four articles were written by authors external to the committee, some of which are GCG members, others were not. The Blog Editor has a number in the works for the end of the year and aims to generate interest at the upcoming Symposium and AGM.

The top five most read articles between November 2022 and mid-November 2023 are:

1. Excavating the 'Rutland Sea Dragon', the largest ichthyosaur skeleton ever to be found in the UK!
2. The Mineral Collection of the Royal Institution of Cornwall
3. Geological Fakes- Minerals, Gems and Meteorites
4. So Far So Good – The Next Step in a Curatorial Career
5. The Geological Record is Full of Cr*p

If you have anything you would like to advertise in the monthly *News from the Sector* blog, or you would like to contribute an article of your own, please get in touch with us at blog@geocurator.org.

Rob Theodore

8.3. Social media

Our social media presence remains healthy on Facebook and Twitter. We thank everyone who has engaged with us over the years. Most news, stories and events are shared across both platforms, and we try to engage in common hashtags such as #MineralMonday and #FossilFriday.

Contributors are reminded of our social media policy, which can be viewed [here](#). Please note, this is a live document, and we will continue to monitor and update it.

Please do get in touch if you have content you would like us to distribute via our social media channels at info@geocurator.org or send us a direct message (DM).

8.3.1. Facebook

We are represented on Facebook in two ways: a group and a page (both called Geological Curators' Group), which have been live since May 2013. All content is posted to both the group and page. There has been a recent surge in spam on the Facebook pages and we urge you to contact a member of the committee straight away should you see anything inappropriate, so that we may remove it. The Facebook Admins are Cindy Howells (membership@geocurator.org), Nigel Larkin (conservation@geocurator.org), and Emma Nicholls (chair@geocurator.org).

8.3.2. Twitter

We have had a Twitter account ([@OriginalGCG](https://twitter.com/OriginalGCG)), since January 2013.

8.3.3 JISCmail

The vast majority of general correspondence goes via our JISCmail list: (GEO-CURATORS@JISCmail.ac.uk).

Everyone is welcome to sign up and post to JISCmail, whether a GCG member or not, although we do of course encourage you to [join us!](#) See our website for sign-up instructions.

List subscribers are roughly in line with our GCG membership, although it doesn't correspond completely. There are currently 279 list subscribers, which has remained constant over recent years (see table below). This varies during the year with some people joining as others leave, but overall remains constant. Sometimes this is because they have left the sector, changed email or had signed up for information about a specific topic and had it answered.

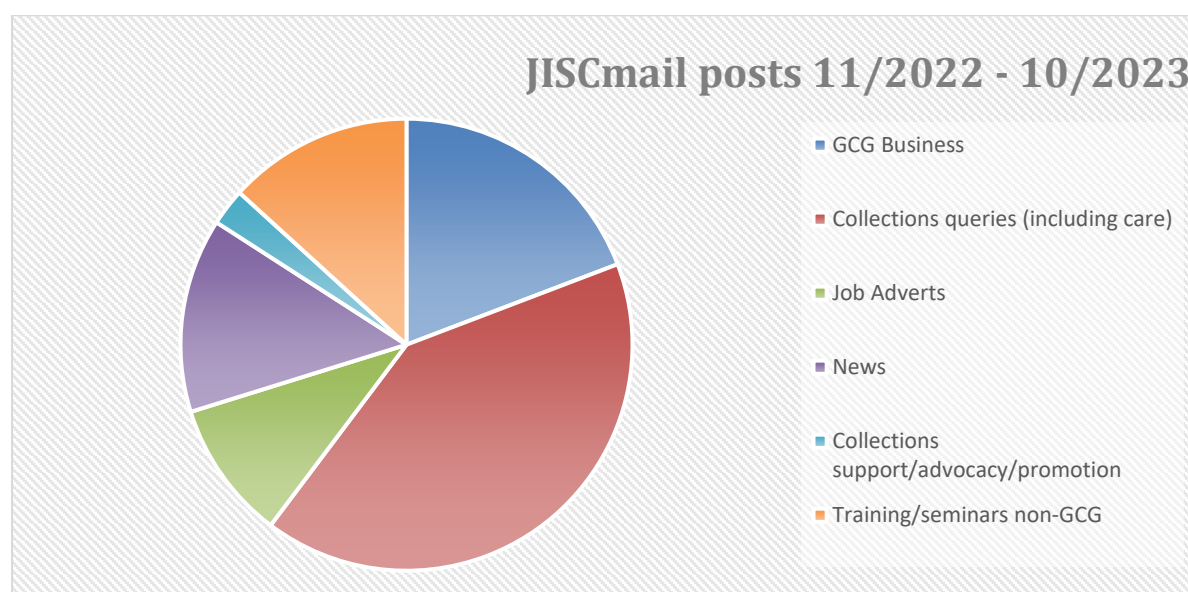
Year	Number of subscribers
2023	279
2022	279
2021	278
2020	272
2019	275
2018	276
2017	272

Table showing the number of JISC mail subscribers since 2017.

It's worth pointing out that this is purely a list of email addresses and some people have signed up with more than one email. If an email address bounces for 5 or so days in a row, JISC will remove it from the list. If you know there have been problems with your email address, it's worth checking if you're still subscribed! If you have any queries or problems, please send an email to secretary@geocurator.org.

Between November 2022 and October 2023, there were 151 posts in total on JISC mail. The majority of posts via JISC concern collection care queries (which also received the most interaction from subscribers), followed by GCG business such as adverts for GCG events.

The graph below gives a breakdown of the number of posts per category:



Total posts 2023: 151
 Total posts 2022: 157
 Total posts 2021: 89
 Total posts 2020: 136
 Total posts 2019: 103
 Total posts 2018: 98
 Total posts 2017: 107

Please note, that the time range for each year can vary as it ties in with the scheduling of the AGM.

As always, we thank everyone who has contributed to the conversations over the past year, especially those who have offered their expertise and advice which is greatly appreciated by the community.

Lu Allington-Jones

9. GCG – SPNHC (Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections) Rep

Throughout the year, I have advocated for GCG and spread news of our events as wide as possible to the SPNHC community. In Spring this year, I provided a summary of the past year of GCG activity for the SPNHC Connections newsletter. This can be found here:

<https://spnhc.org/spnhc-connection-march-2023/>

A full report of GCG news and activities was also published in the All Business Meeting (ABM) report held at SPNHC 2023 in San Francisco this June. It included standing committee reports, as well as Rep reports from other organisations. The downloadable content for that meeting can be found here:

<https://spnhc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-SPNHC-ABM-packet.pdf>

The 2023 SPNHC conference was hosted by the California Academy of Sciences, under the theme ‘Taking the Long View’, encouraging the Natural Science sector to ‘envision the future for our field, our collections, and ourselves. What lessons could be taken from the past to better shape our future?’.

I was unfortunately unable to attend the conference this year, but GCG are very grateful to the SPNHC President (Julian Carter) who was able to distribute GCG leaflets on a ‘SPNHC table of goodies’ in San Francisco where they were very well received by delegates!

The next SPNHC meeting will be a joint meeting with the Biodiversity Information Standards Group and is to be held in Okinawa in 2024. More information on this will be released by SPNHC as the conference details are finalised.

The 2025 conference was due to be hosted by Yale University but unfortunately, they have had to delay their bid to hold the conference. However, there has been interest from a long-term vendor sponsor of SPNHC to host the meeting in Kansas for 2025 and discussions are currently ongoing on the feasibility of this. The SPNHC committee have discussed the potential of holding meetings biannually in the future.

I look forward to continued advocacy on behalf of GCG. If there is any news or information you would like to share with SPNHC, please contact me at spnhc-rep@geocurator.org

Andrew Haycock

GCG information

The Geological Curators Group can be found at:

www.geocurator.org

<https://www.facebook.com/GeologicalCuratorsGroup/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/376700195784835/>

<https://twitter.com/OriginalGCG>

<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=296050&subid=0>

Contact details:

Email: info@geocurator.org

Address: Geological Curators Group
(c/o Becky Goddard)
The Geological Society
Burlington House
London
W1J 0BG

Committee for 2023 (from AGM 2022)

(T = trustee)

Chair (T): Dr Emma Nicholls (*Oxford University Museum of Natural History*)

Secretary (T): Lu Allington-Jones (*Natural History Museum, London*)

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator (T): Meghan Jenkinson (*University of Leeds*)

Collections Coordinator (T): Dr Mike Howe (*British Geological Survey*)

Treasurer (T): Robert Lowther (*Imperial College, London*)

Membership Officer: Cindy Howells (*National Museum Wales*)

Programme Coordinator (T): Mark Evans (*British Antarctic Survey*)

Journal Editor (T): Dr Duncan Murdock (*Oxford University Museum of Natural History*)

Web Coordinator (T): Simon Harris (*British Geological Survey*)

Newsletter Editor: Cinzia Ragni (*Università degli Studi di Torino*)

Blog Editor: Rob Theodore (*Sedgwick Museum, University of Cambridge*)

Officer: (Conservation Officer): Nigel Larkin (*Natural History Conservation*)

Officer: (SPNHC Rep): Andrew Haycock (*National Museum Wales*).

Officer: (Outgoing Treasurer) Rachel Walcott (*National Museum of Scotland*)

Officer: (Collections Coordinator Assistant) Sherri Donaldson (*University of Edinburgh*)

Journal Associate Editors	Neil Adams (Natural History Museum, London) Jess McCoy (Northumbria University) Lu Allington-Jones (Natural History Museum, London)
Journal First Stage Production Editors	Jordan Bestwick (University of Zurich) Alexandria Gour (Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and Sea Center)
Journal Second Stage Production Editor	Emily Carlisle (University of Bristol)

Please print your own copy of this document if you need it; GCG is working to reduce paper waste.
Thank you.

Geological Curators' Group

50th Annual General Meeting, Online

2023 Accounts

28/10/2022 - 27/10/2023

Income			Expenditure		
	2022-2023	2021-2022		2022-2023	2021-2022
GCG AGM: 2021		£230.00	GCG AGM: 2021		-£9.70
GCG AGM: 2022	£756.26	£198.00	GCG AGM: 2022	-£222.68	£0.00
GCG AGM: 2023	£95.00		GCG-hosted: ISCPP	-3,781.63	-£9,306.34
GCG-hosted: ISCPP	£4,646.07	£9,518.15	GCG-hosted: Marine Reptiles		-£76.80
GCG-hosted: Marine Reptiles		£225.00	GCG-event: Games Night		-£5.00
GCG Event: Digital Morphology Workshop	£160.00		GCG Event: Dinosaur Trackways Field Workshop	-£10.00	
GCG Event: Dinosaur Trackways Field Workshop	£630.00				
Events & Workshops Total	£6,287.33	£10,171.15	Events & Workshops Total	-£4,014.31	-£9,397.84
Subscriptions	£4,918.00	£5,473.77	Geological Curator Production	-£359.23	-£2,479.88
Donation	£148.42	£30.69	Bank Fees	-£132.07	-£400.07
Bank Interest	£3.50		Committee Meeting Expenses	-£161.54	-£559.39
			Equipment		-£129.87
			Publishing Fees	-£1,437.66	-£202.43
			Sponsorship	£0.00	-£375.49
			Web Hosting Fees	-£607.23	-£470.05
			Brighton Medals [£1,214.86 in fund]	£0.00	£0.00
			Subscription - Duplicate Refund		-£15.00
2023 Income	£11,357.25	£15,675.61	2023 Expenditure	-£6,712.04	-£14,030.02

Treasurer:

Robert Lowther 14/11/2022

Auditors:

Sherri Donaldson 27/11/2023

Mike McDonagh 22/11/2023

Closing Balance as at 27/10/2022 £23,513.14

Closing Balance as at **27/10/2023** £28,158.35

2023 Profit £4,645.21