

**WMRG Field Meeting  
Oxford University Museum of Natural History**

**Led by curators Rob Knight & Hillary Ketchum  
19/10/19**



Notes by Ray Pratt

## Forward

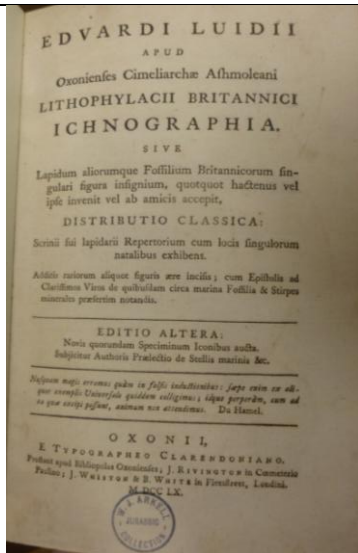
This meeting was arranged on behalf of WMRG members and their families and was scheduled to take place as part of the Earth Science Week activities. Despite several mail shots and use of social media just 3 persons took up this great opportunity to get a glimpse of behind the scenes specimens and their history through a guided tour led by the curators of the minerals and palaeontological sections. After the guided tour of the backroom specimens we were invited to take a look at the displays in the open areas of the museum. A full day was spent at this excellent museum, thoroughly enjoyed by the participants

## Palaeontology tour with Hillary Ketchum

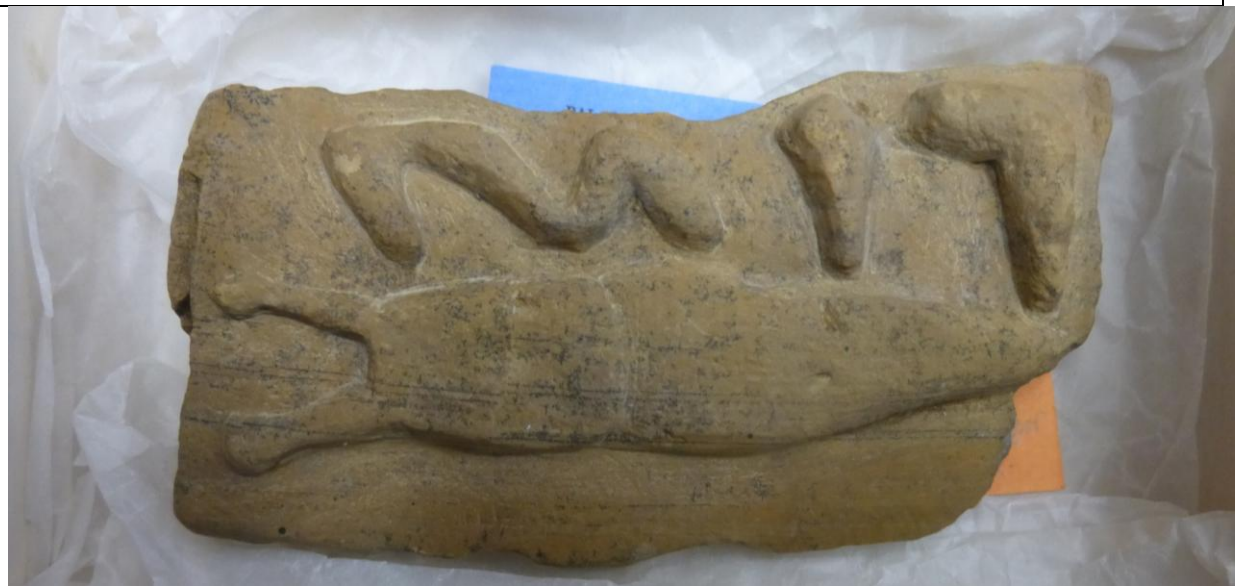
The museum boasts

- 8 palaeontology collections, circ 1/2million specimens in total
- 150 years of collections and still expanding
- Have a geo-conservation centre in Hayford, a former aircraft hanger, now converted to a store.

<p>This book was published in 1676. At the time everything found was considered to be fossils, but thought to be bits of giants and formation due to urine salt crystallisation and other wild ideas. This book resulted in the formation of the Ashmolean museum.</p>	<p>The Learned Dr Plot was the first keeper of the Ashmolean but left as never got paid. His collection is not available.</p>



Edward Lewis 1699, 2<sup>nd</sup> Keeper of Ashmolean .  
His field guide & collection is at the museum. It numbers several thousand specimens including a Megalodon (shark) tooth and other sharks teeth. His work recognises that marine artefacts were being found in sediments far from the sea. This was explained by evaporation of the seeds from oceans, landing in soil and germinating.



Fake fossil from 1720 from Germany. Originally thought to be real with crazy concepts regarding origin. Beranger Luginstein



1824 first Dinosaur described scientifically. (Megalosaurus) Giant lizard. Recognised as extinct. Found 10 miles from Oxford. Sketch by Mary (Morland) Buckland wife of William Buckland



Mary Anning with a Plesiosaur flipper 1823 (Colonel Birch Collection)



Wing bone of Pterosaur (handwriting of Mary Buckland)



Fish from Elisabeth Philpot collection



Collection of some of the first Mesozoic mammal jaws ever found in the world. These were a contentious issue as many thought it impossible to have such small creatures living at the same time as the large dinosaurs. Some suggested they could be fish jaws.

Plesiosaur skull. Holotype called *Statosaurus Tailiori*. 205 mmyold from Street in Somerset. Collected by Thomas Hawkins



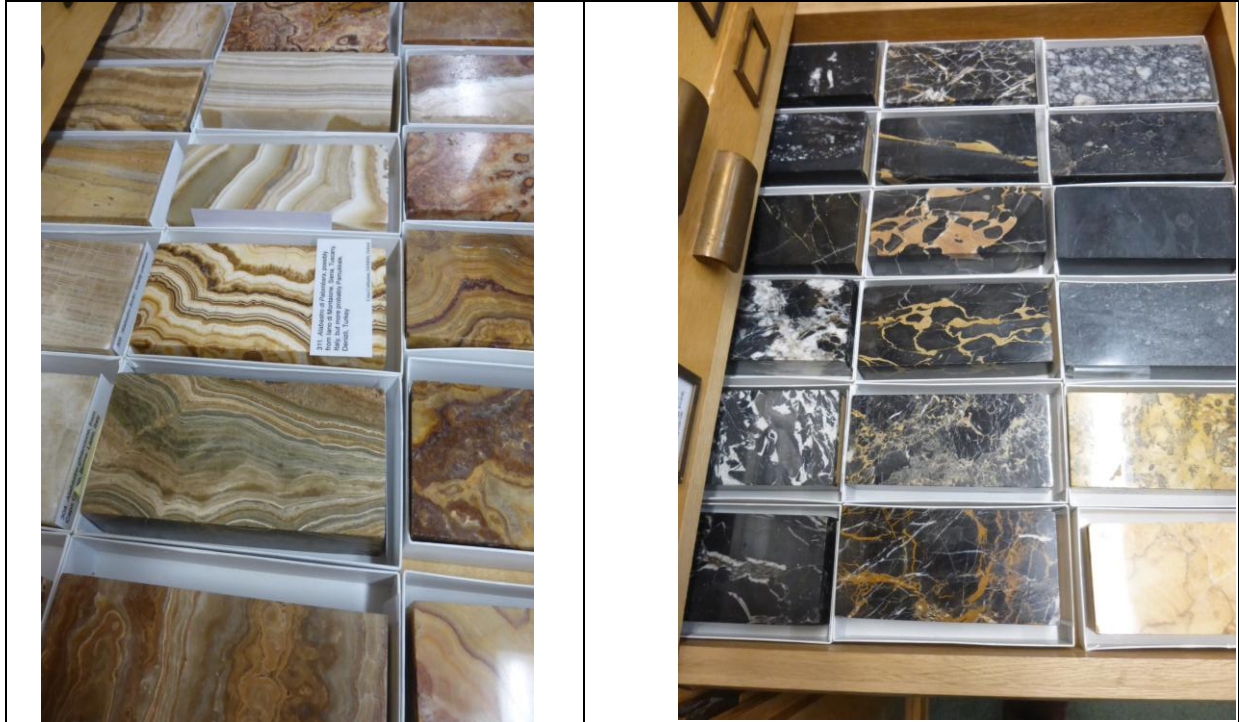
GEOLGICAL COLLECTIONS  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY MUSEUM  
No. J1037  
Type Status: HOLOTYPE  
Fig. 1  
Cat. pp. 2-4  
as *Statosaurus* (not a gen. et sp.  
Reference: HENSON, R.B.J., EVANS, M. and  
DEUCKENMILLER, P.S. 2012. High diversity,  
low disparity and small body size in plesiosaurs  
(Reptalia, Sauropterygia) from the Triassic-  
Jurassic boundary. *PLoS ONE* 7(1): e31838.  
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0111138



## Rocks & Minerals tour with Rob Knight

### Polished stones collection

Corsi Collection. Available to see Online. 1000 samples.



- Additional add ons.
- New collections online site
- Bit of description and origin
- High resolution scans

### Mineral Collection

Curators display



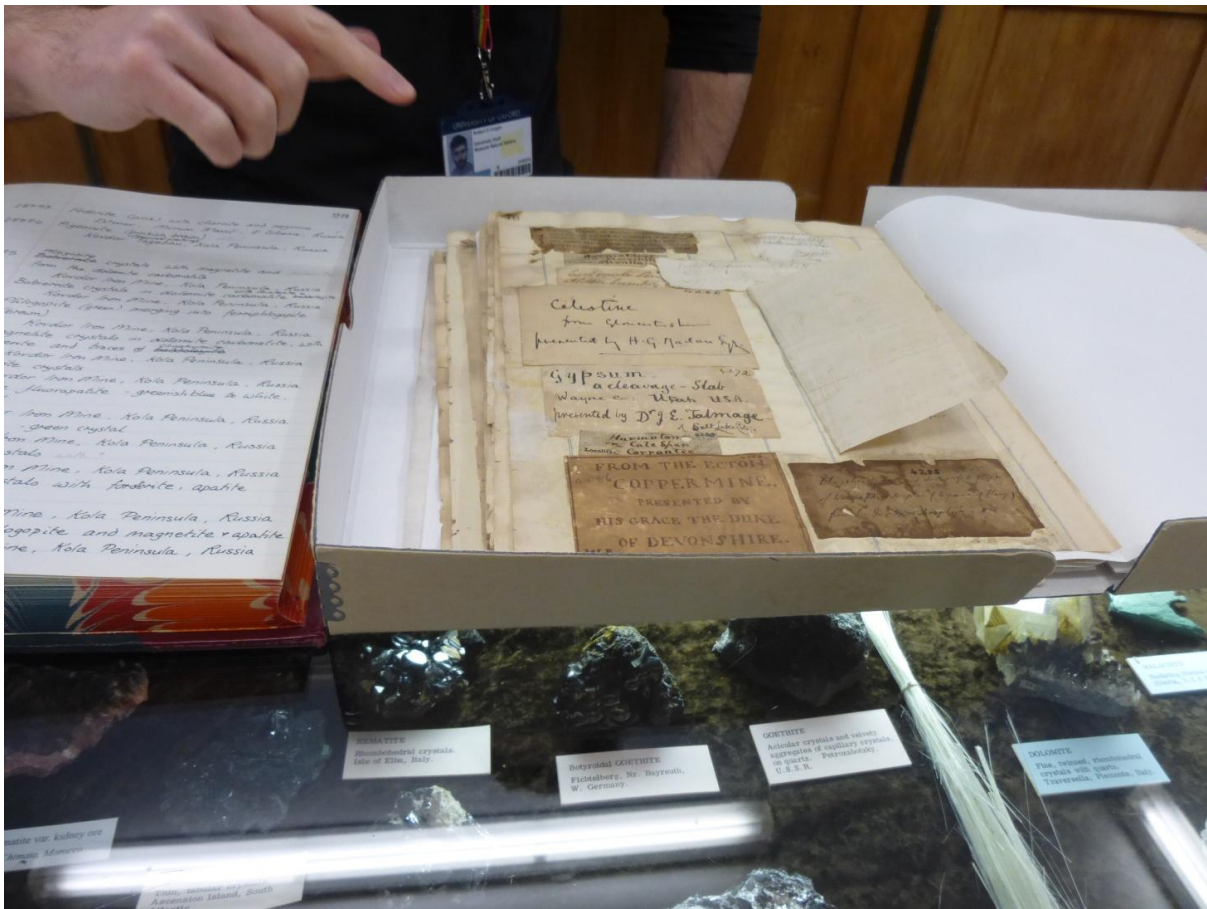
Mineral collection organised by chemical classification Native metals, alloys, sulphides, oxides, carbonates etc

First catalogue 1896 (first 40 years specimens un-catalogued).

Henry Myers first curator of the museum. He started cataloguing

Oldest material from 1600's (from Ashmolean museum), moved here when new museum opened in 1860. Without locality information the specimens are useless other than display purposes.

Kingsbury, an expert mineralogist, sorted out the mineral collection and identifying the fakes, did a lot of good at the museum but fell foul when he tried to create and sell fakes himself.



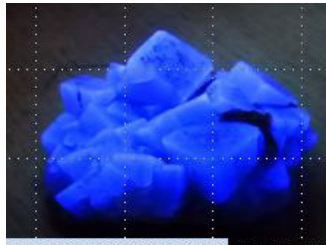
When additional samples added to the collection any original labels are kept in a book and cross referenced to the museum's new label.

Most minerals precipitate from hot fluids. Crystals will grow in cavities.



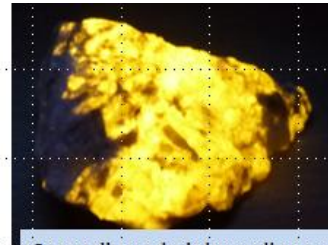


Rob Knight with some superb examples of Malachite, Haematite, Fluorspar, Labradorite



Fluorite - blue

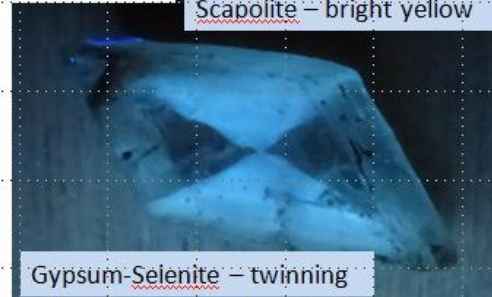
## Mineral Fluorescence



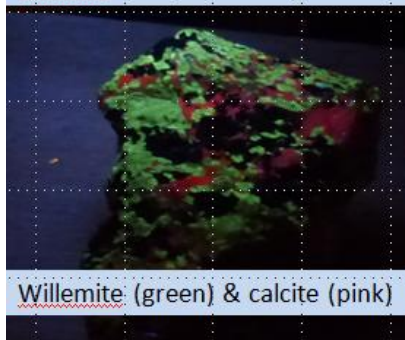
Scapolite - bright yellow



Sodalite - Purple & orange - lava



Gypsum-Selenite - twinning



Willemite (green) & calcite (pink)



Rubies - Red





Manganese – dendritic pattern