

Palaeontological Association Review Seminar, Street, Somerset Friday 31st July 2009

Sea Dragons of Avalon: the early radiations of the marine reptiles and recovery from the Triassic-Jurassic faunal crisis, with special reference to Street in Somerset and the wider British record

The Sea Dragons of Avalon seminar will be held at the modern Strode Theatre in Street, on the edge of the marshes forming the Somerset Levels, opposite King Arthur's legendary Isle of Avalon. It will offer a fresh look at the Street area, one of the classic source localities for marine reptiles during the 19th century alongside Lyme Regis. The seminar will be set in the wider context of the latest Triassic and early Jurassic faunal turnovers, and topics will include assessment of the Triassic-Jurassic marine reptile fauna together with contemporary changes in land reptiles, marine fishes and marine invertebrates. This is highly topical in light of interest in the end-Triassic mass extinction and recent resurvey of the Street area by the British Geological Survey. New vertebrate finds, together with posters by workers and institutions in the south-west of England, will be on display and we plan to visit the Alfred Gillett Collection of local fossil reptiles by kind courtesy of the archives of the Alfred Gillett Trust.

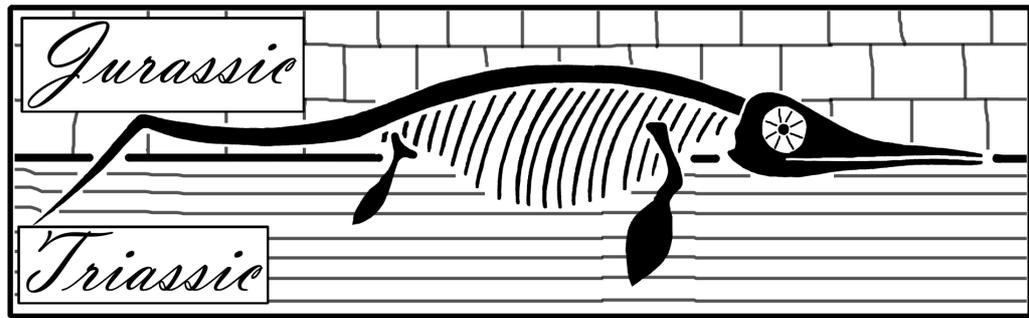
On the preceding evening, Thursday 30th July, the world-renowned ichthyosaur expert Ryosuke Motani (University of California, Davis) will deliver a Public Understanding of Science lecture, "Street's town symbol: the ichthyosaur two centuries since its discovery", to be held at the Strode Theatre, for which there will be a small admission charge. The seminar will be followed by a local field excursion on Saturday 1st August, to see some of the remaining historical quarry sites, the local scenery and its relation to geological structure; if possible a visit to a modern working quarry will also be arranged.

There is no central conference accommodation available in Street itself, but this part of Somerset is a prime tourist area with many attractions (such as historic Glastonbury and the Clarks retail village in Street). Local accommodation is available, although it is wise to book early; we are happy to provide contacts for local Tourist Information Offices at the time of booking. In addition, Street is on regular bus routes from Bristol (through Wells and Glastonbury) and Taunton railway stations. The meeting is timed to allow participants to come for the day by public transport from Bristol or Taunton, if required.

The seminar is open to all, but booking is essential. The conference fee of £35 (reduced to £23 for full-time students and the unwaged) includes tea and coffee, a light lunch on the Friday, and free entry to the Thursday evening Public Understanding of Science lecture; there will be a small additional charge of £7.50 for the Saturday field trip. Please send enquiries to the organisers at Street2009@palass.org or write to: Dr Leslie Noè, Curator of Natural Science (PalAss Street Seminar), Thinktank, the Birmingham Science Museum, Millennium Point, Curzon Street, Birmingham, B4 7XG, including your name and address.

Organisers:

Michael A. Taylor (National Museums Scotland);
Leslie F. Noè (Thinktank, the Birmingham Science Museum and University of Birmingham);
David B. Hill (South Somerset District Council);
Jeff J. Liston (Hunterian Museum and Faculty of BioMedical and Life Sciences, University of Glasgow);
Darren Naish (University of Portsmouth).



Provisional Programme

Thursday 30th July 2009

- 19:30 Public Understanding of Science Lecture
Street's town symbol: the ichthyosaur two centuries since its discovery
Ryosuke Motani (University of California at Davis)

Friday 31st July 2009

- 10:00 Welcome
David B. Hill (South Somerset District Council)
- 10:10 The geology and stratigraphy of the Street area based on new work by the British Geological Survey
Keith Ambrose (British Geological Survey)
- 10:40 The classic fossil reptile locality of Street: its history, collectors, collections and taphonomy
Michael A. Taylor (National Museums Scotland), Angela C. Milner (Natural History Museum, London) and David M. Martill (University of Portsmouth)
- 11:10 Coffee break and posters
- 11:40 The late Triassic and early Jurassic marine realm: the invertebrates
Richard J. Twitchett (University of Plymouth)
- 12:10 The late Triassic and early Jurassic marine realm: the fishes
Peter L. Forey (Natural History Museum, London)
- 12:40 The late Triassic and early Jurassic terrestrial and marine realms: the tetrapods
Michael J. Benton (University of Bristol)
- 13:10 Lunch (Strode Theatre, Street)
- 14:10 Swimming across the Triassic-Jurassic boundary: the radiation of plesiosaurs into Jurassic seas
Leslie F. Noè (Thinktank, the Birmingham Science Museum, and University of Birmingham)
- 14:40 The ichthyosaurs
Ryosuke Motani (University of California at Davis)
- 15:10 Tea break and posters
- 15:30 The marine crocodylians
Mark T. Young (University of Bristol)
- 16:00 Review and discussion
Nicholas C. Fraser (National Museums Scotland)
- 16:30 Visit to the Alfred Gillett Collection of Street marine reptiles, held in the archives of the Alfred Gillett Trust (approximately 10 minutes walk from the lecture venue)
- 17:30 Seminar ends

Saturday 1st August 2009

- 9:00 Field Trip (finish time yet to be determined, but probably mid-afternoon)