

Shell London Lecture Series: Stranger than Fiction: Worlds around and beneath us

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Geological Society of London

Exceptionally preserved fossils: Windows on the evolution of life



SPEAKER: *David Siveter (University of Leicester)*

Our understanding of the history and evolution of life on Earth relies heavily on the fossil record and especially on rare cases of so-called 'exceptional preservation', where the soft parts of animals and entire soft-bodied animals are preserved. Such exceptionally preserved fossils provide unique insights of animal palaeobiology and the true nature of biodiversity. The lecture will illustrate beautifully preserved fossils through geological time. It will focus especially on spectacular finds from two of the world's most important fossil assemblages, from 530 million year old rocks in China and 425 million year old rocks in the Welsh Borderland. These deposits contain a wide range of marine animals that lived on the sea floor and in the water column, including sponges, worms, starfish, snails and other molluscs, arthropods of various kinds and the earliest known vertebrate. The fossils from the Welsh Borderland are being studied by tomographic techniques, resulting in the reconstruction of high fidelity three-dimensional 'virtual fossils' that furnish remarkable anatomical details of the animals. Such fossils are crucial in helping to fill gaps in our knowledge of the history of life and in helping resolve controversies about the relationships of animals still alive today.

Date: Wednesday 27 March 2013

Timings: This lecture will be given at 3pm and 6pm on this day (with tea/coffee served for half an hour before each), so please let us know, when applying for tickets, which talk you would like to attend.

Venue: The Geological Society of London, Burlington House

Entry to this lecture is free to all, but places are allocated on a ballot basis. Please call at reception (to your right) or contact the Society by post, phone, fax or email (see below).



For further information, please contact:
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Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BG
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2013 Programme

9 January	Reconciling past and future worlds: Geology and ground engineering	<i>Jackie Skipper, Geotechnical Consulting Group</i>
27 February	Landslides and subsidence: Engineering geology in an age of austerity	<i>David Shilston, GSL President</i>
27 March	Exceptionally preserved fossils: Windows on the evolution of life	<i>David Siveter, University of Leicester</i>
17 April	Rivers under the sea	<i>Jeffrey Peakall, University of Leeds</i>
29 May	Latest developments in Carbon Capture and Storage	<i>Paul Garnham, CCS Project Manager, Shell</i>
3 July	TBC	<i>Sanjeev Gupta, Imperial College</i>
11 September	Dwarfism in animals on islands	<i>Victoria Herridge, Natural History Museum</i>
9 October	New discoveries of life at deep - sea hydrothermal vents	<i>Adrian Glover, Natural History Museum</i>
20 November	TBC	<i>Caroline Gill, Senior Production Geologist, Shell</i>
18 December	Lakes Beneath the Ice	<i>Martin Siegert, Edinburgh University</i>



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