

IOP NEWSLETTER 76

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The views expressed in the newsletter are those of its correspondents, and do not necessarily reflect the policy of IOP.

President: Else Marie Friis (Sweden)
Vice Presidents: Muriel Fairon-Demaret (Belgium), Zlatko
Kvaček (Czech Republic), Sun Ge (China)
Secretary: Gar Rothwell (USA)

ELECTIONS FOR NEW IOP EXECUTIVE ARE UNDERWAY

Nominations for the new IOP **Executive have been finalized**, and the completed ballots have been sent out to Regional Representatives for distribution to the membership. If you have not renewed your membership by paying your dues for 2004 and want to vote in the current election, please contact your Regional Representative. Balloting will be primarily by e-mail for the first time, but paper ballots will be provided for those who do not have access to e-mail. All ballots must be returned to the Secretary of IOP no later than July 15, 2004. After the ballots have been tallied by the Secretary, and the counts verified by the President, the names of the new members of the Executive will be announced.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN IOP

Over the past few months several people have inquired as to the benefits of IOP Membership. The IOP is the umbrella organization for plant palaeontology. Membership allows workers to become known and effectively network with international colleagues, and to have an effective voice in developing the discipline worldwide. Members also are eligible to:

1. Vote in elections of officers.
2. Influence organizational policies through communication and ballots.
3. Hold office in the IOP.
4. * Receive the most current issues of the IOP Newsletter.
5. Contribute to the IOP Newsletter.
6. Receive reduced registration fee for IOP conferences.
7. Interface with the International Union of Biological Sciences.
8. Students are eligible for financial assistance to participate in IOP conferences.

In the past, IOP dues were spent primarily on production of paper copies of the IOP Newsletters, on postage, and on other costs of communications. To a lesser extent, funds have aided in organizing IOP Conferences. Now that the organization is moving to a largely electronic format, funds increasingly are being used for development and maintenance of the IOP web site and associated expenses, and for assisting students to attend IOP conferences.

* At the present time, the new electronic posting of the IOP Newsletters is open to the public. As of late 2004 or 2005, the most recent issues of the IOP Newsletters will be available only to paid members of IOP, with older issues being posted for public consumption after several months.

At the extremely modest cost of membership, your IOP dues are one of the greatest bargains in your professional life. If your membership is not current, please pay your dues today. Also, please encourage your students and colleagues to become active participants in plant palaeontology on a global scale by becoming a member. Your membership can be initiated or updated by sending your dues to your regional representative. Contact information for Regional Representative can be found at: <http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~rothwell/IOP-Newsletters/Representatives.PDF>

IOPC-VIII TO BE HELD IN BONN, GERMANY

At the General Council Meeting at Bariloche, Argentina the membership voted to accept the invitation by Hans Kerp to hold IOPC-VIII in Bonn, Germany in 2008. IOPC-VIII will be held in conjunction with the IPU (International Palynological Union). Additional details of these meetings will be posted in future Newsletters.

IOPC-VII, FIELD TRIP 5 LATE PALAEOZOIC, MESOZOIC AND EARLY CENOZOIC FLORAS F SOUTHERN PATAGONIA

Led by Rúben Cúneo, March 27-April 3, 2004. After the fabulous conference at the superb Llao Llao Hotel, we parted from Bariloche at about 9:00 am on Saturday, March 27th, and headed southward for deepest Patagonia. We were altogether a party of 30, most of us in a bus and a few others in a large pick-up truck, on what was to turn out to be an odyssey of over 1500 miles (2440km). Although we knew that we had an epic excursion in prospect, in fact, in the end, it proved to exceed our wildest dreams.

On the first day, our route gave us excellent views of the Andean (Subantarctic) forest dominated by *Austrocedrus chilensis* and *Nothofagus* (*N. antarctica*,

N. pumilio, *N. dombeyi*), as well as of the jagged peaks of the Andes themselves. The first major stop of the trip was at the Parque Nacional Los Alerces, where we boarded a catamaran on Lago Menéndez, a lake with sparkling clear, turquoise-coloured water. Our goal was an old-growth Andean forest containing magnificent examples of *Fitzroya cupressoides*, the alerce. These huge trees (50 m tall and 3 m diameter) are apparently the longest-lived trees after the bristle-cone pines. Tree-ring studies on this species reveal that in the last decades of the 20th C., no evidence can be found for anthropogenic warming of the climate between the latitudes of 35° and 44°S. After having travelled about 215 miles (345 km) on this first leg, we arrived at our fine hotel in Esquel. Mention must be made here of the excellent hotels that our leader consistently found for us in the very few townships that exist in the backcountry of southern Patagonia

The next day was to be our longest; we wouldn't reach our next hotel until we had covered over 400 miles (652 km). Recharting our course for SE, we first stopped at Early Permian outcrops of the Río Genoa Formation which contained a rich flora of biostratigraphic importance for the *Ferugliocladus* Superzone, named after the Argentine conifer and the Argentine palaeontologist Egidio Feruglio. Although glossopterids do occur in these beds—the Permian being the heyday of *Glossopteris*—oddly enough, the more abundant conifers and ferns have an affinity closer to Euramerican taxa and give this flora less of a distinctive Southern Hemisphere appearance.

The rock-strewn and uneven dirt roads were tough on our bus. Thus, while our capable guides carried out necessary repairs to our vehicle, we took a restful break at the nearby estancia and watched the gauchos shear sheep's faces. Unlike the *Ovis* that we would later encounter at the dinner table again and again (in the form of *asado*), these animals were being raised for their wool; their fleece grew so luxuriantly over their faces that they could hardly peer out of their eyes before their haircut.

The next stop was the José Ormaechea Petrified Forest, located near Sarmiento, the first of two permineralized forests that we would visit. We viewed these logs, Paleocene in age and massive in size, in the reddish-grey cast of a rainy sunset, which merely whet our appetite for what would come the next day. We thus headed west, towards the Atlantic.

As is the fickle weather is so wont to do in Patagonia, the next morning dawned bright and sunny, with brilliant

blue skies. After spending the night in the coastal city of Comodoro Rivadavia, we continued due south to the Petrified Forest Natural Monument, from which the famous Middle Jurassic cones of *Araucaria mirabilis* originate. However, for me (GTC) with my interest in fossil forests, I was very grateful to have the chance to see the petrified forest that has the largest known fossil trunks ever. They pertain to trees which attained a height of 100 m in life and had basal diameters of 3 m. We spent some time snapping photos, as everyone wanted a chance to pose in front of one of these monster logs.



Caption: GTC with colossal fossil log for scale. Photo by Hans Kerp.

Later that day, we visited the Upper Triassic El Tranquilo Group on a ridge above a large desert playa, where we looked at a typical *Dicrodium* flora. In contrast to the Upper Permian locality, this flora had a distinctive Gondwana flavour, with its dichotomising *Dicrodium* foliage and tongue-shaped *Linguifolium* leaves. The infamous Patagonia wind began to blow while we were digging at this site and never let up throughout the rest of the trip.

Other highlights on day #3 (for GTC) were, in no particular order: the family of wild foxes that joined us for lunch at the Petrified Forest; the condor that, unusually, descended to the plains and gave us a display of flying with its 3 m wingspan; the cave where we saw the silhouette hand prints on the ceiling and walls made by pre-historic humans blowing ochre powder onto them. Other unforgettable memories (for CTG) included the desolate beauty of the endless Patagonia steppe, with the golden colour of the grass tufts glowing in the sun, as well as sight of the Southern Cross in what was the darkest, starriest night sky I have ever experienced.

Day #4 was dedicated to the Lower Cretaceous, as we visited several outcrops of the Barremian-Aptian Baqueró Group. We saw a plenitude of ferns (*Gleichenites*, *Hausmannia*, aquatic ferns), bennettites (*Ptilophyllum*, *Otozamites*, *Zamites*), cycads (*Pseudoctenis* and an entire cycad stem with attached leaves), and conifers (huge branches of *Araucaria*). Sensing the early angiosperm hunters in the group, the fossil flowers undoubtedly decided to make themselves scarce on this day.

That night we stayed at a ranch, Estancia La Angostura, rather than a hotel, where we had a superb evening barbecue. We quickly learned that the Argentinean method was to put entire sheep carcasses on to iron frames thrust into the ground around a substantial bonfire. Much red wine is consumed in the process. This includes a procedure where wine in a flexible leather bottle is passed round. The trick is to squeeze it with the nozzle in one's mouth and then draw it away to see how far one can still direct the jet without covering yourself in wine. GTC mainly succeeded in doing the latter, while CTG didn't even make the attempt, knowing well that several digital cameras were lurking about. At night we slept 5 or 6 to a dormitory. The complaints the next day about well-known palaeobotanists who snored incredibly loudly were highly amusing. To this CTG replies, "No comment."

The next day we made our way to Calafate, our furthest point south, 1300 miles (2080 km) by air from Buenos Aires. After days of driving through the parched grasslands, we suddenly returned to the species-rich *Nothofagus* forest, this time, however, without any of the conifers which were so prevalent in the Bariloche area. For Northern Hemisphere botanists, this seemed strange, as our mental picture of the high latitude vegetation consists primarily of boreal conifers. Despite our botanical disorientation, it was here that we made a visit to the Perito Moreno Glacier. This was an awe-inspiring sight which was coupled with the audio effects of crashing sounds made by great blocks of ice falling into the melt water. The intense blue of the ice here had to be seen to be believed.

Just when one felt that FT5 could not possibly get any better—it did. For our final day, Rúben Cúneo had pulled out all of the stops. A mighty catamaran first took us to see the Upsala Glacier located at one end of Lago Argentino. Afterwards, the boat sped into another arm of the lake and was driven straight onto the shingle shore—similar to how an orca rams itself onto a gravelly beach to swallow an unsuspecting seal. We hiked up to a nearby

waterfall which was fed by glacier melt water, botanising along the way. However, after being told that our meal of *asado* awaited us, we very quickly walked down to the estancia.

We gorged ourselves on barbecued Patagonian lamb, splendid side dishes and plenty of wine. A massive cheer went up as huge desserts were brought in to end the meal. Afterwards we were taken on a tour of the estancia and told how it was established as a sheep farm by an English family in the early 20th C. The very contented members of the field trip then returned to the boat and subsided into their seats, relaxed and well-fed, for the journey back to the hotel.



Caption: Participants of FT5, together for the last time. Photo by hotel receptionist.

One can say, without a shadow of a doubt, that it will be immensely difficult to organise a better excursion in the future. We had an absolutely wonderful time on FT5 and will always remember the joyful spirit of camaraderie that developed during our week-long journey, botanising from the bus and in the field, the wealth of spectacular fossil plants in Argentina, and, most of all, the warm and gracious hospitality we encountered everywhere in Patagonia.

A great debt is owed to Rúben Cúneo and his hard-working team in Trelew.

Geoff T. Creber (GTC), London, and
Carole T. Gee (CTG), Bonn

PROPOSAL TO REVISE IOP STATUTES

The world has changed dramatically since the last revision of the IOP Statutes in 1987. Major changes have been made in both geopolitical opportunities for free communication, and in electronic communications technology. In order to keep abreast of these changes and prepare for the future of IOP, a draft of proposed

revisions to the statutes governing IOP are currently being circulated among the Executive. After comments have been received and further revisions have been made, the proposed new statutes will be presented to the membership for a vote. This vote will most probably be taken at the IOP General Council meeting at the International Botanical Congress in Vienna, in the summer of 2005.

Current IOP Statutes are posted on the web at: http://oak.cats.ohiou.edu/~rothwell/IOP-Newsletters/IOP_By-Laws.pdf

A NEW LAW TO PROTECT FOSSIL (AND ARCHEOLOGICAL) HERITAGE IN ARGENTINA

As a result of serious damage caused by constant smuggling, the Argentine Parliament sanctioned last year a new law of protection of fossils and archaeological items that replaces the old 9080 Law. A Central Bureau for procedure regarding fossils has been established at the Buenos Aires Natural History Museum (Av. Angel Gallardo 470, 1405, Buenos Aires, Argentina). It should be noted that most Argentinian provinces having fossil sites also have local regulations concerning exploration permits, collection, exchange of materials, etc. At this time several penalties are established. There has been already recent confiscation of important collections intended to be smuggled out of the country or be sold in the local market. Paleontologists now have to fulfill several requirements in order to collect and study Argentinian fossils. The most important are:

The visit must be arranged through a local institution, national or provincial (Museums, Universities, Institutes). A contact with colleagues will certainly be necessary and it will speed bureaucratic steps.

To collect specimens a permit is needed for each province. You should write to the corresponding officer stating the objective of the visit (location, type of material to be collected, maps, names of accompanying members, etc.). An official permit will be issued and instructions given.

After collecting, the material is listed and a year loan is decided for study (this term may be extended for another year). After the deadline, ALL specimens listed MUST be returned to the local institution involved in the visit.

These regulations are now being applied for the first time so it is wise to make sure of all steps needed before

coming to Argentina. The Central Bureau in Buenos Aires may be of help by giving contact addresses with different provinces and with local paleontologists.

For the time being we advise to contact with:

Director@macn.gov.ar

Phone 54 11 4982 0306

Address: Sr. Director

Museo Argentino de Cs. Ns. 'B.Rivadavia'

Av. Angel Gallardo 470

Buenos Aires (1405) – Argentina

Sergio Arachengelsky, Argentina

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PALEOCARPOLOGY

We are calling for contributions to the “Bibliography and Newsletter of Paleocarpology for 2002-2003.”

anyone with an interest in paleocarpology is welcome to contribute. Once compiled, the newsletter will be posted on the internet. The last issue, the bibliography and Newsletter for 2000-2001 was finished in 2002, and has been available on line since June 2003 at:

[http://www.paleontology.uni-](http://www.paleontology.uni-bonn.de/mitarbeiter/gee/geepaleocarpology.htm)

[bonn.de/mitarbeiter/gee/geepaleocarpology.htm.](http://www.paleontology.uni-bonn.de/mitarbeiter/gee/geepaleocarpology.htm)

Please send your text to:

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MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

The “XI Meeting on Paleobotany and Palynology”

will take place in Gramado, Rio Grande do Sul State, southern Brazil, from 7th to 10th November, 2004. This reunion is sponsored by the Latin American Association of Paleobotanist and Palynologists (ALPP) and will focus on all the aspects of paleobotanical and palynological studies and ecological and taxonomic aspects of modern biomes, especially those with *Araucaria* and *Podocarpus* that are common in southern Brazil.

The first circular is available, with the deadline for abstract submission (August 31), field trip schedules and registration fees. Our choices of pre- and post-meeting field trip include *The Permian-Triassic paleofloristic successions* and *The Araucaria rainforest and Quaternary peat bogs* from Rio Grande do Sul, Southern Brazil. Please note that both field trips and short courses are limited to a certain number of participants, and reservations will be made on a first-come first-paid basis. Our web site is prepared to receive registration requests and to give you all the information. We look forward to welcoming you in Gramado! Please pre-register before July 15, 2004! The Organizing Committee XI Meeting of Paleobotanists and Palynologists. www.exatec.unisinos.br/_rpp2004

North American Paleontological Convention(NAPC) to be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia. At the recent Annual Meeting of the Geological Society of America in Seattle, the Paleontological Society hosted a meeting for ANAPS. I am very pleased to announce that its next meeting will be in Halifax, Nova Scotia in June 2005. David Scott is the Chair of the convention, and the web page for this meeting is currently <<http://www.dal.ca/~es/napc/napc.htm>>. Exact dates will be established soon, and other details are currently being developed. You are invited to forward symposia suggestions to David as soon as possible <dbscott@is.dal.ca>.

Halifax is within two hours of several world-class paleontological sites. I invite you to attend (or send a representative to) the 2004 ANAPS meeting at the Denver GSA, and I look forward to seeing you in Halifax. Please feel free to contact David Scott or me <ausich.1@osu.edu>, if you have any questions.

William I. Ausich, President
Paleontological Society

International Palynological Congress., Granada, Spain. July 4-9, 2004. Registration before April 15, 2004 is 375 euro (prof) and 263 euro (student). Web site:<http://www.11ipc.org/>

Botanical Society of America Conference, Snowbird, Utah. August 1-5, 2004. Expect three days of contributed papers and activities of the Paleobotanical Section, Botanical Society of America, as well as many concurrent sessions of symposia and contributed papers

from a wide array of botanical disciplines. Of particular interest to plant paleontologists is “*A century of seed ferns: A symposium to celebrate paradigm shifts in the understanding of seed plants evolution*”, sponsored by the Paleobotanical Section. This symposium will be presented on the morning of Tuesday, August 3. In addition a two-day fieldtrip to Cretaceous and Eocene paleobotanical localities in eastern Utah and western Colorado will be led by Boucher, Tidwell, Handley and Manchester. Members of the Paleobotanical Section will receive updates as the conference approaches. Website: <http://www.botanyconference.org>.

Geological Society of America, Denver, Colorado. November 7-10, 2004.

Program proposals January 15, electronic abstract April 1, 2004. Website: <http://www.geosociety.org/meetings/>

Steven R. Manchester, USA

NEWS OF THE MEMBERSHIP

Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument has launched a new paleontologic database website. The database includes all of the type and published specimens for the 1700 species of plant and insect fossils from this late Eocene site in Colorado. The collections from twenty different museums are represented, and new color images for all of the fossils are included. Many of these type specimens have never been illustrated in publication. Users can search separate databases for museum collection data, taxonomic data, and bibliographic information. Digital files for many of the publications are also available. The site's URL is <http://planning.nps.gov/flfo/> For more information, contact Herb_Meyer@nps.gov.

Herb Meyer, USA

The School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Birmingham recently appointed two new Lecturers in Palaeobiology specialising in palaeobotany and palaeo-palynology. Jason Hilton started on October 1st 2003 and will be accompanied later in 2004 by Guy Harrington. New research in the School will add an additional focus on deep-time terrestrial processes and patterns in evolutionary, environmental and climate change. The group will also be complemented by Dr Liang Ming-Mei

who will continue her research on Cenozoic palaeopalynology. Guy will leave his current position as a visiting research fellow at the Smithsonian Institution, and Jason has departed from the National Museums of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Jason Hilton, UK

Professor Kazuo Asama, aged 85 passed away on Feb. 15, 2003, after a short illness of pneumonia. He has been one of the leading paleobotanists in Japan and was former the director of Geology and Paleontology Department of the National Science Museum, Tokyo. (Kazuhiko Uemura, Tokyo).

Harufumi Nishida, Japan

RECENT DEATHS

Dr. Wilson N. Stewart, Professor Emeritus at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, passed away at age 86 on April 8, 2004. Professor Stewart's contributions included not only his important research on Paleozoic plants and his authorship of the prominent textbook *Paleobotany and the Evolution of Plants* (coauthored by Gar Rothwell in second edition), but the rendering of many memorable fossil plant reconstructions that live in our collective minds and instantly appear whenever such words as "*Medullosa*" or "*Psaronius*" are spoken. Perhaps even more significantly, he educated many of this generation's most prominent and productive paleobotanists. He is my paleobotanical grandfather several times over and I acknowledge his influence, special connection and debt.

Kathleen Pigg, USA

Mr. Wesley C. Wehr, Affiliate Curator of Paleobotany at the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture, University of Washington, Seattle died at the age of 74 on April 12, 2004. April 17th would have been Wes's 75th birthday and he was looking forward to a pancake breakfast with 50 or so of his closest friends at the Nordic Heritage Museum in Ballard (Seattle, Washington, USA), in celebration of the publication of his second book *The Accidental Collector: Art, Fossils, Friendships* (University of Washington Press). Instead, 200 or so of us came together to remember an incredible spirit, a musician, artist, writer and friend, who received last year's Harrell L. Strimple award from the Paleontological society for his contributions to paleobotany. I have lost a colleague who provided me with fossil localities and material, editorial assistance and constant good humour, a friend whom I spoke with almost daily for the past decade. The paleobotanical community has lost one of their greatest cheerleaders, instigators and encouragers.

Kathleen Pigg, USA