



What's new at MPE?

CPC - 2006, Montreal

At last, after 32 years of waiting!



The MPE and the Redpath Museum (McGill University) have been hosts to and organizers of the Canadian Paleontology Conference (CPC - 2006) in Montreal, on October 13-16, 2006. There have been two excursions: the first (October 13) visited fossiliferous Paleozoic localities of the Greater Montreal while the second (October 16) brought participants to Champlain Sea fossiliferous deposits of the Saint-Nicolas area near Quebec City and allowed them a first contact with their fossil vertebrate faunas. Over the weekend, a series of talks and posters about various paleontological topics was held, including one produced by us at MPE summarizing the findings of the last 5 years at the Saint-Nicolas site. The conference went very well and, according to the feedback we got from the participants, it was one of the best ever. It had been 32 years since the CPC had last taken place in Montreal!

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ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The annual general assembly will take place will the end of March 2007. The lack of human resources and the setting up of the Canadian Paleontology Conference (CPC) 2006 last fall have been the cause for the postponement of the annual assembly of the members of the Museum. We must inform you that there are a few positions to be filled on the Museum's Board of Administrators, such as secretary, treasurer, and advisor(s). We invite you to come in large numbers to this assembly and to apply for one of the open positions. We will communicate the assembly's date soon.



CPC - 2006, Montreal (continued)

CPC 2006 Fieldtrips

The first excursion, led by Hans Hofmann and Mario Cournoyer, allowed the participants to come to see various geological and paleontological sites of Cambrian and Ordovician age around the Greater Montreal region. Among the stops, there was a visit to the Centre de la Nature de Laval, an abandoned quarry transformed into a park offering a geological tour to



At left, Prof. Hans Hofmann (McGill University) summarizes the geology and paleontology of the St. Lawrence Lowlands for excursion members at the stop on Ile Bizard.

visitors. Another stop, at the Jardin des Fossiles (Fossil Garden) in the Parc archéologique de la Pointe-du-Buisson, was much appreciated. Mr. Pierre Groulx, an amateur paleontologist in the region and a promoter of the Garden, met us on the site and explained to us the Garden's rock formations. Some of these sandstone blocks of late Cambrian age (ca. 500 million years) weigh more than 15 tonnes (!) and exhibit a very impressive collection of fossil tracks and sedimentary structures. This excursion was concluded by a fossil collecting visit to the Laprairie quarry.

The second excursion, led by Michel Chartier and Mario Cournoyer, focused on the fossil vertebrates of the Champlain Sea. During the morning, the participants visited the Redpath Museum collections where they could examine some fossil seals and beluga whales described by Dawson toward the end of the 19th

Century. Afterwards, the group drove to Saint-Nicolas to see, first, the fossil site mentioned by Dawson as early as 1857 (and rediscovered by Michel Chartier and Mario Cournoyer in the late 1990s). The Saint-Nicolas sand pits have been the high point of this day in the field. The group has been able to witness the obvious importance of the site by the size of the exposed deposits, the amount and quality of the mollusk and other shelly fossils, and the potential of these sediments as far as vertebrate fossils are concerned. Thus, one member of the group, Mr. Shawn Doran of the Royal Ontario Museum, found a walrus bone (coxal) in very good state of preservation. This bone is in fact the second such fossil recovered on the site, the other having been found by Mr. Michel Bovo in 1997 (14C age: 9790 ± 60 years BP). Both of these specimens as well as half a dozen more collected at this site make up virtually all the fossil walrus material found in the Champlain Sea sediments over the past 150 years!

Both days were highly successful, with the participants, the sites, the fossils and the weather being in every bit cooperative!



Mr Kevin Seymour (foreground) packs up a day's finds while Mr. Shawn Doran (background) digs on near the spot where he found the walrus coxal. These participants, both from the Royal Ontario Museum, loved the excursion in the Champlain Sea deposits at Saint-Nicolas.



CPC - 2006, Montreal (continued)

"Open house" at the Conservation and Research Laboratory - MPE

On Sunday October 15, 2006, the Board of Directors members organized an "Open House" at the Conservation and Research Laboratory - MPE. This gave participants to the Canadian Paleontology Conference (CPC) 2006 the opportunity to visit our installations and to see our collections. Among the visitors were many collaborators who helped us in the past (Kevin Seymour, David Rudkin, Jean-Bernard Caron and Shawn Doran of the Royal Ontario Museum; William Boyce of the Geological Survey of Newfoundland; Jean Dougherty, curator of the paleontological collections at the Geological Survey of Canada along with her colleague Jim Haggart of the Vancouver offices, Jean-Marc Éthier and François Quintal of the Société de Paléontologie du Québec, and finally M. Mario Lacelle, M. François Habets, M. Martin Brazeau et M. Robert Sensestein). The visitors were well impressed by the laboratory's setup, the equipments, and by the work done by our members. Jim Haggart took advantage of this visit to extend to the MPE a \$500 donation to help in the development of our projects! We want to thank him sincerely for this gift.



Martin Dubreuil (centre) discussing vertebrate fossils with Martin Brazeau (left) and Kevin Seymour (right)



Michel Chartier (left) shows fossil Sea Scorpions (Eurypterids) from the Rivière des Hurons section to Mario Lacelle (standing) and Jean-Bernard Caron (leaning).

Oral presentation and publication of a note in the conference's abstracts volume

The Canadian Paleontology Conference (CPC) 2006 was an opportunity for one of our members to give a talk entitled: Additions to the Champlain sea faunal assemblage from Saint-Nicolas, Québec, with remarks on its paleoecology. This presentation was meant to summarize the findings made over the last five years in the Saint-Nicolas sand pits, near Quebec City. Among the most significant, let's note fossils of the following species: Arctic tern (carpometacarpal bone), common eider (cervical vertebra), bearded seal (2nd rib), and ring seal (femur of a pup). In addition, new occurrences of

half a dozen invertebrates are reported. The content of this presentation is summarized in a short paper published in the conference's proceedings volume. A copy of the article is attached to this bulletin.

These communications were more than just PowerPoint presentations since some specimens collected during the past 5 years at the Saint-Nicolas site first had to be identified. (continued p. 4)



CPC - 2006, Montreal (continuation)

This identification step involved, among others, about 6 days of research at the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa, in addition to many evenings at the Museum's laboratory. Other steps in the research included the paleogeographic analysis of the site and the paleoecological interpretation of these fossils. Everything considered, this research work has filled a major portion of the time spent at the laboratory during 2006.



Walrus ulna found in 2003 in the Saint-Nicolas sand pits

Conservation and Research Laboratory - MPE



Michel Chartier (left) and Martin Dubreuil (right) cataloguing specimens from Saint-Nicolas

Throughout 2006, Michel Chartier, Martin Dubreuil and Mario Cournoyer have proceeded with the cataloguing of the Jean-Claude Breton collection. Among the collections given to the Museum, this one was the first to be completely catalogued and digitized into our databases and conserved at the laboratory. It includes nearly 290 fossil specimens coming in mostly from Quebec.

The Laboratory's conservation equipment improved significantly with the installation of six theft-proof and fireproof metal cabinets donated last summer by the Canadian Museum of Nature (Ottawa). This gift, probably representing a few thousand dollars, is unquestionably a major event in the Laboratory's development; for the first time, it is possible to store safely and adequately the best specimens of the Museum. We thank Mr. Jean-Marc Gagnon and his colleagues at the Canadian Museum of Nature for this gesture.



Since the beginning of 2007, with the goal of preservation in mind, fossil vertebrate specimens from the Saint-Nicolas sand pits (close to 300 specimens) have been catalogued and deposited in the cabinets. These specimens are central to the Museum's collection; they are undisputedly our most important material and must have priority in the conservation process.

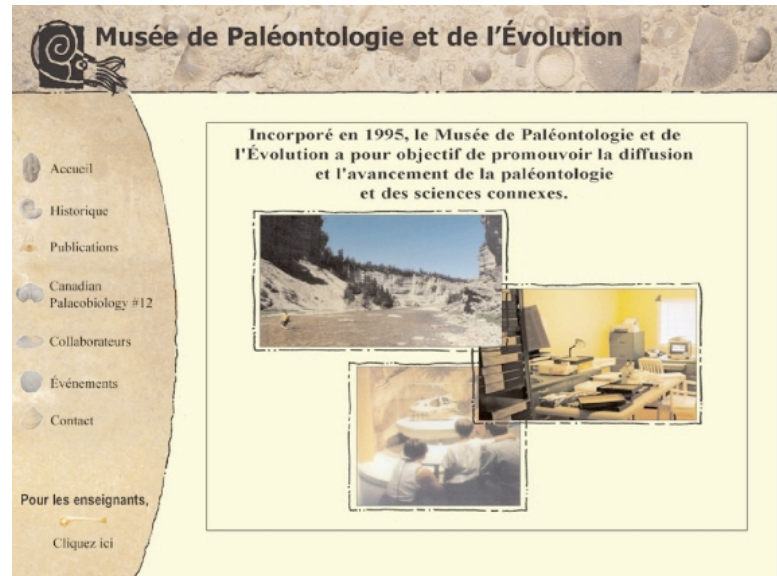
The Museum has acquired a collection of fossils in December 2006. Some of this collection has been purchased but Mr. Normand Pineault has donated the greatest part. The majority of the specimens in the Normand Pineault collection have been collected by him and come in large part from the Ordovician and Silurian of Quebec and from the Cretaceous of Western Canada. This is a major contribution to our collection and help in making it one of the more important paleontological collections in Quebec. Furthermore, Mr. Pineault has offered to search and purchase used books in order to stuff up our research library. This offer was accepted immediately given Mr. Pineault's competence as a librarian and as an amateur of natural history. Already, 15 books have been purchased at a very good price and placed in the library.



MPE's Web Site

We are now working on a temporary version of the Museum's website. In the meantime, you may consult the [mockup](#) at the following address: <http://paleo.site.voila.fr/>. Elements of the *Accueil* and *Historique* menus have to be modified. Some menu options will be removed and others added. For example, a fossil identification guide will allow visitors to learn more about Quebec fossils while having a look at some specimens from our collections.

This portal will give the Museum its best visibility ever.



Membership

We must inform you that, as at the beginning of every year, your membership card must be renewed. Please find attached to this bulletin a copy of the membership renewal form. Remember that you can also make a donation, as the Museum is a charity, duly registered with Revenue Canada, and entitled to issue receipts for income tax purposes.

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