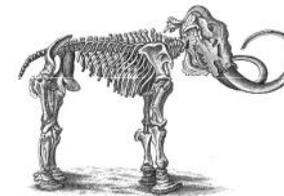


GHOSTS of the MUSEUM



Thursday 6 November 2014

AN ELEMENTARY CLASS ON FOSSILS

Geological Society Library

The specimens in the Museum were split into two major collections—British and Foreign. The British specimens were arranged stratigraphically, then by county, and the Foreign specimens were geographically arranged by continent, then country or area.



WHAT DID IT LOOK LIKE?

NO IMAGES EXIST showing the room as a Museum. However the photograph overleaf shows the Upper Library 20 years after it had been converted from the Museum. Although the drawers and cupboard doors have been removed, at the back you can just see a few of the Museum specimens which were kept, notably the fossil skull of a rhinoc-

GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S MUSEUM

THE ROOM WHICH IS NOW CALLED THE UPPER LIBRARY WAS UNTIL 1911 THE SOCIETY'S MUSEUM. Traces of its previous use can still be seen in the drawer runners in the shelving bays and openings which once held catches and hinges of wainscot cabinet doors. From its earliest days, the Geological Society collected rocks, minerals, fossils and other interesting objects in order to document what was known about this burgeoning new science. Access was restricted to members of the Society but it was to be of educational use to both beginners and accomplished geologists.

eros which was given to the Society in 1820 by Henry Warburton and which we still have. The striking Irish Elk antlers, which are likely to have been given by William Buckland in 1828, were disposed of in the early 1970s.



END OF THE MUSEUM

IN 1911, as a consequence of the Fellowship's preference for the up-to-date resources offered by the Library, the Museum closed to give more room to what had become the largest collection of geological literature in the world.

The Foreign specimens were presented to what is now the Natural History Museum and the British material went to what is now the British Geological Survey.

EDWARD CHARLESWORTH OBITUARY

BORN 13 SEPTEMBER 1813
DIED 28 JULY 1893

A REMARKABLE man in many respects was Edward Charlesworth whose death, at an advanced age, took place recently. While still a student at Guy's Hospital he came to prominence by the publication in 1835 of a masterly paper on the "Crag of East Anglia". He pointed out that the Crag of Suffolk was divisible into two portions, termed respectively the Coralline and the Red Crag. He later identified a newer division, now generally known as the Norwich Crag.



He was elected a Fellow of the Geological Society in 1835 and in the same year appointed Honorary Curator of the Ipswich Museum. He then joined the staff of the British Museum. In 1837 he became Assistant to the Museum of the Zoological Society of London. Also that same year he became editor, then



UPPER LIBRARY, 1931



later also proprietor, of the *Magazine of Natural History* but terminated his connection in 1840, when the *Magazine* was merged with the *Annals of Natural History*. Charlesworth then planned the publication of the *London Geological Journal*, but it did not appear until September 1846 and only three numbers were published.

Between 1844 and 1858, Charlesworth was Curator of York Museum, but was forced to give up this position due to his 'progressive ideas'. From this date, he appears to have made a somewhat precarious livelihood, chiefly by the sale of specimens.

The last 20 years of his life were greatly clouded by illness but during this time he would appear at meetings of the Geological Society to argue at length, with great fluency, and in loud tones about the management of the Society's affairs. While his speeches occasionally contained matter well deserving of discussion, his manner too often was aggressive and needlessly offensive, and this want of tact was displayed in some of the critical remarks he introduced into the journals he edited. From these and other causes Charlesworth came gradually to lose position and friends.



Towards the end of his life he had retired to Saffron Walden and his boxes of fossils, pamphlets and manuscripts used to be heaped around his bed, almost filling up the room. A friend estimated that there was a ton and a half of flint fossils in that apartment at the time of his death.