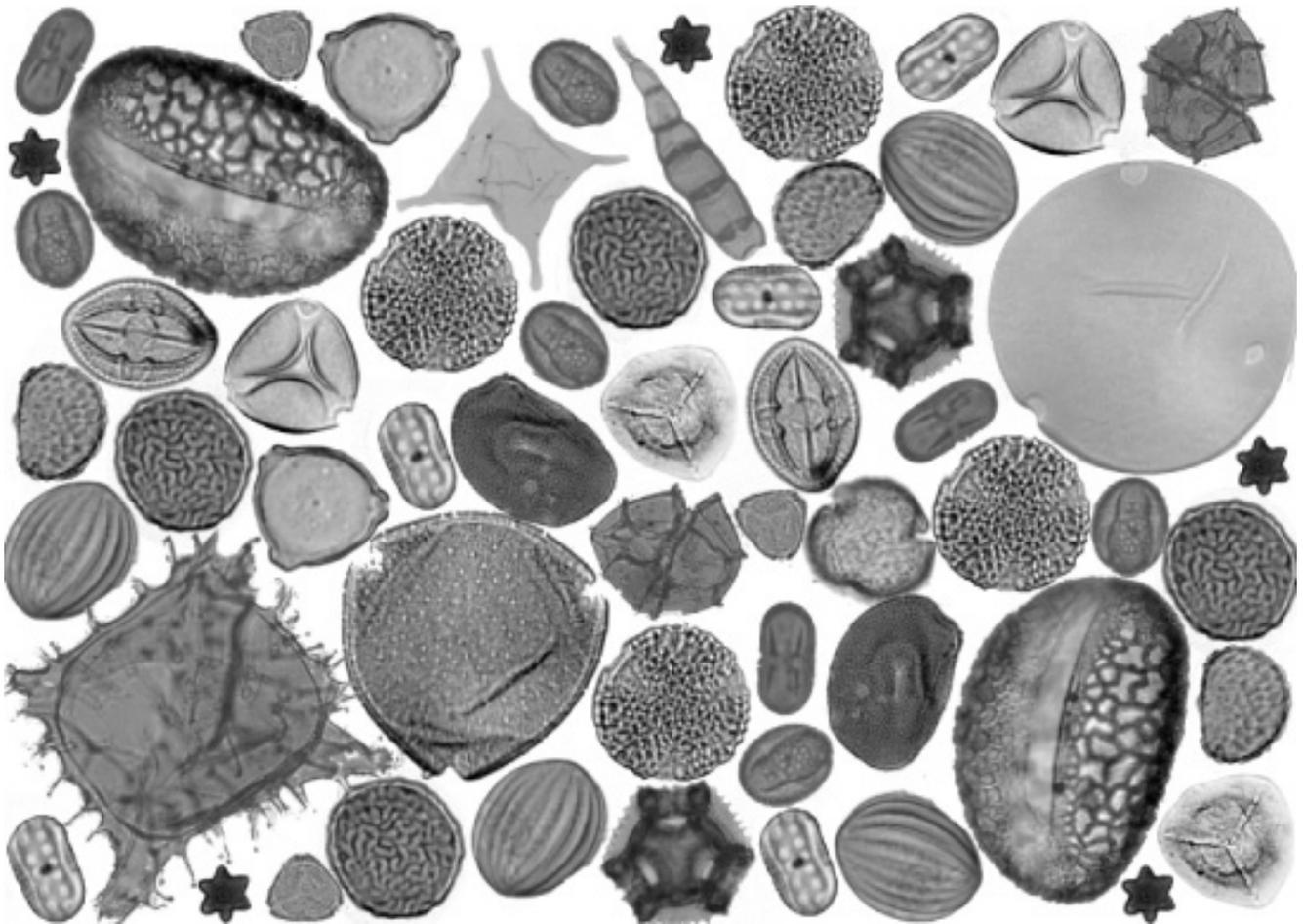




AASP – The Palynological Society

Promoting the Scientific Understanding of Palynology since 1967



NEWSLETTER

December 2025

Volume 58, Number 4

Published Quarterly



AASP – TPS NEWSLETTER

Published Quarterly by AASP – The Palynological Society

December 2025, Volume 58, Number 4

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AASP

The Palynological Society

The American Association of Stratigraphic Palynologists, Inc. - AASP - The Palynological Society - was established in 1967 by a group of 31 founding members to promote the science of palynology. Today AASP has a world-wide membership of about 200 and is run by an executive comprising an elected Board of Directors and subsidiary boards and committees. AASP welcomes new members. The AASP Foundation publishes the journal *Palynology* (quarterly), the *AASP Newsletter* (quarterly), and the *AASP Contributions Series* (mostly monographs, issued irregularly), as well as several books and miscellaneous items. AASP organises an Annual Meeting which usually includes a field trip, a business luncheon, social events, and technical sessions where research results are presented on all aspects of palynology.

AASP-TPS Scientific Medal recipients

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Professor Vaughn M. Bryant (awarded 2016)
Professor David Batten (awarded 2018)
Dr. Robert Fensome (awarded 2024)
Dr. James Riding (awarded 2024)

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Professor Dr. Alfred Eisenack (elected 1975)
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Professor George F. Hart (awarded 2020)

AASP-TPS Board of Directors Award recipient

Dr. Robert T. Clarke (awarded 1994)
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Dr. Richard W. Hedlund (awarded 1982)
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Professor Reed Wicander (awarded 2014)
Professor Fredrick Rich (awarded 2016)
Dr. James B. Riding (awarded 2016)
Professor Martin B. Farley (awarded 2019)
Professor Jennifer O'Keefe (awarded 2023)



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AASP NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Jan Hennissen, aaspnews@gmail.com, Keyworth, UK

AASP NEWSLETTER GRAPHIC DESIGN (From December 2021 Issue)

Filipe Barreira, Laboratório Nacional de Energia e Geologia (LNEG), S. Mamede Infesta, Portugal

The AASP – TPS Newsletter is published four times annually. Members are encouraged to submit articles, “letters to the editor,” technical notes, meetings reports, information about “members in the news,” new websites and information about job openings. Every effort will be made to publish all information received from our membership. Contributions which include photographs should be submitted two weeks before the deadline. **Deadline for submission for the next issue of the newsletter is March 1, 2026.** All information should be sent by email. If possible, please illustrate your contribution with art, line drawings, eye-catching logos, black & white photos, colour photos, etc. **We DO look forward to contributions from our members.**

A Message From Our President

Hi everyone!

If you were at GSA Connects 2025 in San Antonio, Texas, USA, did you see our new booth? If you did, what did you think? There was some positive feedback from those who stopped by. Our presence at bigger meetings is incredibly important. Not only do we promote our science and continue to show its relevance, but we have the opportunity to attract new members.

Did you know we also have a shop? As well as back issues of *Palynology* (including under its previous name of *Geoscience and Man*), we sell AASP Contribution Series, AASP Foundation books, posters and jewellery! Yes. We sell jewellery, but this isn't any old jewellery. This is sterling silver palynological finery! Whether you prefer a dinoflagellate cyst or a pollen grain, you can convey your love all things palynological in metallic format. Or buy that significant someone an item of scientific significance for you/them. And before I finish my salesman pitch, the shop also hosts free items to download as well. That is right, 100% free documents!

Registration for our annual meeting in Trelew is now open! Don't forget this meeting is in partnership with Simposio Argentino de Paleobotánica y Palinología and promises to be a fantastic conference. The registration fee covers the meeting, coffee-breaks and the ice-breaker reception. The organisers have also extended the deadline for proposing thematic sessions until 15th February 2026. The meeting runs from 8th-11th September with the option to extend it for one-day with a fieldtrip to the Valdes Peninsula for botanising in the shrubland-steppe and whale watching in the southern Atlantic. Or if you prefer your

botany in a lithified form, then you can sign up for the 5-day journey through palaeobotanical Patagonia. Travelling from the Neogene to the Permian, it should have a little palaeontological something for everyone. This trip also promises botanical delights as well, from steppe and monte (thorn scrub-grassland) to Andean forest and Valdivian rainforest! I look forward to seeing many of you in Patagonia on 8th September 2026 for the ice-breaker at the Egidio Feruglio Paleontological Museum.

Finally, we have a number of opportunities to join the board of AASP -The Palynological Society. In 2026, we will be holding elections for President-elect, Director-at-Large and Student Director-at-Large. If you are tempted, but not fully committed to nominating yourself, please do reach out to myself or Steve Stukins for an informal chat about what each role requires.



Managing Editor's Report

by Jim Riding

I am sorry to report that I have no big news for this quarter. However, since the last Newsletter, *Palynology* Volume 49, Part 4 was published during late November 2025.

This issue includes 18 items over 234 pages. These articles include one Obituary (of Evan Kidson), one Research Letter, one Review Article and 15 Research Articles.

The full contents are listed below; as you will see the subject matter covered in this issue is extremely cosmopolitan and varied.

Part 4 completes Volume 49 which has 56 items in total, with a final page count of 988. This number of pages published this year easily beats the existing record for this journal; it's a pity we could not get into four figures!

Issue 1 of Volume 50 (for 2026) is now well on the way to being filled, and the 'Golden Anniversary' front cover is almost finalised. This part will be published online in early February 2026.

We sincerely thank all authors and reviewers for their hard work during 2025. Please remember to keep the submissions coming in.

When you are deciding where to submit your work, never forget that *Palynology* is a 'not-for-profit' journal, unlike its principal competitors. Any fiscal surpluses generated go directly to AASP-TPS who use these funds charitably, principally providing students with generous grants to attend our annual meetings.

James B. Riding

Managing Editor, AASP – The Palynological Society

British Geological Survey, Keyworth
Nottingham NG12 5GG
United Kingdom
E-mail: jbri@bgs.ac.uk

25th November 2025

The contents of *Palynology* Volume 49, Part 4 (November 2025)

Obituary

1. Beller, B.K., Williams, G.L., Riding, J.B., Scott, R. and Miller, M.A. The life of Evan J. Kidson (1930–2025). Article number 2532318, 8 p.

Research Letter

2. Rull, V. Insights on the indicator capacity of *Artemisia* pollen in pre-Holocene paleoecology. Article number 2499121, 5 p.

Review Article

3. El Ghazali, G.E.B. Heteroaperturate pollen grains: unique features and structures. Article number 2498678, 8 p.

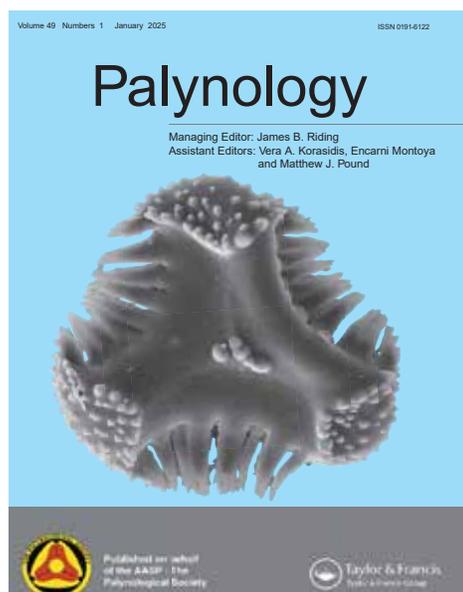
Research Articles

4. Borges, K.M.L., Villa, P.M. and Oliveira, P.P. Palynological diagnosis of honey and propolis (*Apis mellifera*) during dry periods in a Caatinga vegetation, Brazil. Article number 2482252, 8 p.

5. Walter, O.J., Onuminya, T.O., Ikegbunam, N.C. and Olowokudejo, J.D. Characterization of plant species and their associated pollen signatures along the Ijesa-Akure Road, Nigeria. Article number 2491765, 13 p.

6. de Carvalho, R.J.P., Guarino, G.I.P., Alves,

- A.B., Harley, R.M., Pastore, J.F.B., Mendonça, C.B.F. and Gonçalves-Esteves, V. Palynotaxonomy of *Leptohyptis* Harley & J.F.B.Pastore and *Oocephalus* (Benth.) Harley & J.F.B.Pastore (Lamiaceae: Hyptidinae). Article number 2487096, 13 p.
7. Camina, S.C., Rubinstein, C.V. and Butcher, A. Taxonomic revision of the Devonian chitinozoan *Ramochitina boliviensis* Grahn, 2002, a junior synonym of *Ramochitina ramosi* Sommer & van Boekel, 1964. Article number 2486113, 9 p.
8. Filipiak, P., Strullu-Derrien, C., Kondas, M., Wawrzyniak, Z. and Breuer, P. New palynomorphs from the Lower Devonian (Emsian) Zagórze Formation of the Holy Cross Mountains, Poland. Article number 2496716, 11 p.
9. Salcedo, R.P., Huamán, D.M. and Mesía, L.H. Botanical origin of stingless bee honey from the Peruvian Amazon. Article number 2497926, 10 p.
10. Macphail, M. The minimum age of the Goat Paddock Meteor Crater, Western Australia, is Mesozoic and not Early Eocene – the pollen and spore evidence. Article number 2490912, 17 p.
11. Moraal, J.M., McCarthy, F.M.G., Turner, S.D., Pisaric, M.F.J., Cumming, B.F., Riddick, N.L. and Boyce, J.I. Spheroidal carbonaceous particles and other black carbon from Crawford Lake, Ontario, Canada. Article number 2500055, 12 p.
12. Green, T., Pedder, B.E., Williams, M., Wong Hearing, T.W., Olschewski, P., Lunt, D.J., Servais, T. and Harvey, T.H.P. *Corollasphaeridium*: A cryptic record of Cambrian loricate protists. Article number 2494808, 22 p.
13. Rahman, F., Ullah, Z., Sultan, A., Ali, A., Sher, H. and Ahmad, M. Palynological characterization and taxonomic delimitation of the genus *Salvia* L. in Pakistan. Article number 2495223, 24 p.
14. Murshida, C. and Robi, A.J. Pollen morphology of *Rotala* L. (Lythraceae) from South India and its taxonomic significance. Article number 2517036, 12 p.
15. Williams, G.L. and Fensome, R.A. New taxa of dinoflagellate cysts from the Upper Cretaceous to Palaeocene strata of Bylot Island, eastern Nunavut, Canada. Article number 2507028, 23 p.
16. Cunha, J.M., Matos, V.R., Carneiro, L.S., Chagas, I.G., Celis, C.J., Sudré, C.P., Rodrigues, R. and Gaglianone, M.C. Floral resources for *Augochloropsis* Cockerell, 1897 (Halictinae, Augochlorini) in a pepper cultivation area (*Capsicum* spp., Solanaceae): pollen load analysis and implications for agricultural management. Article number 2530756, 20 p.
17. Martarello, N.S., Fidalgo, A.O. and Luz, C.F.P. Characterizing pollen profiles in honey from *Melipona quadrifasciata anthidioides*: a melissopalynological study. Article number 2523619, 16 p.
18. Riding, J.B., Mariani, E. and Fensome, R.A. New name for the Jurassic dinoflagellate cyst species *Gonyaulacysta longicornis* (Deflandre, 1938) Riding et al., 2022. Article number 2528702, 3 p.



AASP – TPS 50th Anniversary Jewelry Collection

Exclusive, Custom-made 50th Anniversary Jewelry

Limited Edition and availability



Special thanks to John Firth and Ingrid Romero for palynomorph images.

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of AASP – The Palynological Society with a beautiful, sterling silver palynomorph necklace. The Society board worked with jeweler and designer, 'Science-inspired jewelry', to create these one-of-a-kind, unique necklaces in honor of our golden anniversary. There are a limited number available of two designs, a pollen grain *Macrolobium multijugum* (a) and a dinoflagellate cyst of *Diphyes recurvatum* (b).

Each necklace comes with a commemorative information card that includes a picture and description of the palynomorph. **The society is selling them now for \$60.00 OR one *M. multijugum* + one *D. recurvatum* for \$100.00.** This is a wonderful way to support AASP-TPS and is a great conversation starter!

All jewelry can now be purchased at palynologyshop.org which is a tab on the AASP-TPS website (palynology.org).

AASP FOUNDATION CENTURY CLUB

What?

The Century Club of the American Association of Stratigraphic Palynologists Foundation is an organization founded by the Trustees of the Foundation in order to provide persons with the opportunity to support activities of the AASP Foundation.

Why?

1. To develop an established level of giving that will continue to provide a solid financial base for the Foundation.
2. To provide unrestricted funds to support the various publishing activities of the Foundation.
3. To provide a meaningful organization and method of recognition of dedicated "friends" of the AASP Foundation.

How?

Your tax-deductible contribution of \$100 or more to the AASP Foundation entitles you to belong to the Century Club. The 2025. "membership" drive is on now. Your contribution may be made by personal check or by a pledge which is **payable on or before December 31, 2025**.

Join!

To join the Century Club, simply complete the attached Contribution/Pledge Form and mail to the address listed below.

The AASP Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit, public organization registered in the United States. This means that contributions to the AASP Foundation are fully deductible on your U.S. Federal Income Tax return. Also, many employers have a matching gift program whereby they match your personal gift to not-for-profit organizations. It is well worth the effort to explore this possibility concerning your gift to the AASP Foundation.

2025 AASP Foundation Century Club Contribution Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contribution Enclosed: \$_____ I wish to pledge: \$_____

Australasia launches a New Chapter in Palaeobotany & Palynology

by Anne-Marie Tosolini

This year marks an exciting milestone for the palaeobotanical community in Australia and New Zealand, with the establishment of the Australasian Palaeobotany and Palynology Group (Palaeo Plants for the Planet), which has now joined the Australian Systematic Botany Society (ASBS) as a new official Chapter.

Australia and New Zealand have long had a vibrant and internationally recognised palaeobotanical and palynological research community, pioneered by Dr Isabel Cookson and Dr Lucy Cranwell. The new chapter provides a formal, national framework to support collaboration, communication, and the promotion of our discipline.

History of Palaeobotany in Australasia

Palaeobotany in Australia has a rich history, beginning in the early 19th century and evolving through significant contributions from various researchers and institutions.

This is not the first time that fossil flora researchers have formed an Association. In 1980, a committee led by Dr. John Rigby and Dr. Noel de Jersey ratified a Plenary meeting in Wellington, New Zealand. The aims of the original Palynological and Palaeobotanical Association of Australasia (PPAA) were to promote the study of Palynology and Palaeobotany in the Australasian and contiguous regions, to act as a Regional Society affiliated with both the International Commission for Palynology (ICP), and the International Organisation of Palaeobotany (IOP) and to cooperate with other Regional Societies having similar aims.

The PPAA constitution was redrawn in the mid to late 1980s, led by Professor Bob Hill, when it was subsumed as a specialist group within the Australian Systematic Botany Society. However, it has not been very active since the 2000s and was dissolved.

Early Developments (19th Century to 1940s)

The study of fossil plants in Australia commenced early in the 19th Century, with the identification of Permian *Glossopteris* flora by Adolphe Brongniart in 1828 (Brongniart, 1828).

Subsequent researchers like Frederick McCoy and William Branwhite Clarke advanced the field by examining plant macrofossils in Victoria and New South Wales, respectively. Prominent figures such as Feistmantel, Tension-Woods, Johnston, and von Ettingshausen published broadly Australian floras across the Palaeozoic, Mesozoic, and Tertiary. F

rom 1915, Arthur B. Walkom's work, particularly in Queensland and New South Wales, significantly influenced Australian palaeobotany. The description of the Devonian-aged *Baragwanathia* flora by Lang and Cookson (1935) added to the understanding of early vascular plants.

Emergence of Palynology (Post-1945)

Dr Isabel Cookson pioneered palynological research in Australia. Around 1945, the focus shifted towards the study of microfossils like spores and pollen, with Cookson's research on Tertiary and Mesozoic palynology. Dr Mary Dettmann collaborated with and continued Cookson's critical work.

Across the “ditch” in New Zealand, distinguished palynologist Dr. Lucy Cranwell built an outstanding body of work in palynology.

Other notable contributors included Virkki, Dulhunty, Balme, and Hennelly, who expanded the knowledge of Permian microfloras. Researchers like Evans, Dettmann and Playford furthered studies on Mesozoic microfloras, while De Jersey and colleagues focused on Palaeozoic and Mesozoic microfloras in Queensland.

We were saddened by the death of Dr. Mary Dettmann this year and our community will feel the loss of such a distinguished palynologist in Australia.

Ongoing research

Research in palaeobotany and palynology has been conducted across various Australian and New Zealand universities and institutions, predominantly in capital cities. These studies have often been organized based on Australian state divisions but also include collaborative efforts spanning multiple regions and involving New Zealand.

Research has focussed on ferns, southern conifer families and key angiosperm families, such as Nothofagaceae, Lauraceae, Myrtaceae and Proteaceae, summarised in the “History of the Australian Vegetation” (Hill, 1994). Biogeographical research on these key Gond-



Palaeobotanical and Palynological researchers at the ASBS Conference, November 2025, from L-R: Dr Miriam Slodownik (Trinity College, Ireland); Dr Maria Paulsen, Monash University, Australia); Dr Raymond Carpenter (Queensland Museum, Australia); Dr Vera Korasidis (The University of Melbourne, Australia); Dr Bianca Dickson (The University of Melbourne, Australia); Dr Anne-Marie Tosolini (The University of Melbourne, Australia); Professor David Cantrill (Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, Australia); Thomas Carter (University of New England, Australia); Professor Greg Jordan (University of Tasmania); Dr Andrew Thornhill (University of New England, Australia); Jeremy Wyman, PhD Student (The University of Melbourne, Australia); Dr Andrew Rozefelds (Queensland Museum, Australia).

wanan families has changed our understanding of their gateways into Australia and evolution of arid adapted floras. Continuing the Cookson tradition started at The University of Melbourne, research in palaeobotany and palynology is strong and ongoing across Australasia.

First ASBS Conference Under the New Umbrella

The chapter made its debut at the 2025 ASBS Conference, held in early November at the University of New England in Armidale, New South Wales. This year's meeting provided a warm and enthusiastic welcome to our group. It proved to be one of the largest turnouts for palaeobotanical and palynological research at an ASBS conference in recent times.

Across the week, delegates enjoyed two dedicated palaeo-themed sessions that reflected the breadth and momentum of current research in Australia; from Palaeozoic rhizomorphs, Cenozoic leaf and amber floras and ecosystems to Cenozoic palynological records that illuminate the continent's environmental and climatic past. The depth of engagement showcased not only the strength of established researchers, but also the growing number of students and early-career scientists entering our field.

Keynote Highlights

Two outstanding keynote lectures anchored the palaeo presence at the meeting:

- Dr Andrew Rozefelds: "Born of Fire – The sub-basaltic silcrete floras of eastern Australia and the role for volcanism in shaping the modern Australian flora". Andrew delivered a richly illustrated talk on advances in Australian palaeobotany, highlighting new fossil discoveries in volcanic sedimentary deposits and their implications for the evolution of Gondwanan floras.

- Dr Vera Korasidis: "New techniques for reconstructing ancient atmospheres and fire intensities". Vera presented an engaging keynote on new techniques in Australian palynology, weaving together stratigraphic, ecological and climatic insights gained from microfossil records across both the Australian and Antarctic continents.

A National and International Community

One of the highlights of the conference was the remarkable diversity of researchers in attendance. Our newly formalised chapter welcomed palaeobotanists and palynologists from across almost every Australian state, representing career stages from postgraduate researchers through to long-standing leaders of the discipline.

We were also delighted to host those who travelled all the way from Europe to participate in the meeting and share their work, in addition to others abroad who joined us online.

This breadth of participation affirmed the need for a coordinated national chapter and provided a strong foundation for future collaborative projects, student support initiatives, and public outreach.

A Warm Welcome from ASBS

The ASBS community celebrated the launch of our new chapter with tremendous generosity. During the conference afternoon tea, we were surprised with a beautifully decorated palaeo-themed cake, enjoyed by delegates before the evening's welcome dinner at a local Armidale microbrewery, which proved a convivial setting for further discussion and connection.

We extend our sincere thanks to the ASBS Executive Committee: President Dr Katharina Nargar, Vice President Dr Peter Heenan, Secretary Dr Tim Collins, Treasurer Associ-

ate Professor Mike Bayly and all members of the Committee, as well as the broader ASBS membership, for so warmly welcoming our new chapter.

We are grateful to the Conference Organising Committee: Dr Andrew Thornhill, Dr Kelly Shepherd, and Associate Professor Rose Andrew, for their exceptional work in hosting such a successful and memorable meeting. Thanks also to Dr Jessica Prebble, New Zealand, for Chair of our session.

Looking Ahead

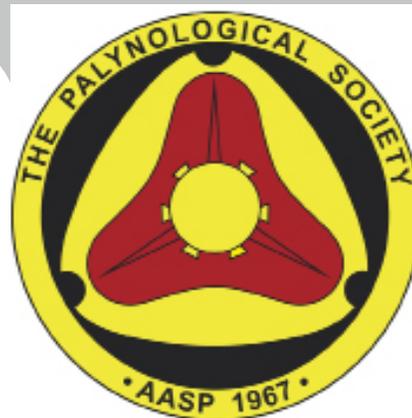
The establishment of the Australasian Chapter for Palaeobotany and Palynology provides a vital platform for strengthening our research community and enhancing national and international engagement. Following the success of our first ASBS conference as an official chapter, we look forward to developing new initiatives, supporting student involvement, and promoting the study of fossil plants and palynomorphs in Australia, New Zealand and beyond.

We warmly welcome new members and collaborators and are excited for the opportunities that lie ahead as we continue to grow our presence within the ASBS and the International Organisation of Palaeobotany.

Dr Anne-Marie Tosolini

School of Geography, Earth & Atmospheric Sciences,
The University of Melbourne,
Australia

a.tosolini@unimelb.edu.au



Test a new Large language Model Augmented Taxonomic Key

by Michael H. Stephenson

We are calling on all palynologist working with pollen and spores to test a new Large language Model Augmented Taxonomic Key based on the ~4000 spore and pollen genera of the Jansonius and Hills genera file.

This has been developed by a small team led by Prof Mike Stephenson at the Zhejiang Laboratory in Hangzhou, China.

Taxonomy Assistant 2.2

This Large language Model Augmented Taxonomic Key (LATK) known as Taxonomy Assistant 2.2 (TA 2.2) uses the information in the Jansonius and Hills (JH) genera file through Artificial Intelligence technology to help a user to identify spore and pollen genera.

An earlier LATK was described in a paper published this year in the journal Palynology.

We have tested the system quite a lot, but we would like to broaden the testing to many other active palynologists.

A few points at the start:

- We have received permission from the Jansonius family to proceed with this development.
- The system is designed to be human-like in its interactions
- The system is only as good as JH. Where JH (and/or the information contained in JH) does not discriminate genera, neither will Taxonomy Assistant 2.2. Similarly where genera have been erected after the period of time when JH was being developed and maintained, these

will obviously not appear in Taxonomy Assistant 2.2. However Taxonomy Assistant 2.2 can be updated with new genera. Like JH, Taxonomy Assistant 2.2 only deals with genus level discrimination and determination.

- Because Taxonomy Assistant 2.2 considers around 4000 genera across the Phanerozoic (many of which are very similar), you may find the results of prompts surprising. Your favourite genus from the Permian (for example) may be similar to ten other genera from the Cretaceous or Cenozoic!

We hope that you will be interested in testing this system. To be part of the test please register your interest with Mike Stephenson at mikepalyno@me.com.

You will be invited to a short webinar (30 minutes maximum) on 8 Jan 2026 at 9 am Pacific time (5 pm UK time), which will provide some of the basics on how to use the system. After that you'll receive a link to Taxonomy Assistant 2.2 and can test it at your leisure in your own time. We will be very keen to receive your feedback and make the system even better!

Prof. M. H. Stephenson
Director Stephenson Geoscience Consulting
GeoGPT Distinguished Geoscientist

Awards Committee News

By Marie McNeill

Society Awards Nominations for 2026

AASP–The Palynological Society has several awards that recognize outstanding service to the Society or to the discipline of palynology. The basic nomination procedure is similar for most awards (main letter of nomination accompanied by letters of support, which include documentation of the accomplishment). Details of the procedures for each award can be found at <https://palynology.org/student-support/professional-awards/award-procedures/>

The deadline for submission of society awards nominations is **March 1 of each year**. A complete list of previous winners can be found on the third page of this newsletter.

Distinguished Service Award

This award recognizes individuals who have generously supported the AASP–TPS with their work and resources over several years, and whose efforts have advanced the Society. Typically, recipients have held society office, participated in committees, or dealt with publications or meetings. There have been twenty recipients of this award, most recently Jen O’Keefe in 2023.

Honorary Life Membership

This is the oldest AASP–TPS award, with the first awards dating to 1975. This award is either bestowed upon individuals who have made a fundamental contribution to the discipline of palynology, or to people who have given devoted service to the AASP–TPS. Honorary Life Membership has been awarded to seventeen individuals, most recently to George Hart in 2020.

Medal for Excellence in Education

This medal recognizes leaders in palynological education. Nominees are expected to have considerable experience and accomplishment in aspects of academic education involving palynology. The medal has been awarded 6 times, most recently to Francisca Oboh-Ikuenobe in 2023.

Medal for Scientific Excellence

The Society’s highest award for achievement in the science of palynology is the Medal for Scientific Excellence. The official description lists “fundamental contributions to the development of the science of palynology” as the main criterion. Recipients should have a substantial research history in the field. The medal has been awarded fifteen times in the history of the Society, most recently to Robert Fensome in 2023 and James Riding in 2024.

Medal for Scientific Merit and Outstanding Promise

This newly established award recognizes individuals in their mid-career who have made important contributions to the science of palynology and who show the promise of continued excellence in the discipline. Typically, nominees will have no more than 15 years’ experience beyond their M.Sc. or Ph.D. graduation (excluding time spent in industry or on leave).

2026 Student Research Awards

Call for Applications

AASP–The Palynological Society is pleased to announce its program of Student Research Awards. For 2026, there will be two awards of \$3000 (US) each, to support research in any area of palynology. Student Research Awards are to be used for costs directly connected to carrying out research, such as fieldwork and laboratory expenses, but not for travel expenses to attend a meeting. Typically, these awards are provided to students in the preliminary stages of their doctoral research, but MSc. and advanced undergraduate students may also apply.

Basis of awards: The qualification of the student, the novelty and imagination of the proposed project, and the likelihood of significant contribution to the science of palynology are factors that will be weighed in the selection process.

Application procedure

The application form can be downloaded from this webpage: <https://palynology.org/student-support/student-awards/student-research-grants/>

Part A of this form is to be completed by the student, and **Part B** by the student's faculty supervisor. Applications must be accompanied by a photograph of the student (.jpeg format) for publication in the society's newsletter.

Additional material will not be considered.

The applicant's supervisor must submit both parts A and B of the form to the Awards Committee Chair, either as Word document or as a PDF:

Dr. Marie L. McNeill
AASP–TPS Awards Committee Chair
aaspawards@gmail.com

Please ensure that you have completed both parts A and B of this application form.

The deadline for applications is **April 15, 2026**. Late or incomplete applications, as well as those that exceed the stated word limits in sections A or B will be disqualified. As per society awards policy only students who are registered AASP–TPS members are eligible to apply (<https://palynology.org/join/#join>). Applications from non-members will not be accepted.

Student Travel Award 58th Annual Meeting, Trelew, Argentina, 2026

AASP–The Palynological Society is pleased to announce its Student Travel Awards program for 2026. These awards are designed to support travel for student members who intend to present a talk or poster at the 58th annual meeting of AASP - The Palynology Society in Trelew, Argentina.

Application procedure

The application form can be downloaded from this webpage: <https://palynology.org/student-support/student-awards/student-travel-awards/>

Part A of this form is to be completed by the student, and **Part B** by the student's faculty supervisor. Applications **must** be accompanied by a photograph of the student (.jpeg format) for publication in the society's newsletter.

The **applicant's supervisor must submit both parts A and B** of the form to the Awards Committee Chair, either as Word document or as a PDF:

Dr. Marie L. McNeill
AASP–TPS Awards Committee Chair
aaspawards@gmail.com

Please ensure that you have completed both parts A and B of the application form.

The deadline for applications is **May 1, 2026**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. As per society awards policy, only students who are registered AASP–TPS members are eligible to apply (<https://palynology.org/join/#join>). **Applications from non-members will not be accepted.**

Undergraduate Student Awards

To support the teaching of palynology at the undergraduate level and to encourage and reward student achievement, AASP–The Palynological Society offers the Undergraduate Student Award. Each award consists of one year’s free membership to the Society. This free membership includes access to digital issues of the Society’s publications, the journal *Palynology*, and the quarterly newsletter; discounted registration fees at Society meetings; and eligibility for Society awards.

The awards are made annually to students nominated by faculty members teaching courses with significant palynological content. One student with meritorious achievement in some aspect of the course can be nominated per year, per institution.

The following institutions have approved courses from which undergraduate students may be selected: University of Southampton, Louisiana State University, University of Tennessee-Knoxville, University of Portsmouth and Morehead State University.

Additionally, course instructors who are members in good standing of AASP–TPS, and who teach an appropriate course, may nominate their course using the Registration Format found below. This should be cut-and-pasted into a word document and sent to the Awards Committee Chair at: aaspawards@gmail.com.

Upon course approval, instructors may nominate a student to receive the award by sending the name, institutional address, and email address of the recipient to the Awards Committee Chair and Society Secretary (s.stukins@nhm.ac.uk) at any time of the year. Additionally, faculty must send the name of the winner, a paragraph about their achievements, and a photograph to the newsletter editor (aaspnews@gmail.com) for inclusion in the March (awards between July and December) or June newsletter (awards between January and June) each year.

Undergraduate Student Award, Course Registration Form

- Nominating faculty member:
- University/Higher Education Institution:
- Course Name:
- Course Description and level:
- Average number of students registered in the course annually:
- Number of hours of palynological instruction:
- Criteria used to determine the winning student:
- Date:

A Pebble in Time

By Jonathan Bujak

As he prepares to donate his beloved copy of Gideon Mantell's "Thoughts on a Pebble" to the Geological Society, Jonathan Bujak reconstructs the provenance of this rare literary gem.

Gideon Mantell first published *Thoughts on a Pebble* in 1831 as a slim 18-page book based on answers he gave to his youngest son, Reginald, about a flint pebble found in a nearby stream. Strangely, there is no surviving record of the second through fifth editions. The sixth edition, published in 1842, was expanded to 43 pages, while the final, eighth edition, published in 1849, runs to 102 pages.

It is the sixth edition that I hold in my hands. I open the book — as always, with a feeling of wonder — but also with sadness, knowing we will soon be parted.

Now in my late seventies, I will take the book

to Burlington House to entrust it to a new protector, the Geological Society of London, so that this gem can be preserved and appreciated by future generations.

Inside, the book bears various inscriptions, written in three different hands. Before parting with it, I need to dig deeper into its history. Can I trace the journey of this slim volume through time using the handwritten inscriptions on its first pages?

From dinoflagellates to dinosaurs

I found my copy of *Thoughts on a Pebble* in a London bookshop in the 1970s. Having recently finished my PhD at the University of Sheffield, describing dinoflagellate cysts from the Eocene Barton Beds of the Isle of Wight, I was first attracted to the illustrations of "Fossil Animalcules in Flint" — Mantell's observa-

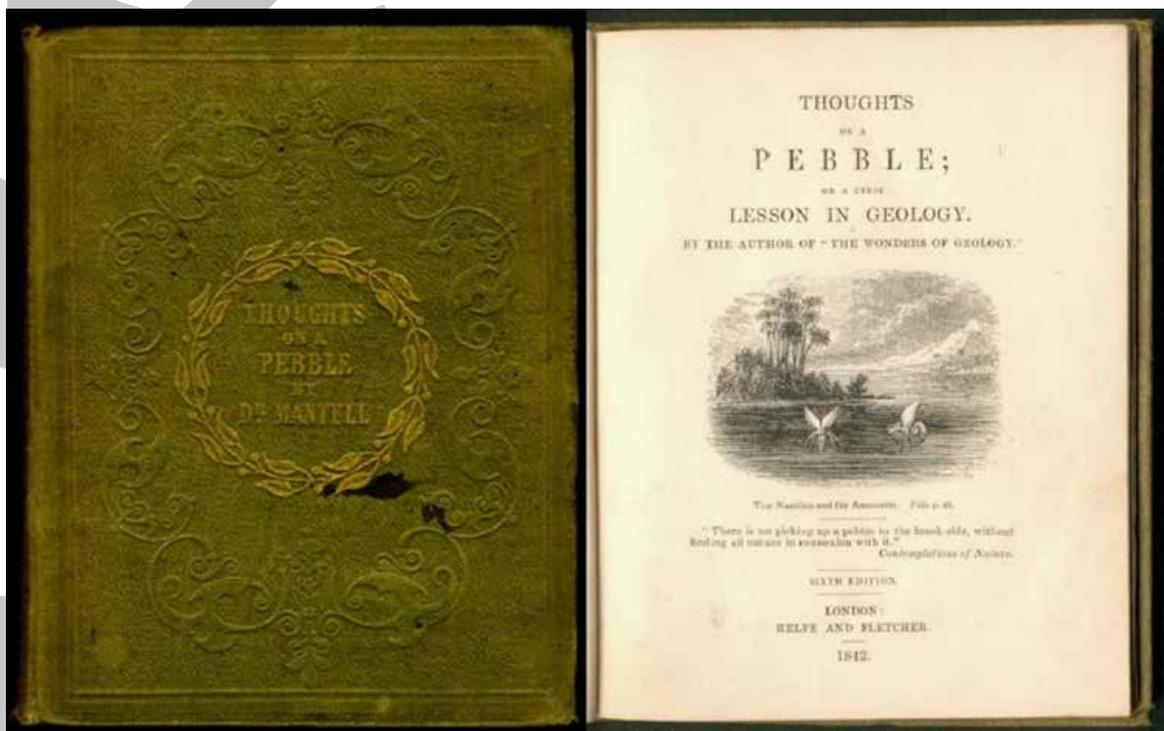


Fig. 1: *Thoughts on a Pebble*. Front cover and title page. (photograph by Jonathan Bujak)

tions of microscopic fossils revealed after striking a fragment off a pebble and preparing a thin section for examination (Fig. 2). Mantell's drawings closely resembled Cretaceous and Paleogene species I had seen in the literature, with the relationship being confirmed by William Sarjeant in 1992 (Sarjeant, 1992).

These microfossils — initially described as fossil hystrichospheres and Xanthidia in the 19th century — remained a palaeontological puzzle for decades. It wasn't until the 1960s that Stanford University's William (Bill) Evitt identified them as the cysts of dinoflagellates (Fig. 2, right).

Formed when the motile cell (theca) contracts into a dormant stage, the cysts often bear elaborate appendages that reflect the plate

configuration — or tabulation — of the parent theca. Thecae themselves, being composed of cellulose, are rarely preserved in the fossil record. The cysts, however, endure thanks to their walls of highly resistant organic material, similar to the walls of pollen and spores.

These resilient microfossils, and the remains of spores and pollen, are a cornerstone of palaeopalynology, providing high-resolution dating and environmental reconstructions of both marine and non-marine deposits. In some cases, millions of specimens can be recovered from just a few grams of sediment — a dense record of ancient seas and climate shifts, encapsulated in structures smaller than a grain of sand.

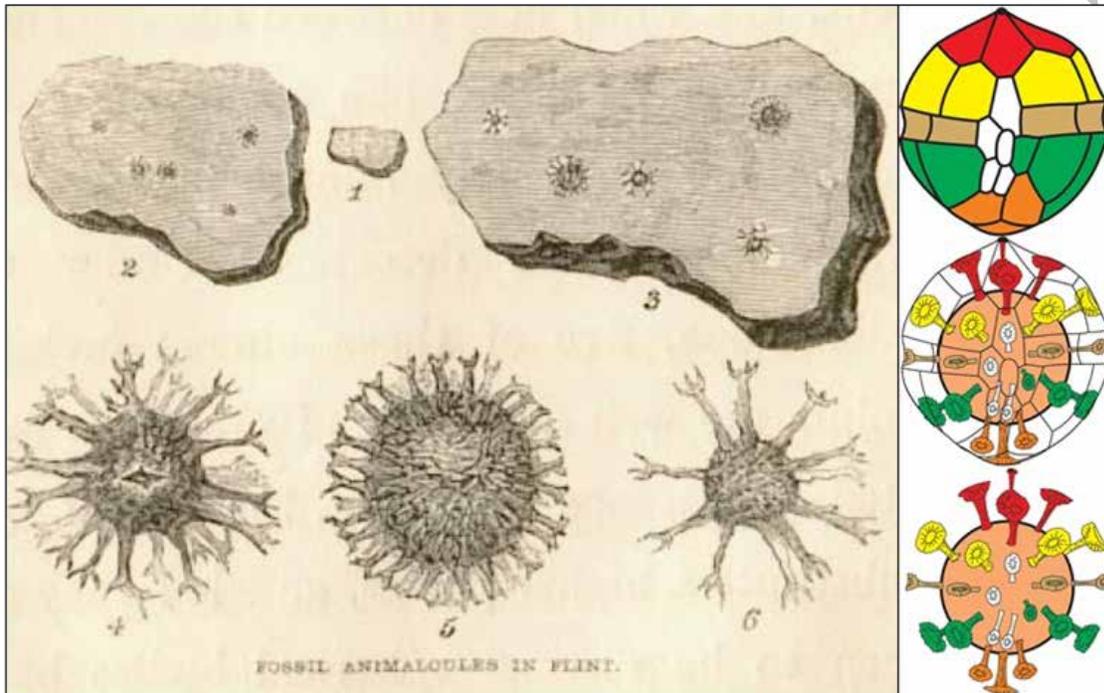


Fig. 2: Left: Illustration of "FOSSIL ANIMALCULES IN FLINT" in *Thoughts on a Pebble*, possibly drawn by Gideon Mantell's wife, Mary (photograph by Jonathan Bujak). An opening is discernible in illustration 5, corresponding to the archeopyle that enables exit of the cellular contents from dinoflagellate cysts. Right: Highly resistant fossilisable dinoflagellate cysts are formed inside the motile thecae which are not fossilised. The arrangement and size of the thecal plates (tabulation) have high taxonomic value and are reflected by the position of the cyst's spines (processes) and archeopyle. Images provided by Geological Survey of Canada's Rob Fensome and Graham Williams, from an original drawing by William (Bill) Evitt.

lation – described sensitively in Deborah Cadbury’s 2010 book *The Dinosaur Hunters*.

Yet Mantell never gave up. His writings, including *The Wonders of Geology* and *Thoughts on a Pebble*, reflect a deep belief that fossils were not just curiosities, but windows into lost worlds – evidence of Earth’s vast, ever-changing story.

A book passed through time

The cover of my copy of *Thoughts on a Pebble* is embossed green cloth with gold writing, encircled by a ring of leaves and berries resembling a laurel wreath. There is some minor scuffing at the top and bottom of the spine, and a small ink stain, but the inside of the book is pristine. The first two pages are blank, except for several inscriptions, written in what appear to be three different hands (Fig. 4).

The inscription on the lower right-hand page, written in bold, italic hand, seems the oldest:

"To Dr Nichol with the respects of the author."

Comparison of the handwriting in this inscription with letters signed by Gideon Mantell shows that they were almost certainly written

by Mantell himself.

But what is the story behind the other entries? The handwriting styles, ink colours, and careful inscriptions tell a story of stewardship – of a book not merely stored but cherished. As I followed the trail, I found that *Thoughts on a Pebble* had passed through the hands of astronomers, authors, antiquarians, suffragists, and scientists – a lineage as remarkable as the book itself.

The book’s provenance

An inscription on the left-hand page reads:

"Presented by Gideon Mantell to John Pringle Nichol, Regius Professor of Astronomy, University of Glasgow. Ex Libris A.A. Jack, whose wife was Nichol’s granddaughter."

It is written in the same hand as the inscription written on the top right that reads:

"Dr Douglas Simpson"

Both were presumably written by Simpson, but how did Simpson come to obtain the book, and what else do these inscriptions tell us about the book’s provenance?

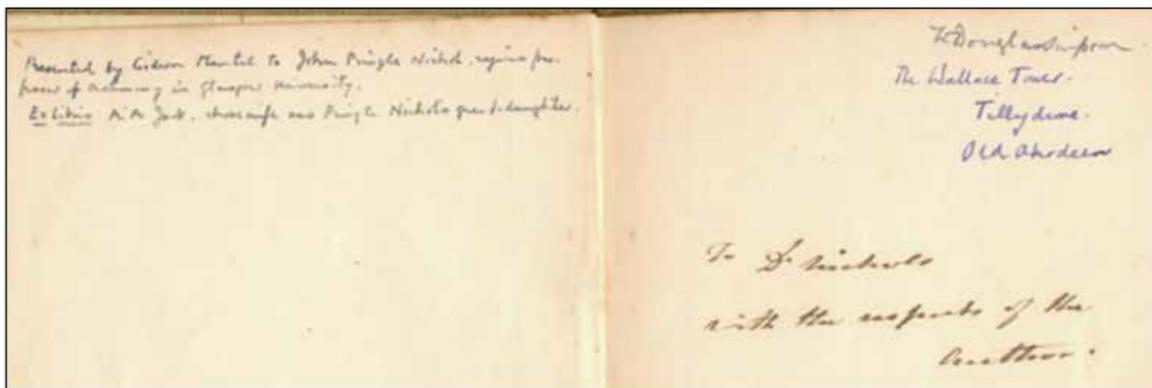


Fig. 4: The book’s inscriptions written in what appear to be three different hands. Left: Presented by Gideon Mantell to John Pringle Nichol, Regius Professor of Astronomy, University of Glasgow. Ex Libris A.A. Jack, whose wife was Nichol’s granddaughter. Top right (in the same hand): Dr Douglas Simpson. Below (in a different hand and fresher royal blue ink): The Wallace Tower, Tillydrone, Old Aberdeen. Bottom right (in bold, italic hand): To Dr Nichol with the respects of the author. [Or possibly: To Dr Nichols with the respects of the author.] (photograph by Jonathan Bujak).

In their inscriptions, both Mantell and Simpson refer to John Pringle Nichol, Regius Professor of Astronomy at the University of Glasgow and a leading public communicator of science in Victorian Britain, implying that Mantell originally gave this book to John Pringle Nichol.

A friend of Sir William Hamilton and correspondent of John Stuart Mill, Nichol popularised nebular theory and wrote influentially on the plurality of worlds. He would almost certainly have crossed paths with Mantell because Nichol was also interested in geology. According to the Geological Society of London's membership indexes, Nichol was elected a Fellow (proposed by Roderick Murchison) on 24 February 1841, but his election was declared void at the Council Meeting of

5 February 1845 because he never replied to the notice informing him of his election (The Geological Society, 1845, 1841).

In 1853, Nichol married Elizabeth Pease, a Quaker reformer, anti-slavery campaigner, and suffragist. She had attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840 and was the founding secretary of the Darlington Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society. Their marriage caused controversy within the Society of Friends, leading her to resign from the Quaker community – yet she remained a passionate advocate for abolition and women's education. Pease married Nichol following the death of his first wife, Jane Tullis, with whom he had two children, John Nichol and Agnes Jane Nichol.

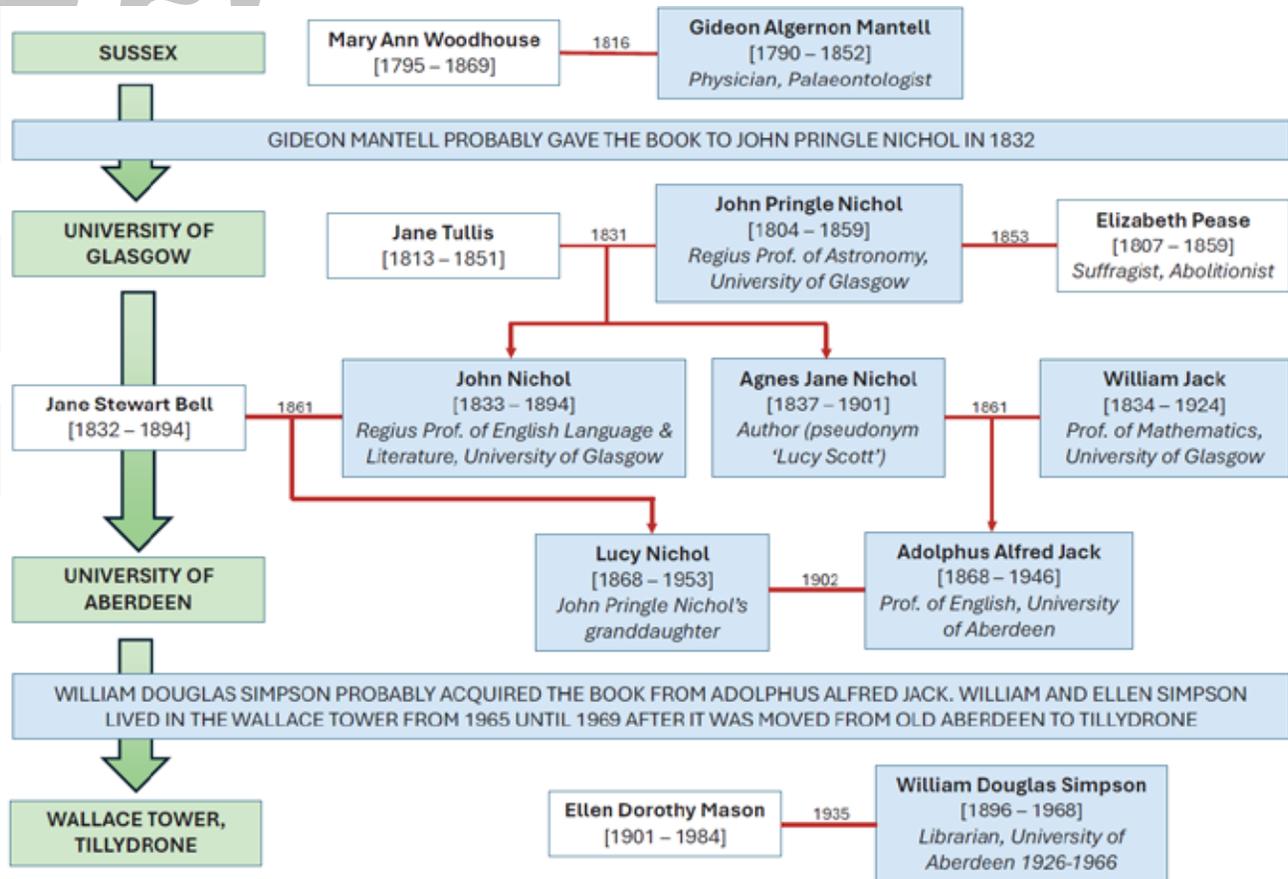


Fig. 5: The provenance of *Thoughts on a Pebble* with its journey via different custodians shown in blue and to different locations shown in green. Each custodian of the book and their spouses must have cherished it as an heirloom, for the book to have been preserved in pristine condition for more than 130 years.

John Nichol – to whom *Thoughts on a Pebble* was probably then passed – was appointed Regius Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Glasgow in 1862 and became known for his literary criticism and philosophical writings. He was also one of the first to introduce American literature to British students. A man of deep learning and compassion, John Nichol served as both scholar and mentor.

Agnes Jane Nichol married William Jack, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Glasgow and formerly editor of the *Glasgow Herald*. Jack had a distinguished academic and literary career, and the couple fostered an intellectually vibrant home that blended scientific precision with literary curiosity. Under the pen name Lucy Scott, Agnes published two novels of Victorian fiction: *Brother and Sister* (1879) and *A Passion Flower* (1882). Her creative work – drawing on the emotional currents of family and society – adds a literary dimension to the book's legacy.

John Pringle Nichol's grandchildren re-connected when Agnes and William Jack's son, Adolphus Alfred (A. A.) Jack, married John Nichol's daughter, Lucy, who probably inherited the book from her father. Adolphus Jack – affectionately known to his family as "Dolfie" – served as Professor of English at the University of Aberdeen from 1915 to 1938. His students recalled that he frequently opened lectures with poetry and invited honours students for tea, often accompanied by Mrs Jack, fostering a warm and intellectually stimulating atmosphere.

Adolphus Jack's association with the University of Aberdeen explains the final inscription, which reads: *The Wallace Tower, Tillydrone, Old Aberdeen*. This refers to the home of Dr William Douglas Simpson who, as University Librarian at Aberdeen and a renowned antiquarian and architectural historian, probably acquired the book from Adolphus Jack. Dat-

ing from around 1610 and originally located at the junction of Aberdeen's Netherkirkgate and Carnegie's Brae, the Wallace Tower was "subject to an enforced move from the Netherkirkgate in 1965, to make way for a Marks and Spencer store. It was carefully reconstructed in Seaton Park under the expert supervision of renowned historian Dr Douglas Simpson" (Andonova, 2024).

Simpson and his wife, Ellen, moved into the Wallace Tower at its new location in June 1965, but the building fell into disrepair in 1969, when Ellen probably moved out following her husband's death in 1968. It then had several tenants and was eventually left vacant, becoming a "derelict monument" until the Tillydrone Community Development Trust fought to "breathe new life into the forlorn tower", securing planning permission in 2017 to carry out refurbishment to turn it into a community café (Andonova, 2024). Their photographs show the derelict state of the building, including "a heaven for anyone with a tendency of being nose-y".

Nothing is known about the disposal of Simpson's library, including his copy of *Thoughts on a Pebble*, and there is no indication that it was ever part of the University of Aberdeen's library collections.

Simpson's wife, Ellen, whom he married in 1935, died in 1984 and was buried next to him, perhaps taking answers to the questions about Mantell's book with her to the grave.

How did the book end up in a London bookstore? Was it sold or auctioned after Simpson died, perhaps with other volumes in his library? Whatever the answer, it is evident that this tiny book was cherished and preserved because of its scientific and family significance: given by Gideon Mantell to John Pringle Nichol, then handed down to his son John Nichol, then to John's daughter, Lucy, who married her cousin Adolphus Alfred (A.A.) Jack, who probably gave it to William Douglas Simpson.

The book's remarkable provenance – from Mantell's Sussex to Victorian Glasgow, from the Scottish Enlightenment to the book-lined study of a librarian-antiquarian in Aberdeen – traces a legacy that can now endure into the future.

An enduring legacy

Gideon Mantell's name lives on, not just in history books, but in the fossil record. In 2007, a revision of the *Iguanodon* genus led to the renaming of one of its species as *Mantellisaurus atherfieldensis* in honour of Gideon Mantell's pioneering work. The dinosaur, originally discovered near Atherfield on the Isle of Wight in 1914 by Reginald Walter Hooley, was found to be distinct from *Iguanodon* and now bears Mantell's name in recognition of his contributions to palaeontology.

Today, the skeleton of *Mantellisaurus atherfieldensis* stands proudly in Hintze Hall at London's Natural History Museum – a tangible reminder of Mantell's enduring impact on the science he helped to shape, and the role that his wife, Mary, played in that 'golden age of geology'.

It feels fitting, then, that the book – having passed through such hands – should now return to the Geological Society of London, where Mantell was elected a member on 15 May 1818. He later served on the Society's Council from 1841 to 1844 and again from 1847 to 1852, and in 1835 received the Society's second-ever Wollaston Medal, its highest honour. As a Fellow of the Geological Society, I see this donation, not as the end of the book's journey, but as the beginning of a new chapter – one in which it will continue to inspire, educate, and quietly astonish.

And so, as I prepare to part with this remarkable book, it seems only fitting to let Gideon Mantell have the final word. On pages 36–39 of my copy of *Thoughts on a Pebble*, he writes:

"Here we must bring our 'Thoughts on a Pebble' to a close; but not without adverting to the pure and elevating gratification which investigations of this nature afford, and the beneficial influence which they exert upon the mind and character. In circumstances where the uninstructed and unenquiring eye can perceive neither novelty nor beauty, the mind imbued with a taste for natural science finds an inexhaustible source of pleasure and instruction, and new and stupendous proofs of the power and goodness of the Eternal!

"Every rock in the desert, every boulder on the plain, every pebble by the brookside, every grain of sand on the sea-shore, is fraught with lessons of wisdom to him whose heart is fitted to receive and comprehend their sublime import. Amidst the turmoil of the world, and the dreary intercourse of common life, we possess in these pursuits a never-failing source of delight, of which nothing can deprive us – an oasis in the desert, to which we can escape, and find a home 'wherever the intellect can pierce, and the spirit can breathe the air'."

Dr. Jonathan Bujak

Palaeontologist, previously a research scientist with the Geological Survey of Canada, and co-author with Alexandra Bujak of 'The Azolla Story'.

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The 58th AASP-TPS Annual Meeting Update

by Paula Narvaez



Early Bird Registration – Is Now Open!

The registration fee (USD) covers access to all academic activities of the meeting, morning and afternoon coffee-breaks, and ice-breaker reception.

	Category 1		Category 2	
	Member	Non-member	Member	Non-member
Professionals	USD 110	USD 190	USD 165	USD 270
Graduate students	USD 55	USD 100	USD 90	USD 150
Undergraduate students	USD 40	USD 70	USD 60	USD 100

Category 1	Participants affiliated with institutions in South American countries or with a Category 1 Human Development Index (HDI) ≤ 0.880 , according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Official ranking
Category 2	Participants affiliated with institutions in countries with an HDI > 0.880 , according to the UNDP. Official ranking
Member	Active membership in any of the following scientific societies:



<https://palynology.org/>



<https://alpaleobotanicapalinologia.blogspot.com/>



<https://www.apaleontologica.org.ar/>



<https://botanicaargentina.org.ar/>

For Early Career Researchers (ECR) only: students and post-docs

The registration also includes an Early Career Networking gathering for all students and post-doctoral fellows.

ECR Luncheon: If you are an ECR and interested to join this event, please add this item to your registration so that we can get a head count. **It is free.**

Support Student Participation – Donate USD 100

We invite all members of our community to help strengthen the next generation of palynologists and paleobotanists. By contributing **USD 100**, you will directly **support student grants** that provide **essential assistance for food, accommodation, or travel**. With your support, we can offer more grants and expand opportunities for early-career researchers who might otherwise be unable to attend the meeting. Help us continue building an inclusive and inspiring event for all.

Call for Thematic Sessions – Deadline Extended!

Great news! The 19th Argentine Symposium on Paleobotany and Palynology (SAPP) and the 58th Annual Meeting of AASP – The Palynological Society (AASP-TPS) are **extending the deadline for Thematic Session proposals**—and we're excited to share that submissions are already coming in from around the world!

If you've been considering proposing a session, this is the perfect moment to join in and help shape a dynamic, international scientific program.

New important dates:

- Submission deadline: **February 15, 2026**
- Notification of selected proposals: **February 28, 2026**

Thematic Sessions offer a unique platform to spotlight emerging research areas, innovative applications, and international collaborations in palynology and paleobotany. Whether you want to focus on a specialized topic, highlight a collaborative network, or spark discussion on cutting-edge methods – we want to hear from you!

Proposals must be submitted via the following Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/aWUCndMPSWqcyxwU8>

The form must include:

- Full name of the session convener(s)
- Email address
- Institutional affiliation
- Potential participants
- Title of the session
- Summary of the proposal (max. 150 words)

Proposals not selected as Thematic Sessions may be included in the regular scientific program.

Speakers and Chairs

Each Thematic Session may last up to 120 minutes, which can be split into two blocks of different lengths, with a coffee break in between. Sessions may include one extended talk (optional) and three to five shorter presentations, selected from the submitted abstracts. Additional contributions may be included as posters.

Presentation time (including Q&A) will be 30 minutes for the extended talk and 20 minutes for regular presentations. These times may be slightly adjusted to fit the final schedule.

Sessions must be moderated by at least one registered participant (chair). A second person (co-chair) will be assigned by the organizers to provide technical, logistical, and/or scientific support.

Upon acceptance of the Thematic Session, the speaker delivering the extended talk must submit an abstract by **March 30, 2026**, and complete registration by **May 1, 2026**.

Rooms and AV Equipment

Standard conference rooms will be assigned to Thematic Sessions, with necessary AV equipment and on-site technical support.

The organizing committee is currently evaluating the implementation of **live automatic subtitles** (Spanish/Portuguese to and from English) to facilitate bilingual participation.

For questions or further information please write to: trelew2026@gmail.com

Check our website <https://palynology.org/58th-aasp-tps-and-19th-sapp/> for the latest information regarding the event.

Get ready! The Second Circular is coming soon with more updates and details.

See you in Trelew!

Organizing Committee

Follow us on

- Instagram: [@sapptrelew2026](#)
- X: [@AASPTPS](#)
- Facebook: [AASP The palynological Society](#)

Upcoming Meetings

PalaeoNoma 2026
Nomenclature & Neotoma

Bonn 22–27 August 2026
WORKSHOP

SAVE THE DATE

22	Ice Breaker @ Castle & Botanic Gardens Bonn
23–25	Part 1: Nomenclature (Madrid Code)
26–27	Part 2: Tilia & Neotoma

Attend Part 1 & 2 separately or together

Travel Grants AVAILABLE

Application Opening Spring 2026


follow us for more info on @palaeonoma2026

MORE COMING SOON

cost
EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL RESEARCH

 Funded by the European Union

funded by COST Action:
Open Palaeoecological Data - analysing the past building foresight (PalaeoOpen)

1st Circular comes in Early 2026

Nomenclature 3 Days
Curious to learn about the rules governing the naming of fossil fungi, algae and plants?
10 sessions à 90 mins, alternating input & application on case studies
We will teach you the principles of how to:
● name a new species
● check existing names
● solve nomenclature problems in stepwise case analysis
all using the new 2025 Madrid Code rules

Tilia&Neotoma 2 days
Interested to share your palaeoenvironmental data with the scientific community?
8 sessions à 90 mins, alternating input & working with your own data
using Tilia software as an interface to Neotoma Paleoeecology Database we will teach you how to:
● enter data with correct element, unit, context and taphonomy
● work with Tilia taxa tables
● add full range metadata
Become a Neotoma Data Steward

Organizers
Dr. Julia Gravendyck
Dr. Steffen Wolters
Dr. Lyudmila Shumilovskikh
Ayaka Nguyen MSc.
Emelie Lüke BSc.