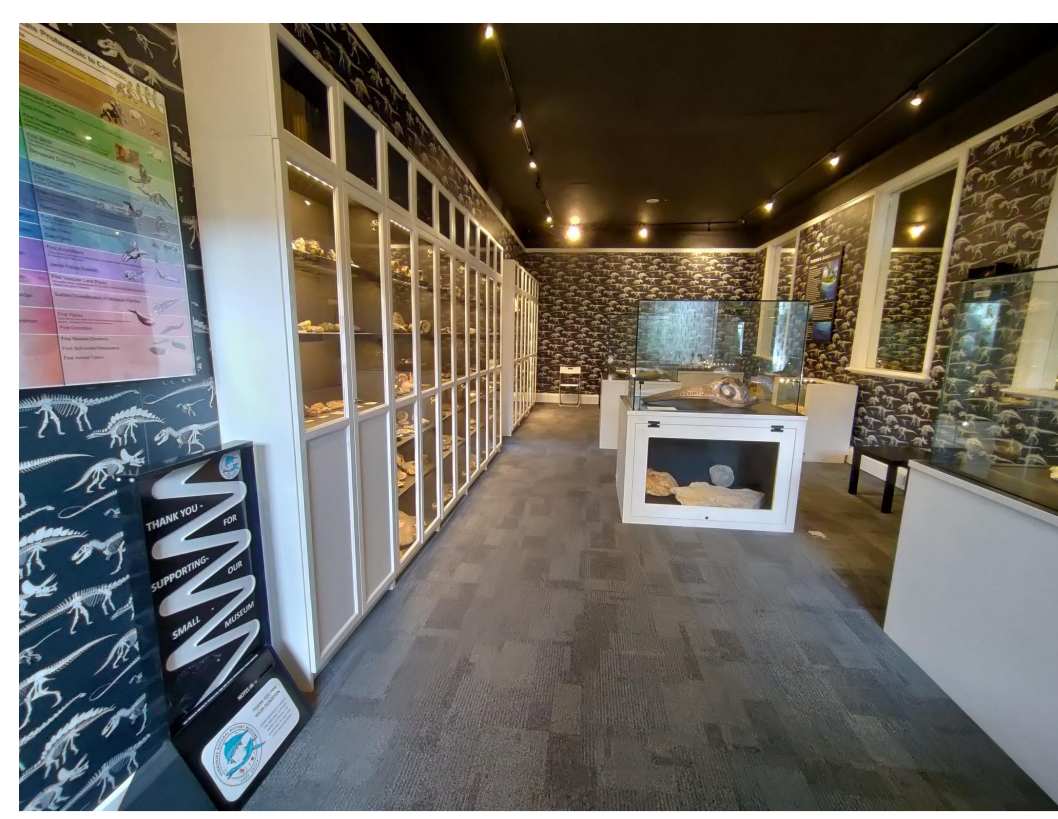


A New Museum for Yorkshire

The Yorkshire Natural History Museum,
149, Holme Lane, Sheffield S6 4JR

James Hogg - Yorkshire Natural History Museum
Richard Forrest - plesiosaur.com



What is it?

It is a natural history museum with a particular focus on the county of Yorkshire, in particular fossils but also its zoology, botany and geology. It has been set up with the objective of creating an accredited collection which is available for scientific and academic study.

Where?

It is located at 149 Holme Lane, Sheffield in the former executive offices of Admiral Steel Works in the early 20th century. Restoration of the building ensured as much of the original interior was maintained as possible. The museum consists of the main gallery, gift shop, a technology/research studio, a conference room, a café, an archive and several laboratories.

All food and drink supplied in the café - named 'Trilo-Bites' - will be vegetarian-friendly, with the café also supporting a large vegan menu. There is the additional aim of encouraging healthy eating and consuming food with a low carbon footprint to help conserve the natural world for future generations. The museum does not use natural gas on site to cut down on unnecessary fossil fuel usage.

Opening

The museum was opened on 13th August with a 'soft launch' to get visitors in so that their reactions can be recorded, strengths can be exploited and weaknesses dealt with. There are plans for a more formal launch at a later date when issues arising have been addressed.

Public Response

There were over 2000 visitors on the opening weekend, and daily visitor numbers have been of the order of 2-300 since then. There has been very positive engagement with the local community. Comments on internet sites have been almost universally positive. Reviews on Google and Tripadvisor rate it at 4 and a half stars.

A good relationship has been established with local collectors, some of whom have loaned or donated specimens.

The Collections

The collections are principally of Palaeontology, but also Geology and Zooarchaeology, focussing predominantly on marine fossils of the Jurassic Period found along the coastline of Yorkshire. Although spectacular specimens of large marine reptiles such as plesiosaurs, ichthyosaurs and marine crocodiles gain more attention, other elements of the fauna such as ammonites, bivalves, gastropods, crustaceans and plants form an essential part. The ambition is to build a collection representing the preserved ecosystem of the period. Specimens from other parts of the world may be added if they help to illustrate global diversity during geological stages represented in Yorkshire.

The founding collection of the museum was gathered by one of the trustees, James Hogg, a young man with a passion for natural history. He will also be the first director of the museum and is supplying the funding for the institution. Other trustees of the charity include Richard Forrest (Head of Trustees), a researcher on plesiosaur paleobiology and preparator, and Paul Davis, ex-registrar of the Natural History Museum (London) and Geology Curator. Two more trustees of the museum are yet to be publicly named.



Getting ready for the opening



149 Holme Lane, Sheffield



Ichthyosaur embryo in body cavity from Yorkshire

At a time when many museums are losing staff and funding sources, and are struggling to curate their collections, this is a valuable new resource for palaeontologists



Fantastic 3-D preservation in a plesiosaur specimen



Rhomaleosaurid plesiosaur



Skull of the thalattosuchian *Pelagosaurus*



Partial skeleton of the plesiosaur *Hauffiosaurus longirostris*



Lepidotes ?semiseratus



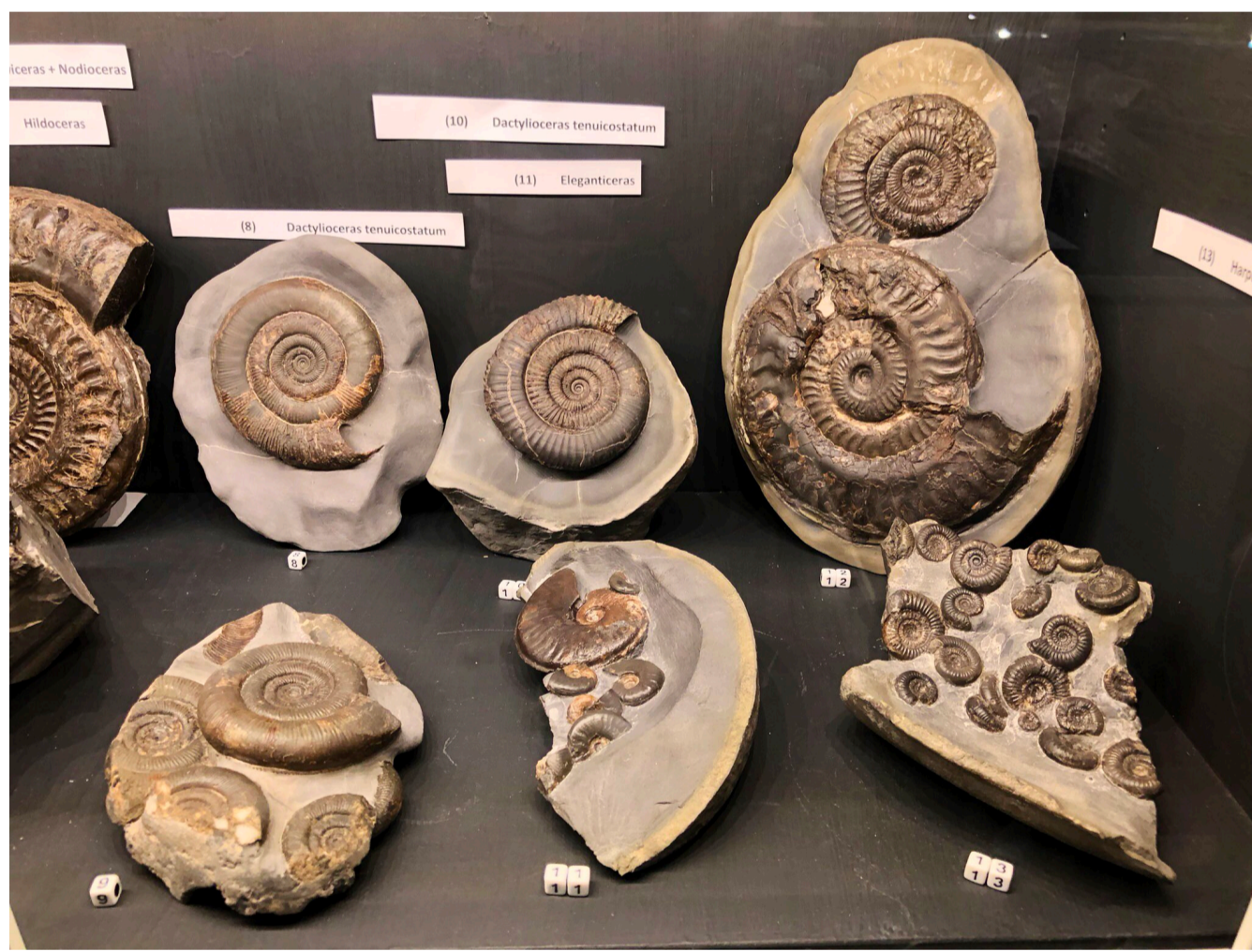
Lobsters and Belemnites



Echinoid



Ichthyosaur skull



Ammonites



Corals, sponges and other invertebrates



Plant fossils from the Estuarine Series



More plant fossils



Skull of "*Steneosaurus*"

Accreditation

The museum is set up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. A submission has been made to the Charity Commission for England and Wales and is currently being processed. Unfortunately there is currently a two year waiting list to processing these applications.

Once charitable status has been established an application will be made to the Museums Association for accredited status.

The collections are held by the 'Universal Palaeontology Repository', a separate non-profit Community Interest Company (CIO), to ensure its long-term continuity, and to make specimens available for scientific study. Researchers are encouraged to approach the museum to gain access to any of the specimens in the collection. Specimens can also be loaned by the UPR to other museums.

Digitisation

One of the ambitions is to create an online database of digitised specimens both from this and other museums which is freely available to anyone, and anywhere with internet access. For other museums this will be carried out at no cost with the proviso that copyright is shared.

Scanning and 3-D Printing

An X-TEK XTH 225 ST CT scanner will be available in the near future. Although this will generally be used for commercial purposes, genuine researchers will be given access at a low cost - £5 to pay for pizza!

Industrial metrology-grade 3D scanning to 0.025mm accuracy, with SLA printing to same precision is also available, and cost for researchers will be no more than that of materials.

Preparation and Conservation

Associated with the museum is an extremely well-equipped preparation laboratory capable of handling large specimens. This can be made available to academic researchers. In addition, a suite of 12 workstations with preparation tools has been set up to allow members of the public to learn preparation techniques, and to work on their own material.

Going forward, the plan is to provide training to ICON conservation standards.