Press release – embargoed until 6.00am Thursday 22 August 2013

Find a 3D fossil – the hunt is on!

The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences is taking part in a JISC-funded project organised by the British Geological Survey that will see fossil types freely available to all. They are also running a competition alongside this national project with other museums including Wollaton Hall, Great North Museum, and Dorset County Museum.

The ‘type’ specimen of a fossil is the one to which all other similar specimens are compared in order to identify them. They are usually held in museums where they can be stored safely and accessed when required.

This 3D fossils project aims to make 3D digital models and photographs of British macro fossil types easily and freely available to everyone. The high-resolution fossil images, stereo anaglyphs and 3D digital models can be viewed and downloaded from the 3D-Fossils.ac.uk website.

The national competition, running until Thursday 12 September 2013, invites participants to find a hidden (but labelled!) 3D printed fossil amongst the collections at The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences. It will be tricky - the 3D printed versions are created by laser scanners that scan the fossil surface and measure the precise position of the surface at over 10,000 points per square inch - so they look quite realistic!

For those eagle-eyed museum visitors entry forms are available from the Sedgwick’s shop and completed entries will receive fossil cards and 3D glasses while stocks last. The prize for five lucky local winners includes a tour behind the scenes at The Sedgwick Museum. There will also be two national winners drawn from the local winners who will win a VIP tour of the British Geological Survey Keyworth. And one overall winner will receive an Android tablet preloaded with 3D fossil models.

It’s an exciting time for The Sedgwick Museum to be part of a national project that is at the forefront of promoting accessibility to collections and use of digital technology in museums.

Ends.
Notes for Editors:

The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences opened in 1904 and has its origins in the early 18th century. It includes specimens donated from important figures such as Charles Darwin and Mary Anning. Today, the Sedgwick Museum continues to play an active part in the research and teaching activities of the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Cambridge.

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