

# VIPS NEWSLETTER



NOVEMBER 2020

## WELCOME

Welcome all to our second newsletter (which is NEARLY in the right month...)! In November we have to say goodbye to our project interns, Harry and Elizabeth, and thank them for their excellent work, reviewing nearly 400 spreadsheet entries and helping us get the web site closer to ready for a range of methods and proxies.

We have two events in December to look out for, both led by Working Group 5 – the next coffee morning is on 2<sup>nd</sup> December and our “lessons learned from semester 1” workshop will be on the morning of December 14<sup>th</sup>. We hope you can make it, and that you’re finding the ViPs resources useful.

Jane Bunting

Coordinating Group Coordinator

On behalf of the Coordinating Group

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## HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

Our spreadsheet is frequently updated and freely available to all. If you wish to contribute resources to our spreadsheet, join the project mailing list or contribute to future newsletters, please use the links below. We can be found on Twitter [@palaeosci\\_ViPs](#).

Reminder that you can download the spreadsheet of resources from [here](#)

And submit resources [here](#)

And join the mailing list [here](#)

And send items for future newsletters to [ViPsNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ViPsNewsletter@gmail.com)

## A GOODBYE FROM OUR PROJECT INTERNS

Hello, over the course of the last 13 weeks we have both been very busy helping to develop the ViPs project by working alongside the different working groups on a variety of tasks. We are sad that we cannot stay working on the project but we look forward to seeing its ongoing development.

I have thoroughly enjoyed being involved on the ViPs project; I've found it really interesting learning about new aspects of palaeoscience as well as furthering my existing knowledge. The team were wonderful to work with and I have gained many valuable skills as a result. Thank you for allowing me the privilege to be a part of this experience, good luck with the next steps! *Elizabeth*.

Throughout this internship, not only have I developed specialist knowledge, but a range of transferable skills too. It has been an excellent opportunity to get an introduction to the many sub-disciplines of palaeoscience whilst advancing an international project. It has been an absolute pleasure to work alongside the team, and I wish the project every success in the future. *Harry*.

## WORKING GROUP 1 – COLLATION AND WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

### Community resource reminder

In our various working group meetings, people often talk about the resources they are putting together for teaching this year or offer to share resources with each other. These are usually resources (handouts, datasets etc.) which don't really fit with the main collection, e.g. are not something that they want to release as a finished product, or which are transient, but which might be useful for other project members.

In September, we sent around an email about a box folder (not dropbox – box is a cloud storage system which the University of Hull pays for and which has good security and reliability features) in which to store and share such resources, and lots of people accepted the invite to use the folder... but no-one has added materials yet. As we come towards the end of semester 1, we'd like to encourage project members to share their resources, however "scrappy" they may seem – it's

always easier to start with something to edit than to start with a blank page, and we have no reason to think semester 2 is going to be any easier than semester 1 has been...

## WORKING GROUP 2.5 – VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP AND ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES

Steve Juggins has reported that a working version of eSlide is now ready for testing. eSlide updates CoPol software for teaching microfossil identification. Steve and Encarni Montoya have recently used it in an undergraduate virtual pollen practical where, after scanning types slides and a “practice” count, students counted slides from an interglacial sequence and discussed the changing vegetation and climate inferred from the pollen counts. Steve and Jane Bunting also presented a poster on eSlide at the Micropalaeontological Society 50th Anniversary Conference in early November ([https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/stephen.juggins/eSlide/eSlide\\_Poster\\_TMS.pdf](https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/stephen.juggins/eSlide/eSlide_Poster_TMS.pdf)).

More information about eSlide can be found on the website (<https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/stephen.juggins/eSlide/index.html>) and an online version can be tested here: <https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/stephen.juggins/eSlide/eSlide.html>. So far we have practicals set up for pollen identification and we are working on adding diatom images. Please get in touch with Steve or Jane if you would like to use eSlide in your teaching or would like to help in adding other microfossil groups to the software.

Steve has also developed an online app for plotting stratigraphic diagrams. Students can upload an Excel file with species percentages or sediment physical / geochemical data and customize the diagram, plot data against depth and/or age, and add zonation using a simple web interface. Try it out using the built-in dataset at: <https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/stephen.juggins/riojaPlot>.

## WORKING GROUP 4 – EXPERT LECTURES

No update

## WORKING GROUP 5 - PEDAGOGY

We will be holding two events in December and hope that you can join us.

- 1) **Wednesday 2nd December 10 am:** ViPs Virtual Coffee Morning.

Dr Simon Hutchinson, University of Salford, will lead the discussion on ‘An idiot’s experience of (rather than guide to) virtual fieldtrips...’

Register free here: <https://forms.gle/dZ9btwVhqdXHbMLH9>

- 2) **Monday 14th December 10 am - 1 pm:** Virtual Palaeosciences (ViPs) December Meeting  
Lessons Learned Teaching in Blended and Virtual Contexts in 2020

Register free here: <https://forms.gle/g6usphVE75WC8mGx5>

## WAYS TO GET INVOLVED (SPECIFIC TASKS NEEDING TO BE ADOPTED BY ONE OR MORE PEOPLE...)

- We'd like to build a creative commons photo gallery of relevant images which we could all freely use. It's popular – but it needs someone to make a decision about platform (e.g. Wikimedia commons, Flickr), tags etc. and to encourage/assist submissions.
- A “toolshed” was proposed by Simon – a location on the website which would collate recommendations of software for smaller issues (anything other than a specific part of a data collected and analysis technique), collections of tips (“this is what worked for me”), work-arounds (“these are issues we know about with this resource...”) and things not to do (“this doesn't work on macs...”). Anyone want to plan, set up & coordinate something like this?
- People in Palaeoscience resource
  - Biographies of diverse palaeoscientists – this was considered especially useful for students, and could be shared via a blog on the website.
  - Similarly, it was suggested that collecting some careers related profiles, interviews etc. which people who trained in the palaeosciences and went on to work outside academia would be very useful.
- Sharing of T resources (handouts, datasets etc. which don't really fit with the main collation) - a spreadsheet and a box folder was considered a good way to organise this – JANE HAS MADE A SPACE FOR THIS.
- Keeping specific ideas for use as undergrad placements (especially after Christmas) would be useful.

Remember, you can get in touch with us either through [our website](#) or on Twitter [@palaeosci\\_ViPs](#).