

ViPs NEWSLETTER



NO. 4: APRIL 2021

WELCOME

Welcome to the fourth ViPs newsletter. We hope to produce regular newsletters in 2021 so please send us items to include. We would also welcome new ideas about how best to organise the newsletter, the possibility of additional sections and features.

In this newsletter, we have short reports from our working groups and a couple of additional announcements.

Simon M Hutchinson, ViPs Newsletter Editor (on behalf of the ViPs Coordinating Group)

STOP PRESS: SOS - SAVE OUR SURVEY

Working Group 5 have a "Teaching Palaeosciences in a Pandemic" survey open at the moment. It should take no more than 15 minutes to complete - please take the time to complete the survey if you taught any palaeosciences in the current academic year - we would greatly appreciate it!

Link: <https://hull.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/vips-wg5-survey-1-spring-2021>

HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN VIPs:

The ViPs resources spreadsheet is frequently updated and freely available to all. If you wish to contribute resources to the spreadsheet, join the project mailing list or contribute to future newsletters, please use the links below.

Download the spreadsheet of resources [here](#)

Submit resources [here](#)

Join the mailing list [here](#)

The Newsletter Editor would like to encourage you to send any items for future newsletters or comments to help develop its content and layout to ViPsNewsletter@gmail.com or to s.m.hutchinson@salford.ac.uk

WORKING GROUP 1 – COLLATION AND WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

Student placements

We are aware that students undertaking placement/employability modules may struggle to find suitable work experience this year. The ViPs project has the capacity to offer a number of small mini projects that students could undertake. The idea is that the student would engage with a ViPs academic from a different institution thereby working with somebody new. Current ideas for potential mini project include:

- Developing a webpage on a particular proxy or topic
- Searching for existing resources which may help fill the gaps in the current resource spreadsheet
- Digitising slides or images for community use
- Creating an image library
- Developing a ViPs blog
- Write profiles on diverse Quaternary palaeoscientists
- Undertake a pedagogic placement (e.g. if the student is unable to undertake a school placement)

If you would like to be involved in the development of ViPs placements or have ideas for other mini-projects please get in touch (e-mail Liz: ehurrell@uclan.ac.uk).

[Liz Hurrell, University of Central Lancashire]

WORKING GROUP 2.5 – VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP AND ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES

WG2.5 is currently reviewing its activities and would welcome news of your plans for the coming year once restrictions, in the UK at least, start to ease and we can resume.

Could you contribute to ViPs and its virtual fieldtrip resources via your 'real' field or lab work?

[Des McDougall, University of Worcester]

WORKING GROUP 4 – EXPERT LECTURES

We have been in touch with everyone who expressed an interest in providing a guest lecture video. We understand that time is short and it has been a long year, so we are grateful to everyone who has replied.

A number of people have asked if they can provide a 'general teaching resource' instead of an expert guest lecture. The answer is YES (!) please email Danni to register your interest danni.pearce@nmbu.no.

[Danni Pearce, Norwegian University of Life Sciences]

WORKING GROUP 5 - PEDAGOGY

Our next ViPs WG5 'coffee morning' will be at 11 am on Tuesday 20th April. The session will be led by Dr Eileen Tisdall of Sterling University and will focus on "*Teaching in the time of COVID – how to keep the best bits*".

To register, please complete the registration form by midday on Friday 16th April: <https://forms.gle/TwKrMsixZ6Lovvqm8>

REMINDER

Our "Teaching Palaeosciences in a Pandemic" survey remains open. Do please take the time to complete the survey - we would greatly appreciate it!

Link: <https://hull.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/vips-wg5-survey-1-spring-2021>

[Karen Bacon, National University of Ireland, Galway]

VIPS MEETINGS AND EVENTS: SUMMARIES

VIPS WG5 COFFEE MORNING EVENT IN FEBRUARY

The third informal event in this series provided a range of insights and examples into the 'art and science' of virtual labs. Adam Jeffery of Keele University illustrated what's possible when lab activities are curtailed and how virtual lab work will support future classes. His talk usefully extended our experience of virtual 'replacements' from the field to the lab and generated considerable discussion.

The results of a preliminary study aimed at gaining feedback on a prototype virtual microscopy resource are available here: <https://gc.copernicus.org/articles/4/95/2021/>. Drop Adam an e-mail (a.j.jeffery@keele.ac.uk) if you missed the meeting or with further questions.

[Simon Hutchinson, University of Salford]

FUTURE EVENTS AND NEW RESOURCES

YPG SPRING MEETING 2021

The Yorkshire Palaeo Group will meet from 2-5:30 pm on Wednesday 21st April 2021 via MS Teams from the 'other side' of the Pennines!

I have received a number of excellent presentation suggestions with topics and presenters hailing from many points west of the Pennines (and elsewhere). The aim is to provide an interesting afternoon through a range of short talks and discussion in an informal setting. A draft programme will be circulated soon.

If you would like to 'attend' this virtual meeting please use this link to register and you will be sent a Teams invitation:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=QCm1Zbb0vUGDPTAz7Lz24dah-3Gv7nFFsvBC-c_GeahUQ0ROVIl1Mko3UIZnWUZnQIRZOVpHRIBEQS4u

The deadline for registration is Friday 16th April 2021. For further details, contact Simon M. Hutchinson s.m.hutchinson@salford.ac.uk

[Simon M. Hutchinson, University of Salford]

11TH ENHANCING FIELDWORK LEARNING SHOWCASE EVENT

The 11th *Enhancing Fieldwork Learning Showcase Event* will take place on **8th- 9th September 2021** and will focus on the themes of '**Diversity, Inclusivity and Employability; "Fieldwork Skills for All"**'. The annual showcase event brings together practitioners across a range of disciplines and provides an opportunity for demonstrations, short presentations and panel discussions. Abstract submission is now open at:

<https://forms.gle/cocWdDfjvCCRwNN6>. For the most up to date information follow us on Twitter (@fieldwork_ntf) and join our Microsoft Team <https://bit.ly/3rPuV3H>

EFL was established in 2010 with 3-years funding from the Higher Education Academy to investigate how simple mobile technologies could enhance fieldwork learning in a range of disciplines including bioscience, environmental sciences and geosciences. To date the team have written over 25 journal articles and book chapters, convened over 40 workshops, presented at over 150 conferences and engaged over 300 practitioners from over 70 Higher Education institutions at their annual showcase event.

[Katharine Welsh, University of Chester]

PATHWAYS TO ANCIENT BRITAIN VIRTUAL FIELDTRIP

Claire Harris (Post-Doctoral Research Associate - Pathways to Ancient Britain (PAB) based at Queen Mary University of London) has just released online an excellent virtual fieldtrip resource to Ancient Britain:

[Click here](#)

The virtual field trip has been created using Google Earth Projects including text, videos and images. There are also links to further resources such as peer-reviewed articles. Email Claire Harris claire.harris@qmul.ac.uk if you have any feedback or questions.

[*Claire Harris, Queen Mary, University of London*]

IN OTHER NEWS

Where's Wally? While most of the human population remain stuck at home, there have been sightings on the coast of Ireland and Wales of a juvenile Atlantic walrus who seems to have failed to exercise locally.

Wally was first spotted on rocks in County Kerry, Ireland and then on the Pembrokeshire coast in Wales. Normally the species is found in east Greenland or Svalbard. Suggesting that this might be a sign of things to come with climate change may, however, be premature as records show that there have been eight confirmed sightings of walrus in Ireland since 1979. In the UK the Natural History Museum recorded a sighting of two narwhals in the Thames in 1949 and an earlier sighting in 1880 of one travelling up the Humber and Ouse rivers ([Historical UK cetacean strandings dataset \(1913-1989\) - Data - Data Portal \(nhm.ac.uk\)](#)).

Not exactly 'palaeo' but a longer-term perspective on out of place arctic species provides an informative insight on environmental change while the Media tend to pick up on the (apparently) weirder and more wonderful.

[RSPCA checks on Arctic walrus spotted off south Wales coast | Environment | The Guardian](#)

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED – THE 'TO DO' LIST

In ViPs meeting several suggestions and ideas have been put forward but need one or more ViPs members to adopt and develop them. Please have a look through the list below and consider whether you could step up and get involved in one of these initiatives.

- ViPs photo gallery: could we build a creative commons photo gallery of relevant images which we could all freely use. It's a popular idea but needs someone (or small team) to decide on the best platform to use (e.g., Wikimedia commons, Flickr), tags etc. and to encourage/assist submissions.
- IT "tool shed": 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...").

If you would like to respond to any of the above, or other aspects of this Newsletter (e.g., items to idea, ideas for new features), please get in touch via ViPsNewsletter@gmail.com or to s.m.hutchinson@salford.ac.uk