

## CNIDARIAN COLLECTIONS AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, LONDON

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The fossil Cnidaria collections consists mostly of anthozoan corals but also include medusoids and conulariids (here regarded as cnidarians), and various hydrozoan groups. The stratigraphic range of the whole collection is from the late Precambrian to the Recent ('sub-fossil') with a geographical emphasis on Britain and its former colonial countries, together with regions which have been economically connected with Britain through oil and mineral exploration (mainly Middle East).

There are over 100,000 specimens of which two thirds are registered and 4,000 of which are type specimens, and other specimens that have been figured in scientific publications. The bulk of the collections were assembled in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but they include some older and some much more modern material. The most important historical collections are those of Milne Edwards & Haime (British), Murchison (Russian Palaeozoic), Duncan (West Indies Tertiary and British post-Palaeozoic), Gregory (especially Jurassic of India) and Stanley Smith (British Palaeozoic). More recent collections include Quaternary from East Africa (Crame) and Aldabra (Kennedy). The largest collections arising from our own work include late Cretaceous corals from the United Arab Emirates, and Cenozoic material from Papua New Guinea and southern Iran. Access to the collections for research, and loans of specimens, can be arranged through Jill Darrell. Visits should be arranged a reasonable time in advance.

Additionally, there is a large and important collection of Recent Cnidaria in the Department of Zoology. All the dried anthozoans are stored at the Museum's out-station depot at Wandsworth about 45 minutes from the main site at South Kensington. Further information about the zoological collections can be obtained from Clare Valentine, Collections Leader.

Over recent years, many visiting researchers from European Member and Associated States have obtained funding from our Access Grant scheme, SYS-RESOURCE. This supports visitors to work on the Museum's collections, to use its facilities and to collaborate with staff. The Museum is currently awaiting confirmation in September that we have been successful in our bid for an extension to this scheme.

### Websites

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/palaeontology/>

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/science/rco/sysresource/>

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/zoology/index.html>