



IGCP735 Regional Meeting in Llandrindod Wells (Wales, UK)

July 4th–11th 2025

Joint conference, field meeting and workshop

SECOND CIRCULAR

We are delighted to formally invite you to a mixed-format symposium and field meeting based in the beautiful town of Llandrindod Wells (central Wales, UK), on the edge of the famous Builth–Llandrindod Inlier.

Registration is now open. Please download the registration form from our website (<https://igcp735.wales>) and return the completed form by email to igcp735wales2025@gmail.com (deadline 16 March). Bank details for payment will be provided after receipt of the registration form. Payments must be made in British pounds by bank transfer (deadline 31 March). After registering, please download the sample abstract form from the website, and submit your abstract(s) by email to igcp735wales2025@gmail.com (deadline 31 March).

Please note that because the venue has limited capacity, we may need to close registration before the deadline.

Key dates

Sunday 16 March	registration closes
Monday 31 March	payment deadline AND abstract submission deadline
Friday 4 July	arrive, icebreaker reception (evening)
Saturday 5 July	talks
Sunday 6 July	field trip
Monday 7 July	talks
Tuesday 8 July	field trip
Wednesday 9 July	talks, conference dinner
Thursday 10 July	workshops
Friday 11 July	depart

Please note that all deadlines are 11:59 p.m. coordinated universal time (UTC) on the given date.

Registration fee

The registration fee is £195. The fee includes refreshments at morning coffee and afternoon tea breaks, a copy of the abstract volume, the field trips, and the workshops. The registration fee is the same for all participants, and we have kept it as low as possible. We recognise that non-student participants (e.g., researchers based in developing countries, or those with no formal academic position) do not necessarily have more money for conference attendance than PhD students (who may belong to well-funded research groups in developed countries).

Because of the relatively small size of the meeting, we will not be running a program for accompanying persons. Information on things to do in the area can be found on <https://www.visitmidwales.co.uk/>.

If a participant is unable to attend, the deadline for requesting a refund of the conference fee is Friday 30 May. We will return the conference fee minus a handling fee of £16 (to cover our bank charges). If a refund is requested between 31 May and Friday 27 June, we will refund 50% of the conference fee. After Friday 27 June, no refund will be possible.

Financial support

The conference organisers hope to have some money available to support people giving one or more presentation(s) (oral or poster) at the meeting, and who have no or very limited research funding. We particularly wish to encourage (in no particular order) members of historically under-represented groups, researchers with disabilities, participants based in developing countries, women, early career researchers, and independent researchers; however, any participant may apply. Please note that any financial support provided will not be sufficient to cover the full costs of attending the meeting. **Money will be disbursed to attendees at or after the meeting: it will not be possible to provide any financial support before the meeting.**

Venue and Accommodation



Conference Venue

The Metropole Hotel and Spa,
Llandrindod

(<https://www.metropole.co.uk/>): a historic hotel that is hosting all our conference activities, and also has a substantial amount of half-board accommodation currently set aside for delegates at a reduced rate (see below). The conference dinner is included in the cost for those staying at the Metropole, but will be extra

for those staying elsewhere.

Delegates are encouraged to stay in the Metropole Hotel if they would like to be on site. A special rate is being offered for Bed, Breakfast and Dinner, and a number of rooms are being

held for the conference at the special rate until the middle of March. After that, the rooms will be made available to other visitors, so please book accommodation as soon as possible. There is a range of room prices available, but only ten single rooms in the hotel.

Metropole Hotel room prices

Shared occupancy rates @ £85.00 per person per night for Classic Double or Twin
(Above rates based on a minimum 5 night stay and based on 2 occupants in room)

Shared occupancy upgrades per room per night:

- ClassicPlus Double or Twin @ £10.00 supplement
- Superior Double or Twin @ £25.00 supplement
- Luxury Tower Double or Twin @ £45.00 supplement

Single occupancy supplement per room per night:

Single bed @ £15.00 supplement on top of the above sharer rates – please note we only have 10 single bedded rooms available and any further double for sole rooms will be charged the following supplements

- Classic Double bed @ £40.00 supplement on top of the above sharer rates
- ClassicPlus Double bed @ £50.00 supplement on top of the above sharer rates
- Superior Double bed @ £65.00 supplement on top of the above sharer rates

Rates include

- Accommodation and breakfast
- 3 course choice evening menu with tea/coffee (private dinner on the final night)
- Access to spa facilities
- Value added tax (VAT)

Booking

If you wish to stay at the Metropole, please contact the hotel directly (telephone: +44 (0)1597 823700; email: salesmanager@metropole.co.uk) and confirm that you are attending the IGCP735 conference. Please provide the following information:

- **Group Reference:** 1456 [to ensure that you are charged the conference rate]
- **Room Type Requested:**
- **Date(s) Requested:**
- **Rate:**
- **Full name:**
- **Address:**
- **Email:**
- **Telephone Number:**
- **Payment Instructions:** The Metropole will need a £20.00 per person deposit at the time of booking, and full payment settled 31 days before arrival.

Individual reservations cancelled within 4 to 7 days prior to arrival are charged at 60%. Thereafter any cancellations received within 72 hours prior (4 pm 3 days prior) to arrival are charged at 100%.

Other accommodation

Although this is a small town, there is a range of other accommodation in Llandrindod and the surrounding area, and you are of course welcome to stay at any of the other hotels, bed & breakfasts, inns, or self-catering venues.

If you do not have your own transport, then *please check the location carefully before booking!* This is a rural area, and accommodation in surrounding villages may be advertised as being in Llandrindod. Public transport is limited, but taxis are available.

There is also a wide variety of Airbnb accommodation available within Llandrindod and the surrounding area, and if you do have your own car then it is possible to stay in beautiful rural locations close to the town; feel free to be creative!

Conference Dinner

The conference dinner will be held at the Metropole, and is included in the room/breakfast/dinner price for those staying at the hotel. For anyone staying elsewhere, it will be £35.00 per person, and should be booked directly with the hotel before the conference (email: info@metropole.co.uk). Accompanying persons are welcome to attend the conference dinner as well, at the same price.

Lunches

Lunch is not included in the registration fee, but can be bought either from the Metropole Hotel, or from many other locations such as cafes and shops within easy walking distance. We'll provide a map with suggestions, but if in doubt, just ask anyone local! Lunch breaks will allow time for socialising and seeing the town.

Getting here

Llandrindod is in the centre of Wales, far from the major cities. However, it is reachable by train or bus from the major UK airports, including Birmingham, Manchester and London. It might take you a while, but whichever way you come, it's a beautiful journey! Please see the conference website for travel details.

Conference format and focus

The format will be mixed, involving alternating days of presentations and local field visits, with a day of workshops. We would like to particularly emphasise presentations on the subject of total communities within the early Palaeozoic: exceptional preservation, ecological studies and neglected or poorly-known groups. Other subjects within the IGCP735 remit are very welcome also, of course!

We recognise that participation in conferences can be challenging for some individuals, particularly those with health conditions/disabilities. Thus, each day of talks will include an extended lunch break (1.5 or 2 hours), to allow people to (for example) return to their accommodation to rest before the afternoon session.

Keynote presentation

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Karma Nanglu, who will be talking about **Deuterostome origins viewed through the lens of exceptional preservation**. Deuterostomia is one of the major divisions of animal life, and the one that includes ourselves. As a result, the ecological and morphological origins of this group are a major outstanding question in metazoan evolution. In his talk, Dr. Nanglu will present and synthesize recent research into deuterostome origins, with a focus on exceptionally well-preserved fossils with soft-tissues. These species demonstrate how many of the characteristics which define modern deuterostomes were already established in the Cambrian, and diversified in the Ordovician.

Dr. Nanglu is currently a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard University and the Museum of Comparative Zoology. He will be starting as an assistant professor at the University of California Riverside in September 2025. He was previously a Peter Buck Deep Time Postdoctoral fellow at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, and received his PhD from the University of Toronto and Royal Ontario Museum in 2018.

Presentations

Presentations can be in the form of traditional talks or posters. Abstracts for oral presentations and posters should be submitted **after** registration. The deadline for abstract submission is 31 March. There is a maximum of one oral presentation per speaker, but presenters may submit more than one poster. Standard oral presentations will be limited to 20 minutes (15 minutes plus 5 minutes for questions). We will be selecting some talks for longer slots based on their fit to the programme and potential for wide interest. Because of time limitations, it may not be possible to give an oral presentation slot to everyone who wants one: in this case, presenters will be invited to provide a poster instead. If you would like to present a different style or format of talk to the normal types (for example, a field report of interesting discoveries, even if you are unfamiliar with formal scientific presentations), please just ask: we would be delighted to receive such suggestions and advise!

Posters will be displayed for the whole meeting. The maximum poster size is A0; posters may be in landscape or portrait orientation. We aim to have extended lunch breaks with dedicated poster sessions.

Field trips

The **field visits** will be to a range of local sites within the Ordovician (Darriwilian to early Sandbian) Builth–Llandrindod Inlier and the surrounding area. The inlier preserves the history of a volcanic island complex, and is the focus of the nascent Heart of Wales Geopark (<https://heartofwalesgeopark.org.uk/>). The area is home to many sites with a degree of exceptional preservation, and some major Konservat-Lagerstätten such as Llanfawr and the newly-discovered Castle Bank (which will be included in the itinerary). The landscape, culture and history of the area are also remarkable, and these will not be neglected! Some of these sites are within walking distance of the conference venue, and transport will be provided for slightly more distant ones, or for those with more limited mobility; the costs of this are included in the conference fee. Some of the field trips will require walking for extended periods and/or over rough ground. If this would be difficult for you, please contact the conference organisers (IGCP735wales2025@gmail.com) to discuss access arrangements.



Workshops

The workshops will include at least (1) the range of exceptional preservation and palaeoecology within the Builth–Llandrindod Inlier (including unpublished sites); (2) identification and interpretation of fossil sponges; (3) bivalved arthropods.

Conference ethos

We, the organisers, greatly enjoy the atmosphere of these small meetings, where the aim is to come together, share exciting news, and have time for discussions—both formal and informal. This is where collaborations start and enthusiasm is kindled for new directions. It's not so much a chance to show off the prestige of your research group, but rather to get involved, and we value the insights and contributions of all. To this end, we are encouraging amateur palaeontologists, early-career researchers, and everyone from any nation to join us and become part of this scientific community.

We have also chosen to integrate the various aspects of the meeting into one whole, including the field visits and workshops, as we believe all are equally important. These are included within the registration fee, which we have kept as low as possible. The workshops will also provide opportunities for open discussion. We may not have all the resources of a university, but we can provide a warm welcome, and a positive atmosphere!

In contrast to most conference locations in big cities, Llandrindod is a small, friendly town, and this conference is a major event for us and other residents. We encourage delegates to relax, enjoy the culture, and spend time outside the conference venue; there are many cafes for lunch, shops to buy a picnic, and pubs for ongoing scientific discussions into the night. Locals will probably be interested in where you've come from, and what you're doing, but they probably won't know anything much about fossils—consider it a chance to be ambassadors for palaeontology! The Metropole Hotel is offering its facilities at low cost, in order to encourage the meeting.

Other considerations

Weather. It's Wales. Expect temperatures between 5°C and 35°C, probably rain and (hopefully) some sunshine. We should be safe from snow. It might be windy, or it might not.

Some of the locations can get surprisingly hot in sunny weather, so bring sun-block and a hat. Basically, be prepared for anything!

Language. English. Welsh is not widely spoken in Llandrindod, but for those who want to immerse themselves a little more, we recommend that you learn at least how to properly pronounce Welsh words and place names! With practice, you can work up to Llanfawrpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlillantisiliogogoch.

Microscopes and specimens. We will have some microscopes available for examination and discussion of specimens, but more (and other interesting bits of equipment) are welcome!

Collecting specimens. Hammering and collecting will be possible at some sites, but restricted at others. If you'd like to take something away with you, especially to deposit in your own local museum, then please ask!

We're looking forward to seeing you!

Organising committee

Lucy Muir, Joe Botting, Michelle Thomas, Berwyn Powell

Scientific committee

Lucy Muir, Joe Botting, Steve Pates, Mansoureh Ghobadi-Pour, Caroline Buttler, Lucy McCobb

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