

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL SDS BUSINESS MEETING October 3, 2014, Sheraton Hotel, Mendoza, Argentina

Attendance: The Chairman (J. MARSHALL), Vice-Chairman (C.E. BRETT),

Mendoza SDS Meeting Attendance

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1. Introductions and apologies for absence

SDS Chair John Marshall called the meeting to order at about 18:35. The scheduled meeting room having proved to be a playroom without chairs. The meeting began with the introduction of himself as SDS Chair, Vice-Chair Carlton E. Brett, and past Chair and Newsletter Editor, R. Thomas Becker, and the SDS webmaster Carlo Corradini.

The CHAIR read list of apologies from those unable to attend.

Apologies were received from: TM's

The CHAIR then read the names of members of SDS who had passed away since the last meeting in Morocco. These were BAI SHUNLIANG, NIKOLAY BAKHAREV, VLADIMIR PAZUKHIN and MENA SCHEMM-GREGORY. SDS members were particularly saddened by the loss of MENA SCHEMM-GREGORY and NIKOLAY (KOLYA) BACHAREV who were both still very active and with much to contribute. It was noted that a memorial slideshow prepared by TM U. Jansen was presented at the joint SDS/IGCP 596 symposium held earlier in the day. Obituaries are in SDS Newsletter 29.

The Chair then introduced BERNARD MOTTEQUIN who made a formal proposal that the next meeting of SDS be held in Brussels, Belgium in mid to late September of 2015 (this was previously scheduled for Frankfurt, but the Senckenberg Museum is under renovation at that time). This would also be a meeting of IGCP project 596 headed by TM PETER KÖNIGSHOF. The meeting, organized by BERNARD MOTTEQUIN and CYRILLE PRESTIANNI, would include 1-2 days of presentations at the **Royal Institute of Brussels** followed by 2-4 days of field excursions in Belgium and the Eifel region of Germany. BERNARD MOTTEQUIN proposed to hold a field trip in the Devonian to Carboniferous (Eifelian-Namurian) to show a variety of critical reference sections and facies including crinoidal mud mounds, and evidence for several bioevents including Kačák and Kellwasser levels. The trips in the western Rheinische Schiefergebirge would be led by THOMAS BECKER and PETER KÖNIGSHOF.

In addition, there is also the meeting of STRATI 2015 in July of next year, to be held in Graz, Austria; this would be preceded by a pre-meeting field trip in the Prague area, led by TM LADISLAV SLAVIK and others. There will also be a post-meeting excursion in the Carnic Alps of Austria to be hosted by TM CARLO CORRADINI, who provided details of a relatively demanding trip to classic sections of the Carnic Alps including Cellon and Lake Wolayer. The details of STRATI 2015 are at: (http://www.stratigraphy.org/upload/Strati2015_1circular.pdf).

As TM VALENZUELA-RÍOS (Nacho) had to leave the meeting early to catch a plane, the Chair asked him for a report on the status of the Pragian-Emsian boundary revision. Nacho briefly reviewed the situation. During the 2008 SDS meeting in Uzbekistan, members of the subcommission visited the proposed revised GSSP sections in the Kitab Reserve and made three decisions regarding the boundary.

- 1) The base of the Emsian should be moved up to the FAD of *Pol. excavatus* 114.
- 2) The stratotype should stay in Uzbekistan.
- 3) Although the boundary would be moved upward from the present *P. kitabicus* level, the former might be useable for a substage boundary within the Pragian.

A team of workers, including PETER KARLS and NACHO VALENZUELA-RÍOS had worked in the field to give considerable detail on the Zinzilban Gorge section and a series of samples were taken both to Prague and to Nacho's lab in **Valencia, Spain**. The results to date are somewhat disappointing and may not have included all critical levels. There is a need to go back to Zinzilban and resample some intervals. Two years ago a landslide cut off the main road into the Kitab Reserve and it is still not open to larger field parties but a small group of 2-3 people could probably get permission to return and work on the sections. In the meantime NACHO VALENZUELA-RÍOS has made considerable progress in characterizing the

conodont biostratigraphy of Celtiberica and this work is now being combined with a multi-proxy approach including chemostratigraphy and carbon isotopic profiles.

The Chair stressed the need for progress on this project. He will write to **Kim and Nadia** that there has been little progress in several years and that they need to push forward on the research. Thomas Becker stressed that ICS Chair Stan Finney had noted to him that we must move ahead with the Pragian-Emsian boundary stratotype. In addition, Finney was rather positive that if SDS applied for additional money for work on the stratotype, he could provide a small amount of grant money through an NSF initiative to improve global stratigraphic studies. Thomas Becker also pointed out that he had produced an extensive paper on excellent sections of the Pragian-Emsian interval in Morocco and that it has considerable potential as a reference section. He noted that the interval around the *excavatus* Zone was excellently exposed and well studied and that it coincided with a black shale that was not the Zlichkov event, but which corresponded to a lower dark shale at the so-called *atropus* Level in the Prague Basin and a transgressive sea level event. This section also yields *Icriodus*, as well as *Polygnathus* conodonts and needs additional study.

NACHO VALENZUELA-RÍOS noted that the Pyrenees sections also have both polygnathids and icriodontids.

THOMAS BECKER stressed that we need a "rosetta stone" section with mixed conodonts and benthic faunas to tie in ULI JANSEN'S well-studied brachiopod bearing sections.

CLAUDO CORRADINI noted that it is important to have real names for conodonts, not numbers (e.g. *P. excavatus* 114) and that the systematic revision of the conodonts needs to be formally published.

At this point NACHO VALENZUELA-RÍOS and JAU-CHYN LIAO excused themselves and left meeting for the airport. The Chair noted that we could then resume the main agenda.

2. Approval of the 2013 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting, held in Erfoud, Morocco, distributed in the SDS newsletter were formally approved.

The Chair noted that Stan Finney had wanted subcommissions to discuss a recent paper by **De Vleeschouwer and Parnell** that had appeared in *Geology* **42**: 491-494. These authors claimed that the spline methodology used for interpolating absolute age dates in the 2012 Geologic Time Scale book were invalid. De Vleeschouwer and Parnell had used the Devonian as an example, but their critique means that potentially many of the dates in that key reference are invalid. The issue was tabled for now.

4. ICS Matters

STRATI15 is in Graz, Austria in July 19-23, 2015, as previously noted by CARLO CORRADINI. Some years ago we agreed that our 2015 meeting would be held jointly with IGCP 596 in Frankfurt (now Brussels as the Senckenberg is scheduled for renovation). There is now

another 2015 meeting in Graz which also has two fieldtrips run by SDS members Corradini and Slavik. Clearly we hope that SDS can also support their efforts. The Chair had attended the earlier meeting (STRATI 2013) in Lisbon and will attend the Graz meeting, but it will not be a formal SDS activity.

NOTE: Subsequent to the SDS Business meeting in Mendoza and discussions with STAN FINNEY a proposal was submitted by the Chair to STRATI2015 for a general Devonian session. This is to draw together all the Devonian presentations and give representation for SDS. It is important that SDS has a profile at an official ICS Conference. However, there will be no SDS Business Meeting in Graz.

5. GSSPs

Stage Boundaries:

Pragian-Emsian: We have already heard NACHO VALENZUELA-RÍOS's report on the status of the Pragian-Emsian boundary revision, which is the most pressing issue. He suggests that we make a proposal to Stan Finney for supplemental funds to send a small working group comprised of VALENZUELA-RÍOS, L. SLAVIC and one or two others to Zinzilban Gorge to restudy the proposed stratotype section.

Thomas Becker remarked on the status of the Australian-based Emsian working group, headed by CM RUTH MAWSON. Regrettably, we understand that Dr. Mawson has been unwell and hence could not be proactive on Emsian issues. We need to find a way of making progress. THOMAS BECKER will contact JOHN TALENT on this matter; he suggested that NACHO VALENZUELA-RÍOS could take over the role of heading up the Emsian working group.

D-C Boundary: MARCUS ARETZ, present at the meeting, is in charge of assembling proposals from various countries. He has put various individual working groups on notice that he needs these proposals for more than a year, but has yet to receive a single proposal. THOMAS BECKER urged Marcus to be more proactive and forceful in trying to obtain these reports. Marcus, however, notes that he has repeatedly sent follow-up notices. TB noted that if our members fail to communicate we must replace them. There may need to be some major reorganization.

MARCUS ARETZ noted that it would be important to have a target date. A D-C boundary workshop will take place at the Graz meeting with follow-up discussion at the SDS/IGCP meeting in Brussels later in 2015.

THOMAS BECKER noted that work by TOMAS KOPAN shows what can be done using hand held gamma ray spectroscopy. Becker and his students have taken samples from a number of D-C boundary sections and are currently revising the Woklum section. Devonian workers from Münster and Köln are cooperating in this effort.

Again, there is a need for short summaries. We need deadlines and reminders. Now the deadline for these proposals should be the Brussels meeting.

Substages

Lochkovian: CARLO CORRADINI has already made a proposal but NACHO VALENZUELA-RÍOS had a different view. Perhaps it is time to make a joint proposal. THOMAS BECKER noted that he needs a brief write up for the Newsletter; three substages have been suggested.

Pragian: already briefly discussed under the heading of Pragian-Emsian boundary revisions. There was a suggestion that the former lower boundary of Emsian could become the Zinzalbanian Substage boundary within the Pragian.

Emsian: Base of old Dalejan stage was favored for a substage boundary. JIRI FRYDA had made a proposal that the base of substage could be *elegans* zone, but THOMAS BECKER felt that it was too low, as it coincided with the upper Zlichkov (1st deepening event). The Dalje base coincides instead approximately with base of *cancellata* Zone, but there is a need for revision of the systematics of *cancellata*.

Eifelian: There has, as yet been no formal proposal for a substage boundary within the Eifelian Stage. THOMAS BECKER called upon CARLTON BRETT to make a proposal. CARL suggested that a position at the *costatus/australis* Zonal boundary would divide the Eifelian into approximate equal substages and would have the virtue of coinciding with a major transgression and the onset of a series of named bioevents, culminating in the Kacak (*sensu stricto*) at or near the end of the substage. THOMAS BECKER suggested that a formal proposal should be written for the Newsletter.

Givetian: as for upper substage THOMAS BECKER has recently sampled the classic Blauer Bruche section in Germany and found that the "Taghanic" interval is highly condensed so this would not be an appropriate stratotype. Other possible stratotypes are in Morocco, Nevada or possibly at the Emanuel Baptist Church, Irvine in Kentucky (Portwood Member sections) as visited by the SDS in 2009.

The middle Givetian substage has been proposed by former SDS Chair PIERRE BULTYNCK, who had been contacted for a progress report. However, there had been no reply at the time of the SDS meeting.

Frasnian: CM D. JEFFREY OVER has headed up this has recently reported that he has not made progress but is working on the detailed cyclostratigraphy of the lower-upper Kellwasser interval. He has said that in 2015 he will take some study leave time to work on Frasnian substage issues. THOMAS BECKER noted that WILLI ZIEGLER had suggested a reference section for the *punctata* Zone as a stratotype for a lower-middle division. This coincides with the so-called *punctata* or "Middlesex" Event. We need to check with GRZEGORZ RACKI in Poland, who has had work in progress on this level for some three years.

Famennian: THOMAS BECKER had wanted to bring proposed definition of the latest Famennian substage to a vote. However, a publication by Kortov and Weyer (see p. 40 of 2013

Newsletter) had raised issues with the proposal. Thomas also proposed that the base of the *annulata* Zone be used for the base of the upper division; this is associated with the *annulata* Event and transgressive level. The Chair noted that the study and data generated by studies of boundaries is critical and more important than bringing these issues to an immediate vote.

Nomination/Election of New Corresponding Members

MERCEDES DI PASQUO of Argentina who has been working on Devonian palynology who was elected in 2013, was welcomed.

LUIZA PONCIANO, who has been working in the Devonian trilobite-rich succession of the Parnaiba Basin was proposed by TM Brett as a new CM and seconded by Thomas Becker.

There is also a need for a new member from Belarus to replace TAMARA OBUKHOVSKAYA, who has retired; CM KATARZYNA NARKEWIECZ nominated DIMITRI PLAX, who has done a considerable amount of work on Devonian stratigraphy including fish. This was seconded by CARL BRETT.

(During the subsequent field conference JUAN JOSE RUSTÁN, co-leader of the Pre-Cordillera excursion and an active worker on Argentinian Devonian successions, including trilobites, was proposed as a CM by TM Thomas Becker seconded by Brett and supported by John Marshall and Uli Jansen who were present at the field conference.) Thus, SDS has gone from no representatives in South America to five CMs.

There is a need for replacement of member from South Africa. THOMAS BECKER has corresponded briefly with a potential candidate who needs to be identified and contacted.

HANS PETER SCHONLAUB of Austria has retired and rather inactive on Devonian issues and TM Becker proposed a substitute a former student and active Devonian ostracod worker CLAUDIA("Dodo") DOYEN as a substitute CM from Austria. This was seconded by CARL BRETT.

Publications:

The Special Publication of the Geological Society of London on Devonian Events, edited by TMs THOMAS BECKER, CARLTON BRETT and PETER KÖNIGSHOF, is in progress. A total of ten papers have been received to date and all have been reviewed. Within a month 5-6 fully edited and revised manuscripts should be received and managing editor Angharad Hills has indicated that these can be made available as electronic publications within this year. She also indicated that the volume could go forward with ten papers although she would prefer to see it closer to 15. Three to four more manuscripts are in the works that may be ready for submission within the next two months. THOMAS BECKER hopes that the volume will be completed early in 2015.

The volume of papers resulting from 2012 Novosibirsk meeting is to be published as a special issue of Palaeo-2 is making some progress as the deadline for submission

approaches. Eight papers have been promised; nothing however, has been received to date. He has written to potential authors urging them to submit manuscripts even if they are not in "perfect" form. He WHO IS THE HE HERE? hopes to have a batch of papers in 2015 and publication some time in 2016.

SDS Publications

The SDS Newsletter editor THOMAS BECKER set a deadline of end March 2015 for submission of contributions for the next newsletter and wants this to be a hard deadline.

THOMAS BECKER noted that he would like to see all older versions of SDS newsletters available on-line. He has copies of all but one of the older issues edited by REX CRICK, volume 10. He will contact GIL KLAPPER and/or PIERRE BULTYNCK for the missing issues. CARLO CORRADINI indicated that if he can receive scanned pdfs of these newsletters he will try to upload them to SDS website.

In a brief discussion of the new popular book on Paleozoic geology edited by Peter Königshof, Luiza Ponciano offered to help translate the book to Portuguese. Peter noted that the book was already translated into 17 different languages including Portuguese.

Stan Finney's Discussion

ICS director Stan Finney arrived late at the meeting but wanted to report several things

The **STRATI 2015** organizers are still requesting proposals for symposia. It would be good to have a general Devonian session if possible.

The Devonian subcommission meets regularly with IPC; STAN FINNEY would like all subcommissions to meet at STRATI in the year between the IPC and IGC.

He notes, as already discussed, that the Stratigraphic Commission is seeking proposals for \$5000 to 7000 for field work on potential stratotype sections. This money supported by NSF could also be used to improve websites or to encourage participation at meetings by under-represented and/or younger workers.

RICH LANE (director of NSF) wants all data on stratotype sections and, eventually all measured sections, to be archived in a central database that could be linked with the existing stratigraphic database directed by JUANXAN FAN of Nanjing Institute.

LANE will have a workshop at the STRATI meeting including FAN and others on the best use of databases. Some money will be available to support participation by member from each subcommission, ideally one active in biostratigraphy of major taxa to attend this workshop.

The plan is to start by archiving data generated in GSSP studies and then move to auxiliary sections. In future all GSSP proposals will have to have data archived before they can be voted on.

FINNEY also discussed the new *Encyclopedia of Stratigraphy*. He wants proposals for short papers by November to formalize his list of contributions. Thus, he wants titles for manuscripts in the next four weeks. Manuscripts should be received within four months afterwards. He suggests that papers might fall into one of three groups: longer contributions (e.g. Devonian Stratigraphy) of 8000 to 10,000- words; intermediate (3000-4000 words) and short (<1000 words). Articles are to be written at a level suitable for advanced undergraduate and beginning graduate students, Springer will set up a system of electronic publication of individual contributions available on-line after reviewed and approved. The content will include geology of Period/Systems and/or regions and summaries of biostratigraphy of all major groups.

THOMAS BECKER agreed to do a longer overview of the Devonian. CARL BRETT agreed informally to do one to two general papers on event stratigraphy and perhaps one on Devonian of eastern North America.

After STAN FINNEY excused himself from the remainder of the meeting the discussion resumed the agenda.

There is a need to propose the symposia for the Graz meeting in the next few weeks. It would be good to have a session of 6-8 talks on Devonian issues.

THE CHAIR asked if PETER KÖNIGSHOF planned a meeting of IGCP 596. PETER responded that he anticipated some presence of the IGCP group at the meeting but the main focus for next year would be the Brussels meeting.

Future Meetings

SDS is obliged to meet at the IGC in South Africa in 2016. It is hoped that SDS can also have a field excursion to the superb Devonian sections in the area. JOHN MARSHALL suggested that JOHN ALMOND, a local geologist in South Africa with considerable experience with the local Devonian, might be contacted to find out if he would be willing to organize such a trip.

THOMAS BECKER also noted that there had been a proposal to meet in Bulgaria in the near future. But lack of a report from Bulgarian colleagues suggests that this may not be a viable option. In 2017 ICOS will meet in Valencia. This would be an opportune time for a field meeting to examine sections in the Spanish Pyrenees. It might also be possible to arrange (with THOMAS SUTTNER or CARLO CORRADINI) a field meeting in the Carnic Alps. There will be a circular on the ICOS meeting sent in June or July.

THOMAS BECKER mentioned that next year there will be a major meeting on the Carboniferous and Permian. There is a need to have representation on the D-C boundary issues.

Also, there is a question of whether we need to start thinking about another *International Devonian Symposium*.

Financial Report

A total of \$1303.00 received. About half went to publication of the newsletter. The remaining funds were used for Vice Chair and Secretary to attend SDS business meetings.

Other Business

There is a continual need to correct and update addresses of all SDS members for Newsletter.

JOHN MARSHALL put on record sincere thanks from members of SDS to the organizers of the International Palaeontological Congress in Mendoza for a highly successful and well organized meeting. The meeting closed at 20:10 and members adjourned for further informal discussion over dinner.