

## A new valuable resource: The Newsletters of the International Subcommittee on Jurassic Stratigraphy

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From the formation of the International Subcommittee on Jurassic Stratigraphy (ISJS) in 1978 until 2010, a total of 38 newsletters were compiled, edited and circulated by ISJS. These newsletters contain news items, correspondence, commission business matters such as details of working groups and meetings, reports, summaries of the Jurassic in various countries, obituaries and papers on Jurassic Global Stratotype Section and Points (GSSPs). They range in length from a few pages to over 80. The newsletters are notable because they often contain work in progress and stratigraphical details that were not published elsewhere. They also form an important historical archive of the work during the first 32 years of the commission.

We are pleased to now deposit this archive with *Volumina Jurassica* for free access in perpetuity. The collection can be accessed at <https://vjs.pgi.gov.pl/pages/view/archival-newsletters>. The copyright remains with the ISJS and any enquiries should be sent to the chair of ISJS.

The compilation, editing and distribution of the newsletters was undertaken by the chairs and secretaries of ISJS. These were as follows: Newsletter 1 to 19 (1979–1989) Arnold Zeiss and Olaf Michelsen; Newsletter 20 to 23 (1991–1995) Raymond Enay and Charles Mangold; Newsletter 24 to 27 (1997–1999) Giulio Pavia and Fabrizio Cecca; Newsletter 28 to 34 (2001–2007) Nicol Morton and Paul Bown; Newsletter 35 (2008) Nicol Morton and Stephen Hesselbo and Newsletter 36 (2010) Stephen Hesselbo. As well as acknowledging the considerable work ISJS previous chairs and secretaries for compiling these newsletters, I'd particularly like to formally acknowledge the work of Eckhard Mönning (Naturkunde-Museum, Coburg, Germany) who very kindly produced the high-resolution digital copies of all the newsletters that are now in the archive.

Since 2010, *Volumina Jurassica* has published many papers and news items arising from the work of ISJS and this journal, together with our ISJS website, (<https://jurassic.stratigraphy.org/>) forms the main methods of communication of the subcommission. Details of the accepted GSSPs can be found in Episodes (<http://www.episodes.org/main.html>). For specific links for each ratified stage see the ISJS website.

To illustrate how rapidly matters have advanced in 43 years I draw your attention to the first Newsletter (July 1978), typed on a typewriter and discussing working groups for Lower, Middle, and Upper Jurassic (Figure 1). By Newsletter 7 (October 1981) it is clear that everything was not going smoothly and that lack of funding was an issue. This newsletter goes on to describe the first stages in setting up the working groups for each of the stages as a solution; a strategy which is still functioning well today.

It is interesting to compare the first newsletter to the last (Newsletter 36, October 2010) which was compiled online,

To promote the activities and to be economic we propose the work to be done in three working groups: For the Lower, Middle, and Upper Jurassic respectively. Furthermore, we propose the working groups to arrange special field meetings.

For organizing of the working groups we propose the convenors listed below. The members of the Subcommittee are asked to agree to the choice of the conveners or to make other proposals. The

**Fig. 1. Extract from the Newsletter 1 (July 1978) of ISJS setting up working groups for the Jurassic Series**

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contains colour images and information ranging from news items, working group reports, book announcements, obituaries, correspondence and minutes (Figure 2).

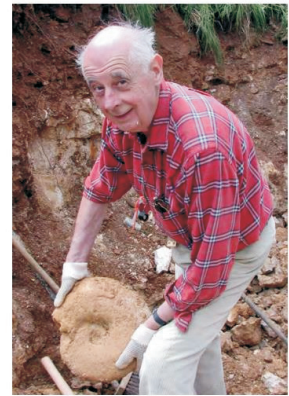
Other notable highlights in the ISJS history that are recorded in these newsletters are:

- Newsletter 9 (March 1983) captures some of the initial discussion of the Jurassic-Cretaceous boundary.
- Newsletter 12 (May 1985) reports on the first International Symposium in Jurassic Stratigraphy.
- A retrospective in Newsletter 19 (November 1989) from Arnold Zeiss and Olaf Michelsen after serving ISJS for 10 years. This issue describes how ISJS evolved from the Sous-Commission du Jurassique and also how in 1986 the International Commission on Stratigraphy provided new guidelines and statutes for the work of the commission and its subcommissions (See Newsletter 14 June 1986 for more detail) after which the focus of the ISJS on defining GSSPs became much clearer. The current version of these guidelines and statutes is on the International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS) website at <https://stratigraphy.org/statutes>.
- Newsletter 22 (September 1994) contains interesting and diverse comments on sequence stratigraphy from members of ISJS.
- Newsletter 27 was the first to be distributed by email, prior to this the newsletters had been printed.
- Newsletter 34-1 (July 2007) is entirely devoted to the Triassic/Jurassic boundary.
- Newsletter 34-2 (December 2007) records the publication of the abstracts and proceedings of the Kraków Jurassic Congress in *Volumina Jurassica* and the start of the relationship between ISJS and this journal.

It is clear from the Newsletters that some things have not changed such as the challenge of finding the most complete sections for GSSPs, and the usefulness and enjoyment of field work and meetings. The commission also continues to comprise 20 or so international voting members who each serve for 4 years and are selected to ensure a very broad range of expertise and knowledge of different areas of Jurassic stratigraphy.

The archiving of these newsletters benefitted from discussion with Nicol Morton (ISJS Chair 2001–2008) and Guilio Pavia (ISJS Chair 1997–2000).

horizons with the variability at each level depicted with every intermediate. He stated that variability was far more easily discerned by good illustration than via mathematical criteria: "You can identify your mother amidst a crowd of thousands; however, to produce a set of figures with similar precision would be impossible." He was meticulous with his stratigraphical control, always ensuring that specimens were correctly marked with the beds from which they came. We compiled ammonite morphospecies lists from single faunal horizons in the Inferior Oolite that approximate to isochronous assemblages; the closest we can hope to get to the interpretation of a palaeobiospecies and the highest resolution using biochronology. The assumption is that the period over which the ammonites accumulated (taking in to account other factors) was insignificant over geological time, and members of an intergrading ammonite



*John Callomon [microconch] and Fissiloboceras fissilobatum [macroconch], Dundry 2006*

**Fig. 2. Extract from Newsletter 36 (October 2010) showing the more formal layout and John Callomon with the key index macrofossil of the Jurassic, the ammonite**