Natural History Museum – January 30, 2018 – London England

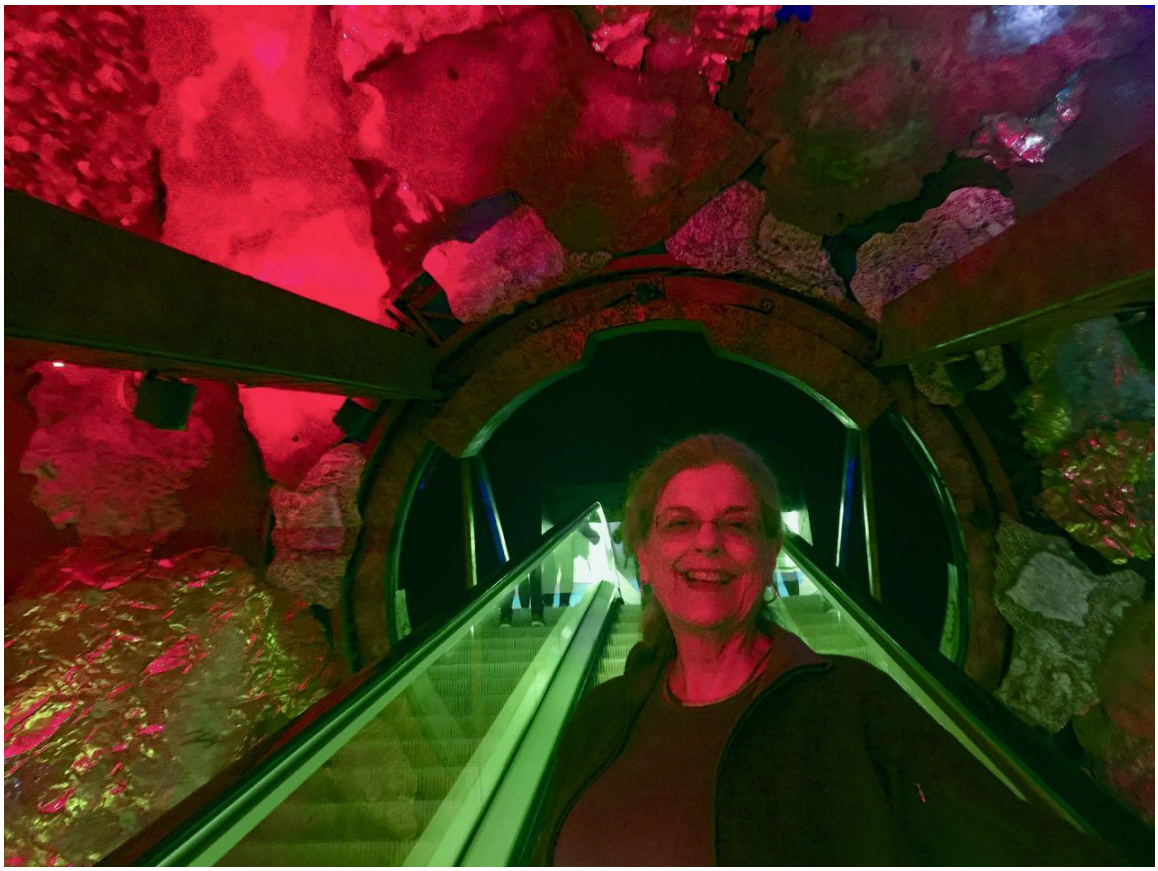
By Tom Allin

Today it was time for us to put in practice what Lee and Rick has told us about London. First we walked to the underground station – no issues. Then we got on a train – no issue here. And finally off the tube, out the turnstiles, and into the city of London – did I mention how cold London is during the winter!

Our underground stop or start – Turnham Green station.

OK, a little mix up. We entered the museum at a side entrance rather than the main entrance. As a result we spent some time in the earth gallery which could have been better used elsewhere in the museum. We spent about four hours in the museum or about half as much time as you need to truly see the museum.

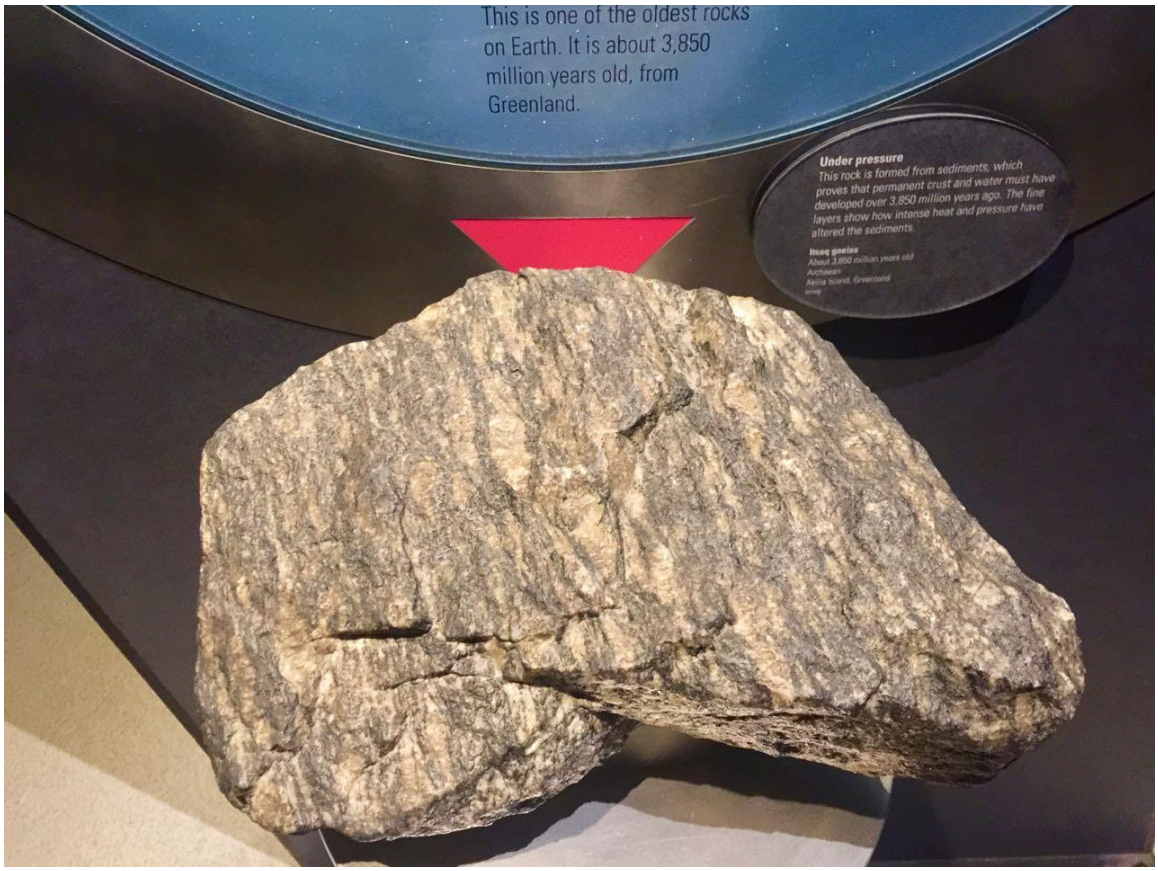
We chose to go up the escalator through the inside of a volcano and into the earth gallery.



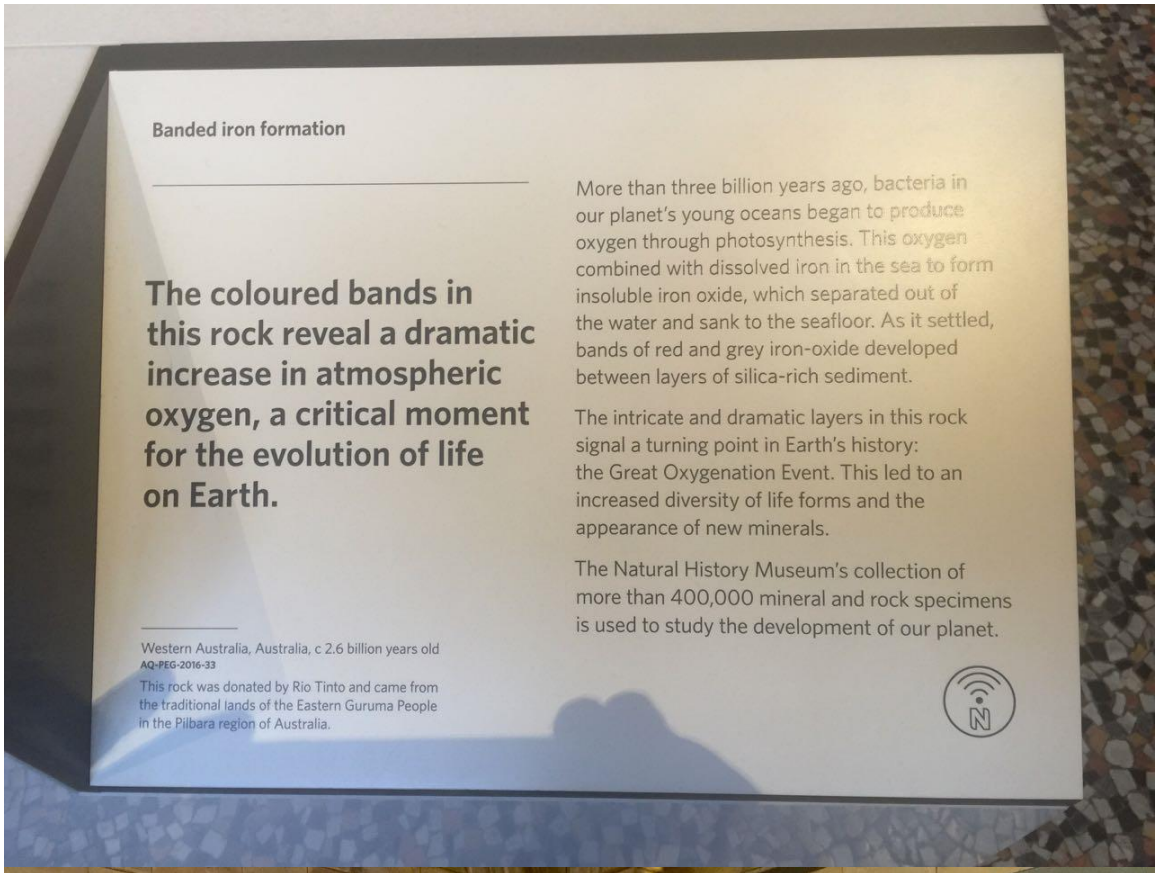
The museum as a whole is very interesting and I only wish I had a better background in geology. For those worried about where the next super volcano may erupt see the map.

Damn, three of the locations are in the U.S.

Yes, I took a photograph of a rock. However, “This is one of the oldest rocks on Earth. It is about 3,850 million (yes, million) years old, from Greenland”.



Another rock I found very interesting.

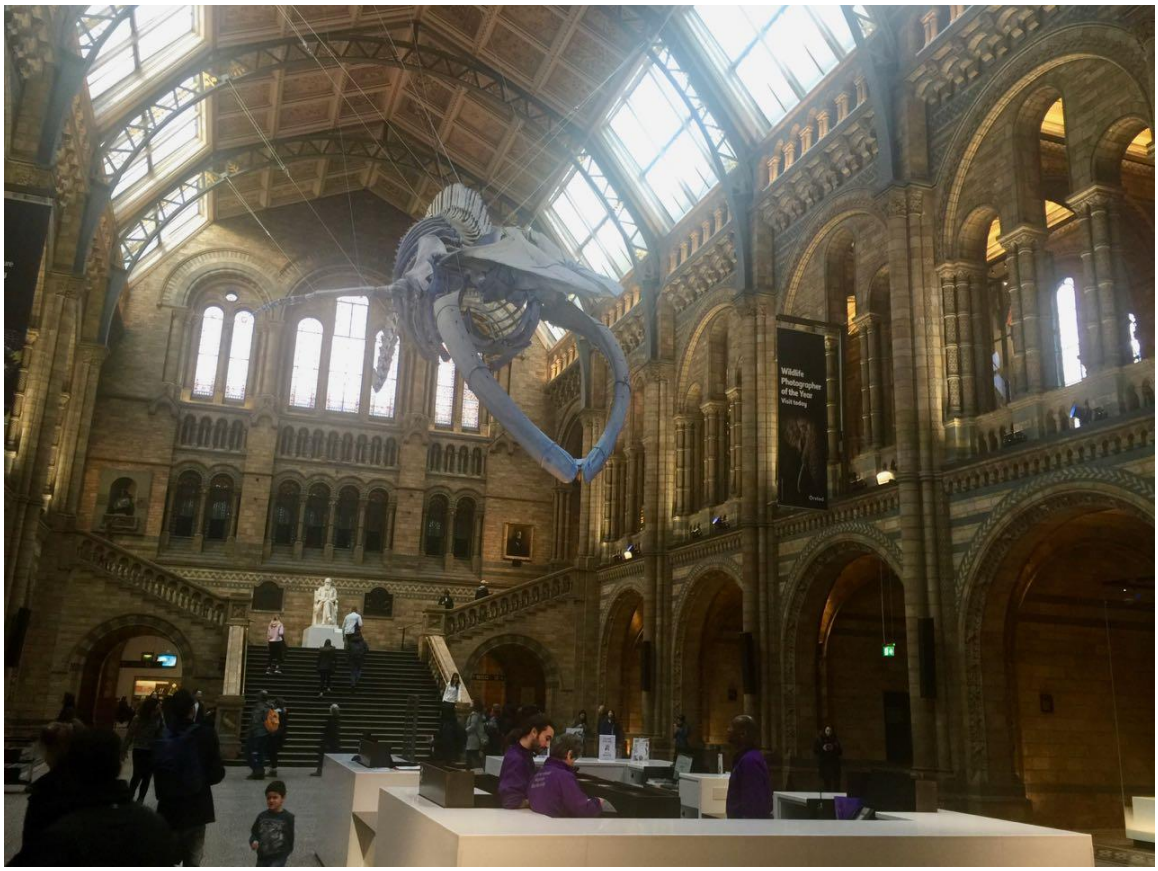

Banded iron formation
The coloured bands in this rock reveal a dramatic increase in atmospheric oxygen, a critical moment for the evolution of life on Earth.
Western Australia, Australia, c 2.6 billion years old
AQ-PEG-2016-33
This rock was donated by Rio Tinto and came from the traditional lands of the Eastern Guruma People in the Pilbara region of Australia.
More than three billion years ago, bacteria in our planet's young oceans began to produce oxygen through photosynthesis. This oxygen combined with dissolved iron in the sea to form insoluble iron oxide, which separated out of the water and sank to the seafloor. As it settled, bands of red and grey iron-oxide developed between layers of silica-rich sediment.
The intricate and dramatic layers in this rock signal a turning point in Earth's history: the Great Oxygenation Event. This led to an increased diversity of life forms and the appearance of new minerals.
The Natural History Museum's collection of more than 400,000 mineral and rock specimens is used to study the development of our planet.

We know so much more about the world and us as humans today than say 50 years ago when I was in high school. All I remember about man from high school is there were the Neanderthals and us and scientists were looking for a missing link between the two. Today we know there were as many as 16 different Homo erectus species and although the Neanderthals is not a Homo Sapiens (that's us) our DNA contains between 1 and 4% of their DNA.

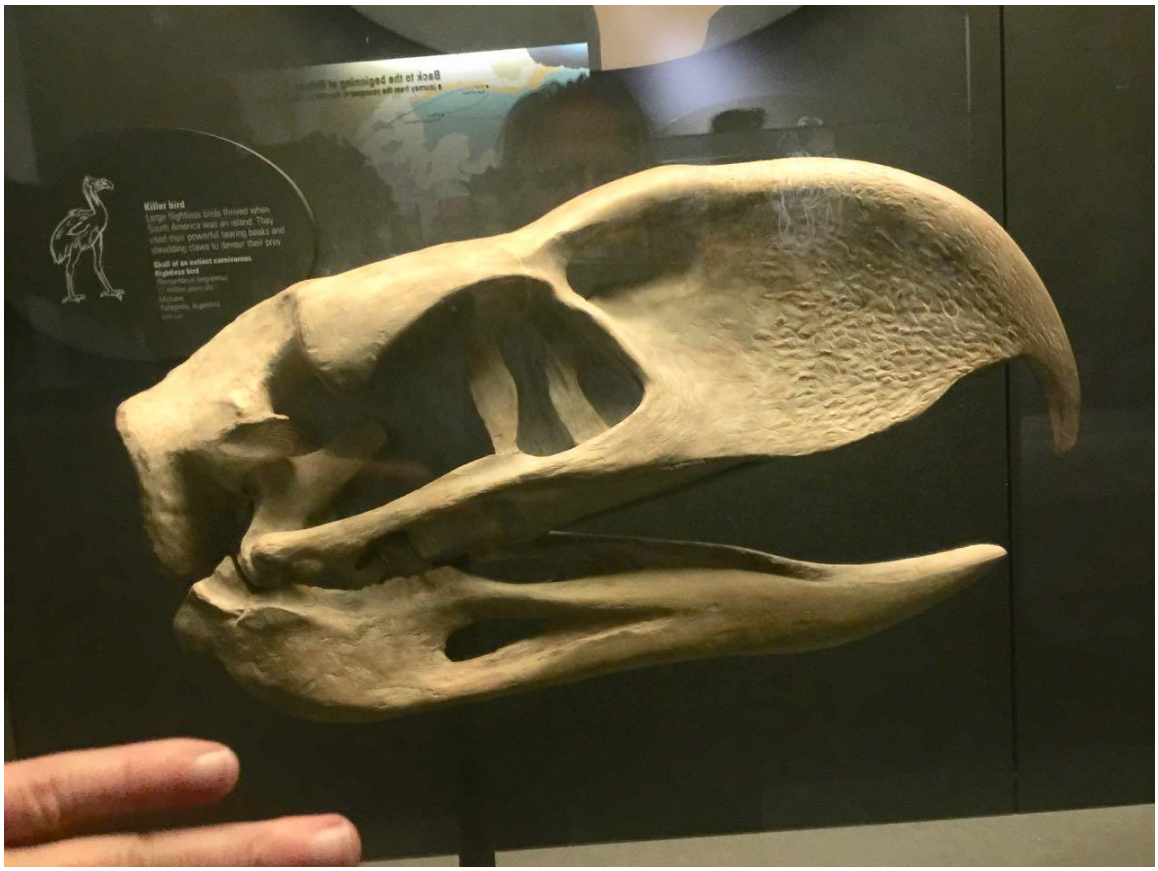
Cheddar Man is the oldest nearly complete skeleton found in Britain. The guy died approximately 10,000 years ago.

This is a photograph of the first Neanderthal found. It was found in 1848 and scientists are still working to identify its age.

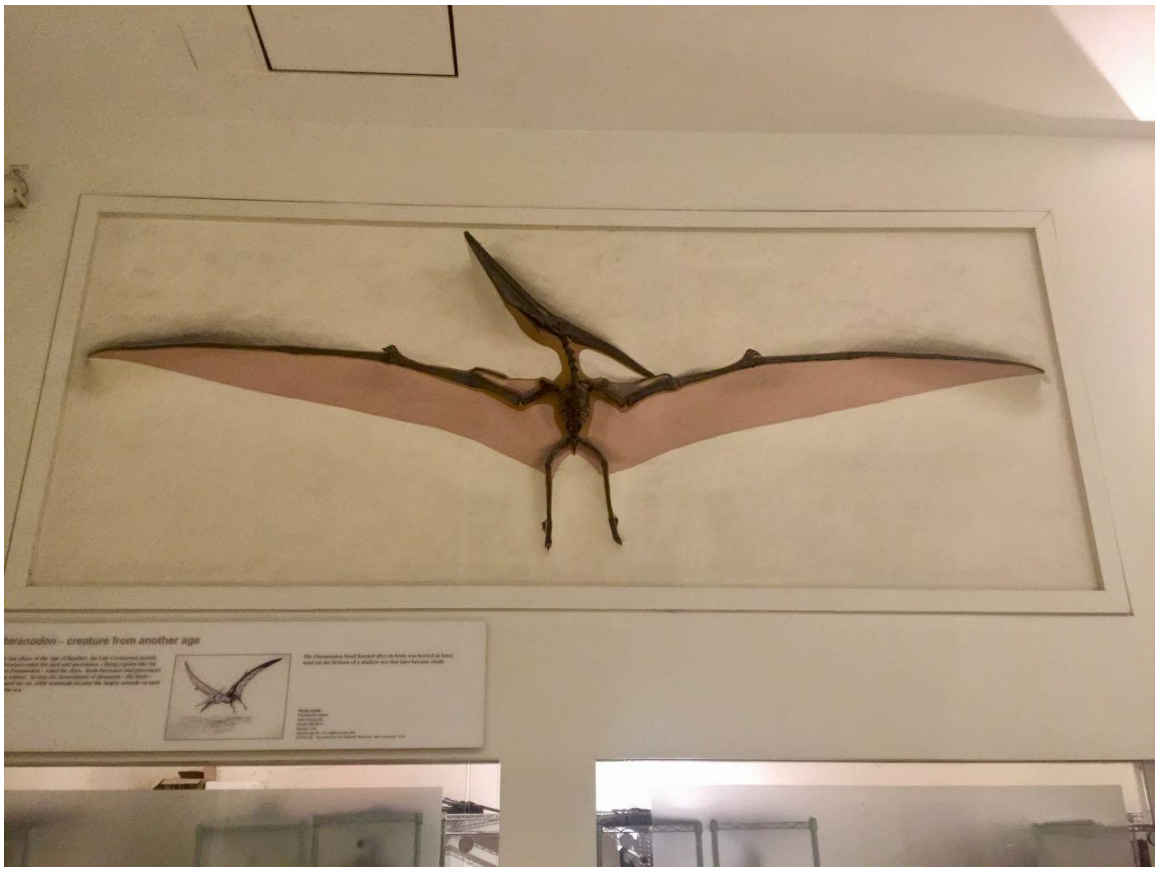
We finally stumble into the main entrance of the museum. Hanging from the ceiling is a diplodocus skeleton and is just another dinosaur.



Being birders I am glad we haven't ever come across this guy.



And then there are the pterosaurs and what I have learned is there are approximately 130 different genera of pterosaurs.



We explored the museum for as long as they allowed us. But at 5:50 pm we were out the door and in the cold weather exploring the streets around the Natural History Museum. The next photograph is the main entrance to the Natural Museum.

May we never stop learning about where we live and us.