

Neil Clark PhD



Neil studied geology at the University of Edinburgh from where he graduated in 1984. To celebrate completing his final exams, he went fossil shrimp collecting to Granton shore where he discovered the second ever known conodont animal and later found several more of these animals. Neil worked at the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow for six months before starting his PhD project at Glasgow University in 1985. He was supervised by Ian Rolfe and Chris Burton, both past presidents of the society. His research project was a palaeoenvironmental and crustacean palaeobiological study in the Carboniferous Bearsden Shark locality to the northwest of Glasgow that Stan Wood discovered 1982. Neil completed his PhD in 1989.

Neil has held the position of Curator of Palaeontology at the Hunterian, University of Glasgow, since 1991. He has written and published several articles on crustaceans from the lowest Carboniferous to the middle Carboniferous as well as on other arthropods. However, after starting his job at the Hunterian, he started delving into the dinosaurs of the Middle Jurassic of Scotland so that he could better communicate his science to the wider public. As a result of his interest in dinosaurs, he was nicknamed *Jurassic Clark* by the Times Education Supplement early in his career. He has written many books for both children and adults covering topics as wide-ranging as a history of gold in Scotland, amber and dinosaurs, and has also written a chapter in a textbook on art and collecting in the 18th century. His scientific publications include specialist articles on conodonts, crustacea, other arthropods, dinosaurs, crocodiles, ichthyosaurs, crinoids, amber and gold, as well as historical articles and articles on palaeopathology. He has appeared in the Guinness Book of World Records for his discovery of the smallest dinosaur footprint in the world in 2006.

Neil nearly gave his right leg to palaeontology in 1996 when he was in the process of discovering the second piece of evidence of dinosaurs in Scotland on a beach on Skye. He was airlifted to Stornoway hospital for treatment of a multiple fractured tibia and fibula. Since then, he has published on many new discoveries of dinosaur material on the Isle of Skye and has discovered dinosaur remains on the mainland of Scotland as well.

In 1990, Neil set up the Scottish Geology Festival, which is still running and now encompasses over 100 activities involving the public around Scotland. He was also involved in the setting up of the Scottish Geology Trust and the Scottish Geodiversity Forum and in the production of the Scottish Geology Charter and Scottish Fossil Code. Like many palaeontologists, he has had a few fossils named after him, including the aptly named *Helicocoprus clarki* for his contribution to our understanding of coprolites.

Neil joined the Geological Society of Glasgow in 1985 and served as president from 2018 to 2021.

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