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## **Giant Irish Elk changing location**

The conservation team at the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Science have finished moving the giant deer skeleton from its place at the end of the Museum to a new location on top of table case in nearby bay 4. This will free up space for the forthcoming HLF funded Darwin the Geologist exhibition set to open in the area to the far left of the Museum's entrance in 2009.

One of the Sedgwick Museum's most famous skeletal incumbents, the 'Irish Elk' (in-fact a kind of extinct giant deer) used to face the entrance and *Iguanodon* skeleton. On February 5<sup>th</sup>, museum conservators removed the head of the looming, two-metre-tall deer skeleton beginning a careful period of deconstruction in which most of the skeleton was dismantled and removed from its previous base.

Darwin project conservator, Esther Sharp is pleased that the move has been less difficult than expected. "In general terms the biggest problem was getting the head from its high plinth, down to people on the ground. Because of the massive antlers (spanning nearly three metres) the skull has a really weird centre of gravity and you can only hold it at certain places without the danger of it breaking."

The deer's new base was constructed by the Department of Earth Sciences workshop and the skeleton carefully reassembled in its new location where it now awaits some final conservation before the project is complete.

The enormous endeavour has been supported by a keen crew of Department of Earth Sciences and Sedgwick Museum staff. In its striking new position, the giant deer rests opposite the Barrington Hippo, a metre above the ground on top of a table cabinet.

The new location will give visitors an opportunity to see an iconic part of the Museum collection from a different perspective.

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Note to Editors

1. The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences is the oldest established Museum at the University of Cambridge (having been founded in 1728). Its collections of over 1.5 million specimens have received the accolades of Designation and Accreditation because of their national and international importance. Since the mid 1990s it has been undergoing a period of renovation and refurbishment.

2. Images of the Irish Elk in transit to accompany this story are available on request.