

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20 October 2008



The Sedgwick Museum
of Earth Sciences

Seismic events at the Sedgwick Museum

Thanks to a public engagement grant from the Institute of Physics and funding from the Friends, the Sedgwick Museum has been able to set up a seismological station to record the shock waves created by earthquakes.

This allows us to participate in the Schools Seismology Project, a new initiative run by the British Geological Survey (BGS) which encourages secondary schools to record and use real seismic data from the thousands of earthquakes which occur all over the world each year.

The Sedgwick seismometer has been logging data since early August, and has recorded a number of major seismic events including China, New Zealand and Indonesia. This data will be uploaded to the SSP website and shared with schools all over the UK and the US where a similar project has been running for several years. We are also planning to develop new learning resources about seismology as part of the Heritage Lottery funded *Darwin the Geologist* project.

As well as buying a seismometer for the Museum, the funding provided project work for this year's Learning and Outreach Prizewinner, geology graduate Joel Gill. During his time at the Museum working with Annette Shelford, the education officer, Joel has researched and put together a hands-on science show and experiments for our exciting activity day *Seismographics*.

He has also worked with local artist Carolynn Cooke to develop some seismic art activities which use some of the physical principles that allow us to measure earthquakes as a starting point. Joel and Carolynn have both consulted with earthquake experts Paul Denton from BGS and Prof James Jackson from the Department of Earth Sciences while planning the activities. If you want to find out more, you'll have to come along and join in!

Seismographics takes place on Saturday 25th October, 10am – 4pm as part of the new Festival of Ideas. All activities are free. Places for Joel's show can be booked in advance via the Festivals Office on 01223 766766 or at the Museum on the day.

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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. The Institute of Physics is a scientific membership organisation devoted to increasing the understanding and application of physics. It has an extensive worldwide membership (around 34,000) and is a leading communicator of physics with all audiences from specialists through government to the general public. Its publishing company, IOP Publishing, is a world leader in scientific publishing and the electronic dissemination of physics.

3. The British Geological Survey (BGS), a component body of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), is the nation's principal supplier of objective, impartial and up-to-date geological expertise and information for decision making for governmental, commercial and individual users. The BGS maintains and develops the nation's understanding of its geology to improve policy making, enhance national wealth and reduce risk. It also collaborates with the national and international scientific community in carrying out research in strategic areas, including energy and natural resources, our vulnerability to environmental change and hazards, and our general knowledge of the Earth system.