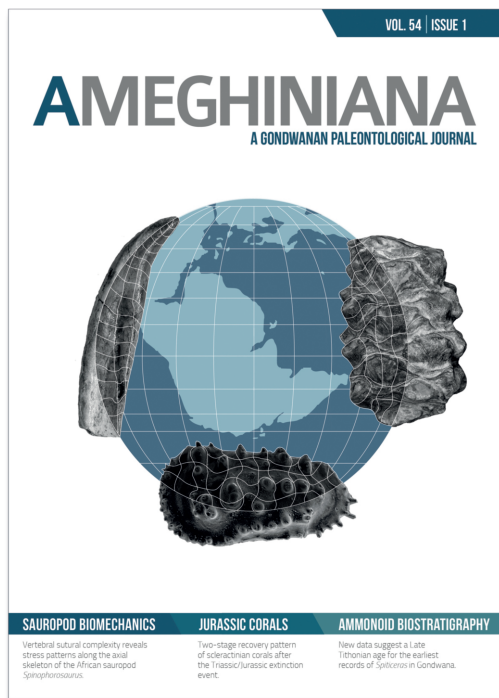




# AMEGHINIANA

A GONDWANAN PALEONTOLOGICAL JOURNAL



ROBIN WHATLEY  
(1936-2016)

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## SAUROPOD BIOMECHANICS

Vertebral sutural complexity reveals stress patterns along the axial skeleton of the African sauropod *Spinophorosaurus*.

## JURASSIC CORALS

Two-stage recovery pattern of scleractinian corals after the Triassic/Jurassic extinction event.

## AMMONOID BIOSTRATIGRAPHY

New data suggest a Late Tithonian age for the earliest records of *Spiticeras* in Gondwana.

Robin Charles Ignatius Whatley was born in England (Hawkhurst) on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1936 and, being 79 years old, died in Wales on June 4<sup>th</sup> 2016. He attended the Sir Norton Knatchbull Grammar School in Ashford, Kent, and then took various jobs in farming, fishing and the National Service in the fifties. He received his higher education at the University of Hull, where he graduated with a First-class honours degree in both Geology and Zoology (1962). There, he subsequently earned a Ph.D. with an excellent Thesis on the Callovian and Oxfordian Ostracoda of England and Scotland (1965). By that time, he joined the staff of the Geology Department of the University College of Wales at Aberystwyth, academic institution where he developed a brilliant career, deservedly obtained a personal chair in 1988, and finally attained the status of Professor Emeritus in 2001. In spite of being retired and facing serious health problems, he managed to produce valuable research, literally until the very day of his death, with the indefatigable help and support of his wife and colleague, Dr. Caroline Anne Maybury.

Robin lived and worked in Argentina between 1970-1973, supported by the overseas development agency of the British Council and the Argentinian National Research Council (CONICET). During that spell he made an everlasting impression in the Ar-



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gentinian scientific community, documented the diversity of past and present ostracod faunas, taught micropalaeontology at La Plata University, and laid the foundations of the Micropalaeontology Laboratory at the La Plata Museum. His lectures were always an insightful and stimulating experience, since he was an inspired teacher, who was ever involved with the interests of each of his students. That stay was also propitious for travelling across the territory, which enabled him to visit many different regions, nonetheless, the 'pampas' remained his favourite. Simultaneously, he developed and reared friendships with Argentinian scientists and other people, which he maintained and increased through the years. His correspondence was often signed as

"Robincito". He always felt a special fondness towards our country and its customs and manners (like the 'asados'). He was an active member of the Argentine Palaeontological Association (APA), helping in many ways, and formed part of the Scientific Editorial Board of *Ameghiniana* (where he stood by his convictions). In recognition for his influential achievements, he was designated as Corresponding Member of both the Argentine Geological Association (1995) and the National Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences in Buenos Aires (1991), distinctions he was very proud of.

He nurtured broad interests in Geology and Palaeontology, devoting himself particularly to the study of post-Palaeozoic ostracods. He was a most prolific author, publishing nearly four hundred relevant and lasting contributions to our knowledge of these microfossils from many places around the world, including South America and Argentina in particular (for a recent list in full, see Riccardi, 2016, *Rev. Asoc. Geol. Arg.* 73: 442). His numerous papers, often monographic, appeared in leading journals, several books and symposia proceedings. He was also committedly involved in the revision of the ostracod *Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology, Part Q*, untangling a range of complex taxonomic issues (yet, failing to receive enough technical support for photographing every type specimen, as was his wish). He felt at ease with fossil as well as

extant taxa, dealing with various aspects of their biology, systematics, ecology, taphonomy, biogeography, biostratigraphy and evolution.

Robin supervised undergraduate, Masters, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral students (not only from Great Britain) by the hundreds; all of them benefited from his guidance and tuition and many went on themselves into successful careers in micropalaeontology in various corners of the globe. Robin was responsible, together with Professor John Haynes, for building up an impressive, superbly-curated micropalaeontological research collection naturally linked with the activities of the well-known "Aberystwyth Micropalaeontology programme". Following the closure of the Aberystwyth Geology Department in 2000, the 62 microslide cabinets housing catalogued microfossils from the world's oceans and more than a hundred different countries were bequeathed to the Natural History Museum, London. His expertise was internationally renowned and widely recognized by his colleagues; for instance, he was made an

honorary life member of The Micropalaeontological Society (TMS) in 2004, and a forthcoming scientific Memorial Event is scheduled for January 30<sup>th</sup> 2017 in the Geological Society, Burlington House, London, by the Ostracod Group of TMS.

A bold personality coupled with an inquisitive, sharp mind stimulated Robin to undertake every endeavour with verve and passion; he was hospitable, generous and had a witty sense of humour. His many hobbies were mostly outdoors, such as hunting, shooting (aided by his well-trained gundogs: *Darwin*, *Wallace*, *Huxley* and *Lyell*), birdwatching, gardening, salt and freshwater fishing and lobster potting (he used to steer his sea-boat "*Old Jake*", mainly in Cardigan Bay). On the other hand, he also enjoyed hand-crafting his own fishing-flies with skill (see photo), listening to classical music, and was an accomplished military and naval historian, a classicist (able to read Greek and Latin), and a model-railway enthusiast. He was a keen traveller when health permitted, having visited all seven continents while attending

conferences, acting as an external examiner, viewing specimens in repositories and collecting samples.

Following a funeral service with a Tridentine Requiem Mass (the rite he liked best), held at St. Michaels Church, Aberystwyth on June 26<sup>th</sup> 2016, he was buried at Hafod Churchyard, Cwmystwyth. His final departure has left a sorrowful void in the hearts of those who were privileged with his friendship. We share our deep grief and sympathy with Caroline, Gregory, Madeleine, Vicky and Guy. Doubtless, he will likewise be sorely missed in many other academic institutions worldwide.

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