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## **Mr Joseph Stephen Henry (Joe) Collins, 1927–2019**

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It is with profound regret that we report the death of Joe S. H. Collins (Figs. 1–4) in January 2019, shortly before his last paper to the ‘Bulletin’ was published. Joe was one of Britain’s greatest advocates for fossil decapods and had a formidable publication record, particularly on Brachyura, but also other groups of Crustacea, particularly cirripedes. His interests were not limited geographically and included published works on crustaceans from around the globe. Joe was an extraordinary man; he had no formal training in palaeontology, but he achieved more research, field-work and awards than most professionals, even before he retired. A familiar sight at UK fossil festivals, Joe was as keen to impart knowledge to non-specialists as to his research collaborators. Kindly and modest, he was a real inspiration to many generations of palaeontologists. Such was Joe’s determination that he worked right up until he died at 91 years old. He will be greatly missed.

Joe was born within the sound of Bow Bells and brought up in London, and a worse place to develop an interest in field palaeontology is hard to imagine. Favourite trips into town as a schoolboy included visits to the British Museum (Natural History) and Geological Museum in South Kensington. When he was ten years old, Joe was presented with his first book on palaeontology, Webster Smith’s ‘The World in its Past’ (1931). Finally, a school trip to Lyme Regis in

1939 gave young naturalist Joe his first taste of collecting fossils, one he enjoyed. With the outbreak of World War Two, Joe was evacuated to a small village near Liphook in Hampshire. This allowed Joe to further pursue his interests in natural history, mainly in entomology. After the war, Joe was in the Royal Navy for 16 days before being discharged ‘visually unfit for naval service’, a strange pronouncement for a man whose descriptions of fossil crustaceans abound with minute observations. Joe then worked for the Wellcome Foundation as an animal technologist in the Immunology and Histopathological departments for 21 years. From 1967 he owned a second-hand bookshop, specializing in natural history, from which he retired in 1989. All the while he was developing his interest in palaeontology, and particularly decapod and cirripede crustaceans, the first specimens of which he collected from the Cretaceous Gault Clay in 1947.

Joe began to specialize in crustaceans after finding his first Cretaceous specimens in 1947. On joining the Geologists’ Association in 1953, he was introduced to C. W. (Willie) Wright, with whom he formed a close friendship leading to publication of ‘British Cretaceous Crabs’ (Wright and Collins, 1972). Opportunities to visit fellow workers subsequently arose, and included Professor A. Radwanski (in Warsaw); Dr P. Müller (Budapest); Drs J. W. M. Jagt and R. H. Fraaije (Netherlands); S.L. Jakobsen (Copenhagen; Fig. 2);



**Fig. 1.** Joe Collins of the Freelance Geological Association. (A) Caving in the early days. Joe emerges from the Boulder Chamber, Sidcot Swallet (after Donovan and Collins, 2016, fig. 3D). (B) A portrait of Joe by fellow member Dr. Bob Everton (after Everton, 1959, unnumbered figure). (C) Not desktop publishing: “Joe Collins (left) and David (Little Bunny) Blatchford producing a part of the Proceedings of the Freelance Geological Association on Joe’s mother’s kitchen table” (after Donovan and Collins, 2016, fig. 6).

Dr S. K. Donovan (Jamaica); R. W. Portell (Gainesville, Florida; Fig. 2); and Dr G. Breton (France). He was also pleased to interact with many other specialists during their visits to the U.K.

The Freelance Geological Association (FGA) (1948–1967), formerly Society, was a group of amateurs based in south and south-east London; Joe was

a founder member (Donovan and Collins, 2016; Fig. 1 herein). Enthusiastic early members founded the FGA shortly after World War Two, and defined its direction and form. The original driving interests were caving and fieldwork. At that time there were many quarries that were still working and a few discarded underground mines, popularly known as caves, that



**Fig. 2.** Three musketeers enjoy a cup of tea at the Second Symposium on Mesozoic and Cainozoic Decapod Crustaceans, Boxtel, the Netherlands, in 2003. From left to right, Roger Portell (Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville), Joe and Sten Jakobsen (Geological Museum, University of Copenhagen). Photograph by S.K.D.

were still accessible close to south London, in Kent, Sussex and Surrey. Examples included Gault Clay pits and the Kent coalfield, and chalk quarries were more openly accessible. The FGA thrived on fieldwork (including caving), public exhibitions, frequent indoor meetings at members' houses and scientific publication, and Joe was closely involved with all aspects for most of its existence. A particular strength of the group was the stratigraphy and palaeontology of south-east England, particularly the Cretaceous and Tertiaries. Members developed specialist interests, such as the Gault, its ammonites and their stratigraphy (e.g., Milbourne, 1956), and the systematics of fossil crustaceans (Joe). The Proceedings (later Journal) of the FGA was a vehicle for publication of the research and observations of the membership. As will be seen in Appendix 1, Joe's early forays into publishing about fossil crustaceans, and diverse related topics, were in this journal.

Joe Collins made an outstanding contribution to palaeontology, at least equal to that of many professionals in the field. He was the leading expert on fossil crabs and barnacles in the British Isles, a subject on which he published for almost 60 years. He started to

publish in the wider scientific literature with a note in 'Palaeontology' in 1961. Joe's list of published and 'in press' papers numbers well over 100 titles, and have appeared in such respected publications as 'Journal of Paleontology', 'Palaeontology', 'Proceedings of the Geologists' Association', 'Monographs of the Palaeontographical Society' and 'Journal of Systematic Palaeontology'. His regular contributions to 'Bulletin of the Mizunami Fossil Museum' have helped transform an apparently parochial publication into a



**Fig. 3.** Joe in the collections of the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh in 2014. Photograph by C.J.T.M.



**Fig. 4.** Joe Collins on his 90th birthday, having a relaxed lunch with friends in South Kensington, London (after Donovan, 2017, fig. 9). Photograph by S.K.D.

focus for the international community of palaeocarcinologists.

Joe's main research interest was crab and barnacle systematics, and he was as 'at home' describing a new species of crab based on carapace material as he was teasing out the affinities of a fauna composed only of claw fragments. Joe's papers have included published works on crustaceans from Antarctica, Belgium, the Caribbean islands, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Greenland, Italy, Japan, Libya, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, south-east Asia, Sweden, Tunisia and the U.S.A. His fieldwork has spanned Europe and the Americas. Joe has described over 300 new crab taxa, mainly at the subspecies, species and generic level.

Retirement gave Joe ample time to follow his palaeontological research in both the field and the laboratory, which he pursued in collaboration with co-workers on at least three continents. Joe was a scientific associate of the Natural History Museum in London, where he considerably expanded the collections with his type and figured material. He was always willing to help, providing expert identification of crabs and barnacles for the Department, and mentoring many people over the years. Joe's research was recognised by the Fullerton Award of the Geologists' Association (1971), the Worth Prize of the Geological Society of London (1987), the Mary Anning Award of the Palaeontological Association (2001), the Marsh Award of the Natural History Museum, London (2008) and the Harrell L. Strimple Award of the Paleontological Society (2010). Yet he remained an 'unsung hero' of palaeontology: quiet, unassuming and always working away tenaciously in the background as one of our leading amateur palaeontologists.

But remember, Joe did all this for his interest in the subject, and enjoyed much good companionship and fun along the way. Rereading the memorial to another notable amateur, Harrell Strimple, that Tom Broadhead and the late Terry Frest published in 1986, we see great similarities between Joe and Harrell. They were two 'colorful characters', both with a zest for palaeontology whose approach was summed up by Strimple when he said "I want to get it recorded." Like Harrell Strimple, Joe Collins has made a prominent and lasting contribution to his chosen subject. It

was entirely appropriate that Joe received the Harrell L. Strimple Award in 2010.

In conclusion, we turn to a favourite English novelist, J. L. Carr (1975, p. 78), who, in describing a rather different endeavour than palaeontology, said, "But take heed: when I say 'amateur' don't mistake me—I mean 'very professional, very unpaid'." That was Joe Collins, our late collaborator and friend.

This obituary has been adapted and expanded after Donovan and Mellish (2011), Donovan and Collins (2016) and other relevant documents by the authors. We thank Dr. R.M. Feldmann (Kent State University, USA) for reviewing the manuscript.

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**Appendix. Publications of Mr J. S. H. Collins**

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