

Biotic Recovery from Mass Extinction Events

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Biotic Recovery from Mass Extinction Events

EDITED BY

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Preface

The majority of the papers in this volume are those presented at the project meeting held at the University of Plymouth, 3–11 September 1994. The remainder of the papers were accepted for the conference (and publication) although, in the event, the authors were unable to attend in person.

I.G.C.P. 335, **Biotic Recovery from Mass Extinction Events**, is a successor to the highly successful I.G.C.P. 216 **Global Bioevents**. It was initiated in 1993 and the co-leaders are Dr Doug Erwin (Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., USA) and Dr Erle Kauffman (University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, USA). In following on the work of I.G.C.P. 216 it was accepted that many of the extinction events considered in some detail during that work would be revisited, but on this occasion concentrating on how the fauna and flora recovered from the actual 'event'. It was always recognized that there would, inevitably, be a need to debate further the mechanisms and causes of extinction as the nature of the event is key to the mode of recovery we see preserved in the geological record. As in all branches of science there is a complex terminology, much of which is not well known or used in an inconsistent way. Many of those at the Plymouth meeting requested that one of the roles of the project could be the development of a standardized, or at least properly defined, terminology. While most participants admitted to a knowledge of *Lazarus* taxa, many were unsure of the exact nature of *Refugia* and the majority were somewhat baffled by the identification of *Elvis* taxa. It was readily agreed that the development of a glossary would be an aid to communication as the project proceeds. It was also agreed that meetings be held on a regular basis throughout the duration of the project either as piggy-back sessions at other meetings or as special conferences in their own right. This volume, which will appear part-way through the life of the project, represents a collection of papers that present the current state of knowledge on floral/faunal recovery following some of the global bioevents recognized and discussed during I.G.C.P. 216. A wide range of taxonomic groups are considered in this collection of papers, including those from both terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Following a number of more theoretical papers the remainder of the contributions are arranged in stratigraphical order.

M. B. Hart, Plymouth, UK
May 1995

Acknowledgements

As the Local Secretary involved in the organization of the project meeting at the University of Plymouth I would like to thank Nicola Lobb and her assistants in the way in which the administration of the meeting was organized. This allowed me the time to concentrate on the scientific content of the meeting. All the speakers made a tremendous contribution to the success of the meeting with the overwhelming majority delivering their manuscripts on time. This enabled me to set in train the reviewing process quite quickly and I wish to thank all those involved for the excellent advice they gave to the contributors. This feedback has ensured that this volume will make a significant contribution to our knowledge on global bioevents. I would also like to thank Professor Michael House (University of Southampton) and Dr Meriel FitzPatrick (University of Plymouth) who, at the very last minute, kindly stepped in to lead the Dorset field excursion when personal circumstances prevented me from carrying out the original programme.