Symbiosis 2026
Imagining Prehistories: Geoheritage, Palaeontology, Human Prehistory

Day 1 (November 2nd): Imagining human prehistory

10:00 – 10:15: Opening remarks

Panel 1: Remnants and artefacts (10:15 – 11:30)
Chair: Janine Rogers

1. Niamh Lawlor (University of Birmingham): 'Green Roads and Stone Avenues: Expanding creative visions of the prehistoric landscape in the early twentieth century.'

2. Stella Basinyi (University of York): 'Rock art and the cultural identities of San people'

Panel 2: Interpreting prehistory (11:45 – 13:00)
Chair: Billie Gavurin

1. Jacob Blewett (University of Bristol): 'Politicised Prehistories: How Archaeologists can Counter the Deployment of Prehistoric Research by the Far Right'

2. Nick Fitzgerald (University of Bristol): 'Taking shots: the possibilities and probabilities of alcohol in British Prehistory'

Panel 3: Experiencing prehistory (14:00 – 15:15)
Chair: John Holmes

1. Billie Gavurin (University of Birmingham): 'Gothic Prehistories: haunting, heredity, and humanity's deep past'

2. Abdul Busari (Mount Allison University, Canada): 'Muslim Experiences of Human Prehistory Concepts'

Keynote (16:00 – 17:30)
John Holmes (University of Birmingham): '"A Veritable 'Middle Earth'": J. R. R. Tolkien and the Palaeoanthropological Imagination'

Public Lecture (18:00 – 19:00)
Will Tattersdill (University of Glasgow) 'Made Up Dinosaurs, Made Up World'

Drinks reception, the Lapworth Museum of Geology (19:15-20:30)

Day 2 (November 3rd): Interpreting Earth history and heritage in museums and geoparks

9:55 – 10:00: Opening remarks

Panel 1: Keynotes: Interpretation in geoparks and museums – why and how? (10:00 – 11:15)
Chair: Paul Smith

1. Janet Stott (Deputy Director & Head of Public Engagement, Oxford University Museums of Natural History)

2. Jack Matthews (Charnwood Forest Geopark and Avalonian Consulting)

Panel 2: Approaches to interpreting geology and heritage in geoparks (11:30 – 13:00)
Chair: Jonathan Larwood

1. Naomi Foster (North Pennines National Landscape/vice-chair, European Geoparks Network Education working group)

2. Elaine Hooton (Written in Stone project, Open University)

3. Ľubomír Štrba (Assistant Professor of Geoheritage & Geotourism, Technical University of Košice, Slovakia)

4. Mike Wilson (UNESCO Chair in Storytelling Education for Sustainability, Loughborough University)

Panel 3: Approaches to interpreting geology and heritage in museums (14:00 – 15:30)
Chair: Jack Matthews

1. Jon Clatworthy (Director, Lapworth Museum of Geology, University of Birmingham)

2. Liz Hide (Director, Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge)

3. Duncan Murdock (Oxford University Museum of Natural History and lead geologist on the 'Life As We Know It' redisplay project)

16:00 – 17:30: Tours of the Lapworth Museum Collections and Archives

Day 3 (November 4th): Field excursions

Field excursion option A: Uley Neolithic Long Barrow

Field excursion option B: Charnwood Forest Aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark