

## "I showcase museum life"

→ DR DANIEL COX is the Senior Earth Scientist at National Museum Cardiff, UK, and cares for tens of thousands of specimens across the mineralogy and petrology collections

### What's a typical day for you?

The great thing about working in a museum is that no two days are the same. My responsibilities are varied; I manage acquisitions and loans, maintain specimen security and care, and promote access to the collections through tours and enquiries. I also manage the Geology Laboratory where we prepare a variety of geomaterials for accessioning (the process of formally recording and taking an item into a collection) and research, as well as conserve degrading specimens. Plus, I am the Radiation Protection Supervisor for Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales, ensuring that our sources of ionising radiation comply with regulations. Once all this is done, I have a little time to work on my research into the genesis of porphyry copper deposits, as well as showcasing behind the scenes of museum life through social media (@rockologistdan)!

### Are you currently working on anything interesting?

I am conducting a programme of conservation on our pyrite specimens (or specimens containing pyrite) across the mineralogy, petrology, and palaeontology collections to help prevent further degradation. The decay of pyrite is irreversible, but it can be halted through treatment in the laboratory by exposing the specimen to ammonia gas and then encasing the specimen in a protective bag with silica gel to reduce contact with oxygen and humidity.

### What inspired you to follow this career path?

My GCSE and A-Level geology teacher was my sole inspiration for getting into geoscience. They



© Andrew Timby

### What has been the highlight of your career so far?

Whilst studying for my PhD, I had the opportunity to do three months of fieldwork across Panama, Colombia, and Chile. Not only were these countries beautiful, but the work in challenging environments gave me some amazing experiences – from dense Panamanian jungle to coastal settings and the high-altitude Atacama Desert.

made learning about geology fun, highlighting the importance of an engaging educator. Since then, my passion for geoscience has grown and hasn't stopped. To this day I love learning new things, handling fascinating rocks and minerals, and visiting unique outcrops.

### What are the main challenges you have faced?

Firstly, having confidence in myself and my knowledge to discuss and educate others on various aspects of geology. Secondly, it's a very competitive job market. Museum jobs in the geosciences sector are not abundant and there are many talented geoscientists vying for these roles.

### What advice would you give to someone hoping to work in your field?

Volunteer or undertake a placement (during an undergraduate degree, for example) at a museum. This will give you great experience of how collections are curated and managed. And consider smaller museums. While large, or national, museums can have prestige, the responsibilities of roles within these institutions can be confined, or heavily defined. Comparatively, working at a smaller, regional museum can expose you to a broader range of responsibilities. **G**