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| **Project Title** | **Project summary** | **Project detail** | **Selection criteria** | **Outcomes for the intern** |
| **Rediscovering and documenting a fossil insect trove**  **Supervisor:**  Ricardo Pérez-de la Fuente  **Co-supervisor:**  Eliza Howlett | This project will document, digitise, and identify the OUMNH’s holdings on ca. 23-million-year-old insects from Aix-en-Provence (France)., This locality is famous for their fossil butterflies, exceedingly scarce in the fossil record. Although the Aix-en-Provence fossils were intensively studied in the 19th century, the original quarries became inaccessible after WWII and studies rapidly decreased. The OUMNH collection was put together by Reverend F.W. Hope, who published works in 1847. | For this project, the intern will:   * Update the database records for the ca. 230 fossil insect samples from Aix-en-Provence at the OUMNH. * Take high-quality photographs of the fossils using a state-of-the-art stereomicroscope, aided by polarising filtering and other techniques improving visibility. * Identify the fossil insects down to order or family, when possible. * Perform bibliographic and archival work to determine the background of the specimens studied in the 19th century and ascertain those that have remained unstudied. * Assist the preliminary assessment of the scientific interest of the samples within the collection. * (*Depending on the student’s interest and progress*) Prepare – beyond the physical stay at OUMNH – a manuscript on the findings of the project, to be submitted to a scientific journal. | Please see website for additional Eligibility criteria oumnh.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate-bursary-scheme  Essential   * Attention to detail * High motivation and enthusiasm for nature * Ability to handle fragile specimens * Care when using microscopes and camera equipment * Patience and ability to work on repetitive tasks * Ability to work without close supervision and as part of a team   **Desirable**   * Basic notions on entomology and/or palaeontology * Interest in photography * Ability to write clearly | * Opportunity to unlock an important collection of historic and palaeontological significance under the close supervision of OUMNH’s researchers and collection managers. * Experience in handling and photographing palaeontological samples. * Experience in interpretation, morphology, and classification of a wide diversity of fossil insect specimens. * Particularly valuable for students seeking a career in specimen-based research and/or museum curation. |