



**Name:** Peter Morgan.

**Date:** September 1988.

**Location:** Harlech, Gwynedd.

**Title:** Harlech Leatherback Turtle, 1988.

**Memory:**

“The work on the Skomer Leatherback Turtle turned out to be a fortuitous turn of events as our investigations into this Leatherback Turtle and its biology showed major gaps in knowledge of the species’ structure and history.

In September 1988 a Friday phone call from Mike Alexander, previously a Skomer Warden and now based in North Wales, informed us that there was a freshly dead Leatherback Turtle on Harlech Beach. Surely this was not an opportunity that the museum should miss. He would winch it onto a trailer and be with us next morning. So with a Western Mail photographer, in the rain, it duly arrived at the museum car park, to an astounded group of onlookers.

Luckily the museum had recently acquired a Ships Chandlery at 126 Bute Street, and in the basement were some old cold stores where the department kept specimens so it was possible to freeze it and set up a team later to examine and autopsy it in detail. However we hadn’t at the time of the telephone call realised it was the largest and certainly the heaviest Leatherback ever recorded. It could only be lifted by the Maritime Museums’ industrial crane and the cold store doors had to be removed to enable it be slid into the biggest cold store. Job accomplished!

Since then, and after many processes it has been on display to highlight the need for conservation of all turtles worldwide.

The moral of these stories is if you want a quiet life as a museum curator don’t take telephone calls from old friends!

Peter Morgan”