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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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with which the remainder of the taxonomic concept denoted by the same name is subjectively associated. The type thus represents the static component of the dynamic state which is limited taxonomically only by the requirement that the static type component must be contained somewhere within its limits.

A comprehensive summary of the history of the type-concept and the categories now recognised has been written by Robert Nash and Helena Ross and republished in the BCG Newsletter No. 9.

David Heppell

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Unfortunately it has not been possible to obtain the text of the remaining lectures from the Edinburgh Conference in time for publication in this issue. It is hoped to reproduce these in the December Newsletter, but meanwhile below is the Report prepared by Geoff Stansfield and published in Museums Journal, September 1978, which some members may not have seen.

#### REPORT OF THE BIOLOGY CURATORS GROUP SPECIALIST SESSION

Over 40 members attended the Biology Curators Group specialist session on 4th July, more than half of whom had travelled to Edinburgh especially for the meeting. The morning visits to the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Garden and the collection stores of the Royal Scottish Museum provided a valuable opportunity for the exchange of information and demonstration of techniques for the practical management of botanical and zoological collections. Both institutions were complimented on the high standards achieved.

The afternoon session was devoted to four short-papers followed by a general discussion. Phillip Ashmole of the University of Edinburgh considered the usefulness of museums for research. Geoff Hancock of Bolton Museum gave an illustrated account of the collection rescue operation in the North West, David Heppell of the Royal Scottish Museum discussed the 'Type concept' in zoology and E. C. Pelham-Clinton, also of the Royal Scottish Museum, considered the special problems of insect collections. In the main these papers were concerned with matters of interest only to biologists. They will be printed in a future issue of the BCG Newsletter. There are however a number of matters arising from the general discussion which are of interest to the general membership.

As a preamble it should be noted that the BCG now has a membership approaching 200 and that the Newsletter, now in its ninth issue has become an important medium for the publication of papers describing important historic collections and matters concerning the maintenance and use of collections. A great deal of the work of the Group has been centred on research into the history of collections in order to locate and identify important historical material. In addition to the survey of collections carried out to provide evidence for the Standing Commission (to be published in 1978),

a number of new initiatives have arisen from the very successful Liverpool Seminar on the function of Local Natural History Collections held in September 1977, including the North West Collection Rescue Unit referred to above. During the year in co-operation with the Biological Records Centre of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology an interim Handbook for Biological Record Centres has been produced (authors S. W. Flood and F. H. Perring), available from the Biological Records Centre at Monks Wood. In co-operation with the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History and the Geological Curators Group, an inter-national seminar on the History of Museums and Collections in Natural History is being organised to take place in London from 4th to 6th April 1979.

From the general discussions, two recommendations were made which are pertinent to the general conference:

The Group recommends that museum authorities and such organisations as the Area Museum Services, make resources available in terms of staff and finance, to locate and safeguard those natural history collections not at present administered by professional curators. In this context the Group would wish to reiterate its support for the concept of peripatetic curators who are specialists in particular groups of animals and plants, a concept which has already been supported in principle by the British Museum (Natural History) but which has not yet been implemented.

The second recommendation arises through concern for the dissemination about the location of 'type specimens':

It is recommended that museums give priority to the preparation and publication of lists of type specimens in their collections with the aim of producing a National Type Register.

The Group very much appreciates the provision of facilities for specialist sessions at the Annual Conference. It feels that the activities of the BCG which bring together curatorial staff from Local Authority, National and University Museums is a valuable and complementary activity to that of the Association.

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