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comprehensive answer. I only wish that the Editor would allow me enough space to give one, and that libel proceedings would not be brought if I did. Be that as it may, I hope the fore-going may have proved the point made by one speaker at the Conference concerning the general level of education enjoyed by provincial museums curatorial staff, and that the gentlemen in the British Museum who want any of our type specimens, beware!

To sum up, (only 70 words of my quota left now), I thoroughly enjoyed the Liverpool Conference and found it to be an extremely useful introduction to the professional world of museum curation. It is a world with which my contacts prior to June of this year have only been an occasional visitor, but which I am happy to explore. At last I have come home and am among friends.

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*"Better late than never".

HAVE MERSEY ON THE SMALL MUSEUMS

As a relatively junior member of the museum's profession with a training in geology and archaeology, the Liverpool Conference was a good opportunity for me to meet some new faces known to me before only by reputation, of one sort or another, as well as a break-out from the ivory tower.

I left the meeting feeling somewhat dissatisfied, not because the draught Guinness was off (far from it - in fact I was surprised at the high proportion of boozers among us, disillusioning my convictions that only geologists and archaeologists were bar-proppers) - but more from the feeling that there was a lack of overall coherence in the meeting.

Perhaps this was due to the small representation from the insignificant end of the BCG survey - our problems and aims are necessarily different from those of our colleagues in larger establishments.

Working in a small district museum with a somewhat unsympathetic council we are not likely ever to see the money to carry out our ideals. With small collections curated by the minimum of staff, our priorities lie in trying to keep abreast with accessioning and serving the users (in our case mostly students, teachers and artists). Our time for research is practically non-existent. Despite this it seems to me unreasonable that we should be totally robbed of our type specimens and important collections to the National Institutions unless there is a real lack of qualified staff.

One aspect of function which was not touched upon, as we were more involved with important collections, is that of the white elephant or duplicate and undocumented material, which most of us have inherited in varying proportions. Aside from the schools loan service, I feel that this part of the collection should not be neglected as it often is. Although there may be questionable ethics involved, for example in removing loaned material, specimens festering away in museum cupboards and drawers looked at once a decade are surely of greater value loaned out to further knowledge and conservation awareness in public education.

Most of our museums are theoretically a public service; how far are we prepared to bother to do this? - especially now as many of us are faced with having to justify ourselves to our Councils.

Finally, an echoing plea from the back row: from the suggestion made on several occasions during the Conference that our brothers with the expertise in the National Museums should come out to help those of us without it in the small understaffed backwaters, can we hope something will come of this now that we have broken the barriers through the various discipline groups?

June Roberts
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