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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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A FOREIGNER'S LOOK AT THE LIVERPOOL CONFERENCE

As I was the only foreigner participating at the Liverpool Conference I have been asked to write some words about my impressions.

The papers presented at the Conference showed many similarities between local museums in Great Britain and Norway, but also clear differences.

Concerning local natural history collections you have longer traditions in Great Britain. We have in fact relatively few natural history collections in Norway, - and to tell the truth, - some of them are very old fashioned! I think one reason is that from every town in Norway you could until recently reach fairly undisturbed nature in a few minutes. Therefore exhibitions of for example plants have been of limited interest. Now the situation is changing rapidly. In the neighbourhood of Stavanger nature is to an increasing extent being destroyed due to agriculture, new roads, - and not to forget, - the oil industry!

Many vegetation types were formerly abundant, but now in danger. For instance bogs, heathlands, and oakwood. In this situation the local museum has got many important tasks; taking care of collections from areas now covered by asphalt and concrete, doing fieldwork in areas which might be destroyed in future, and to give the collected information to the government, the public, school classes etc.

I noticed that many speakers stressed the importance of old collections. In fact I felt that they talked too much about the history of the collections, and too little about the function, but I was happy to get an invitation to go back to London by car. The 5 hour drive on the motorway clearly showed me that the history is important. It is no longer possible to do field investigations where the cars are running, and I am afraid the "development" will go on in my country too.

In Spring 1976 I began as the first curator in Botany and Pedology at the cross-scientific Arkelogisk museum i Stavanger. At that time the museum had got 3 private herbariums from the country

of Rogaland in SW Norway. In total about 1000 sheets of vascular plants.

Due to collections from my colleagues my own fieldwork, and several private donations the herbarium now consists of 3,000 sheets of vascular plants, and collections of bryophytes and algae. Our main interest is plants used by man, and anthropochorus plants (Ed. I do not know what this is either).

Speakers at the Liverpool Conference claimed collections from 18th century to still be very valuable. Let us hope that the curators at Stavanger in say 2200 will consider the work done in 1977 as valuable and well curated!

Together with a visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, British Museum, and Butser Ancient Farm, in Petersfield, the Liverpool Conference made my 1 week stay in Great Britain a very successful one. I have learned a lot and should be pleased to welcome to Stavanger any British Curators.

Sverre Bakkevig,  
Arkeologisk Museum,  
i Stavanger, Norway.

#### A SNAILMAN'S IMPRESSIONS OF THE LIVERPOOL CONFERENCE

Natural History is a diverse subject, and museums are a pretty heterogeneous collection of Institutions; small wonder then that natural historians in museums tend to be a motley crew! But at Liverpool in September representatives of many different aspects of our profession came together intellectually as well as physically. Between the National and the large Regional museums cooperation, not confrontation, was the keynote; and both these groups were made aware of the importance of the smaller local museums, and their collections.

Indeed, one of the most valuable results of this meeting was to illustrate how pointless was the "them, them and us" attitude often found among museum natural historians. We all have the same problems it transpired, whether we be a specialist in the largest or a lone worker in the smallest museum, and the curator of