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Author(s): Watson, A. N.

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MY IMPRESSIONS OF THE BIOLOGICAL CURATORS GROUP LIVERPOOL CONFERENCE.
(or, 'A Pilgrim's Progress', Part 1).

The impressions of a newcomer, - I nearly wrote, "a late comer" -, because that is what I was on Wednesday 21st September, are inevitably somewhat confused. Mine are particularly so because I was really rather lucky to get there at all; and it is not like me to be late for dinner!

"Dinner from 6.30 p.m.", it said with, "registration from 5.00 p.m.". No mention of when either of these activities cease you will notice, but no matter. By setting out from London at 9.00 a.m. in my rusty Renault, "Rocinante", I should be able to enjoy a leisurely trip to Liverpool with a few rest stops on the way. Now, although I pride myself on punctuality, I did begin to question my avowed scepticism concerning the general subject of superstition as I struggled with the complex mechanical problem of replacing one of the two rubber bands which separately drive the fan and dynamo of all Renault 4s, and which had curiously decided to drop off mine somewhere near Junction 13 on the M1.

Then I got hopelessly lost in limbo at Litherland. The forlorn souls of my trusty steed and I might still be there to this day were it not for a kindly inhabitant of those nether regions who guided us out of the maze with his Police car and set us on the road to Carnatic Hall.

But now we come to the meat of this piece, (Editor, please note), for as John Heywoodes observed in Chapter X of Part I of his, "Woorkes - a Dialogue conteyning the number in effect of all the proverbes in the English tounge, compact in a matter concernynge two maner of Maryages etc.", dated 1546,

"POTIUS SERO QUAM NUNQUAM",*

although some say Livy would be livid since he coined the phrase sometime between 59 B.C. and A.D. 17.

"What", you may ask, "has all this got to do with, 'The Function of Local Natural History Collections', as discussed by Members the Biological Curators Group at Liverpool last September?". A fair question, I freely admit, and one which deserves a

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.

Arthur N. Watson,
Assistant Curator,
Natural Sciences (Biology),
Passmore Edwards Museum,
London E15 4LZ.

*"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.