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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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MINUTES OF B. C. G. COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 13th, 1979

MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Greenwood (Chairman), Steve Flood, Martin Brendell, Geoff Hancock, Peter Davis, Mike Hounsome, Geoff Stansfield, John Mathias, Janet Chamberlain, Jim Bateman.

1. APOLOGIES were received from Peter Morgan, Mike Taylor, Peter Lambley, Dave Erwin, Kelvin Boot.
2. The MINUTES of the MEETING OF 26th APRIL were confirmed.
3. MATTERS ARISING
 1. No correspondence had been received on the Manual of Curatorship. J. Bateman reported that it was intended that professional groups should take responsibility for collecting together discipline information. G. Stansfield outlined current proposals to appoint an editor and research assistant (with grant-aid). It was agreed that S.F. should make contact with the working group.
 2. The editor agreed to commission an article explaining the inclusion of natural history material within UNESCO definition of Cultural Property.
 3. The profits (£124) of the SBNH Conference were being used to aid the spring publication of the conference proceedings.
 4. J. Bateman, who chaired the joint meeting with the Guild of Taxidermists outlined the main points raised and suggested that the main differences with BCG centred on the desire of taxidermists to concentrate on taxidermy whereas curators demanded a wide range of technical skills. Both groups had been charged to prepare details of training facilities and requirements before convening another meeting.

From discussion it was clear, that even where the museum posts existed or could be created, training facilities were extremely limited and in some large institutions (including the B. M. N. H.) curators were responsible for training junior and part-time technical help. J. Mathias agreed to contact P. Morgan, P. Lambley and R. Harris with a view to setting up a working party to produce syllabus suggestions and comments on technical training provision. An appeal for members' views would be included in the Newsletter.

5. Copies of the Chairman's letter to the Standing Commission of the Drew Report were circulated.

6. High printing costs had prevented final printing of the Collection Survey although further sources of grant-aid were being sought. It was agreed that the officers of BCG seek an early meeting with the Editors to clarify production details and costs.
7. The Report of the Review Group on Taxonomy (1979) made no detailed reference to the role of provincial museums and collections in taxonomy, in spite of evidence submitted by J. Bateman and N. Tebble (on behalf of the M. A.) and E. Greenwood for Liverpool. Committee felt that a response was necessary and E. G. agreed to prepare, and circulate for comment, a submission to the Advisory Board to the Research Councils, using previous evidence. M. Hounsome undertook to review the publication for the Museums Journal.

4. FINANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Treasurer had left a message that the balance after producing the September and December Newsletter would be £300.

5. NEWSLETTERS

The September Newsletter was to have a South-West theme. G. Stansfield agreed to seek advertisers and would be grateful for suggestions for potential customers. Following discussion on the production of back numbers for resale P. Davis agreed to obtain costings for producing complete versions of Volume 1.

6. MEETINGS

1. BCG A. G. M. 1980.

It was generally agreed that a study weekend to incorporate the A. G. M. should be planned, on the theme of techniques, with an emphasis on the demonstration of new procedures. J. Mathias and G. Stansfield undertook to make arrangements to hold the meeting in Leicester during the Easter vacation, 1980.

2. M. A. Conference 1980

Following a letter from S. Flood to the Museums Association it was hoped that the group would be allowed a greater say in planning the main Conference sessions, as there was to be no specialist day next year. S. Flood undertook to arrange a day visit for BCG members before or after Conference.

3. BCG Conference 1981

P. Morgan and S. Flood had had initial discussions about a conference on collecting, and it was agreed that when the officers meet P. Morgan they should prepare notes on the ramifications of this topic with a view to setting up a Conference planning group.

7. REGIONAL SURVEYS

M. Taylor had submitted details of a meeting planned to discuss collections in Scotland.

A report was requested on the progress of the North West Collection Research Unit.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The M. D. A. were undertaking a survey of progress on Environmental Recording and S. Flood agreed to liaise with B. R. C. over providing the necessary details.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday 14th February 1980 at the British Museum (Natural History).