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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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cluded such activity. Instead, in 1976, with the help of J.C.P., I established the Gwent Biological Records Centre here at the Museum and Art Gallery for the collation, collection and co-ordination of all natural history records for the county.

Bruce Campbell

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I was interested to read the reports of the April Study Meeting (B. C. G. Newsletter 2(7)) and I was sorry that I was unable to attend what must have been a most interesting weekend. However, I feel that the relevance of some of the topics discussed to everyday work in museums may not be fully appreciated.

In particular I note that Hugh McAllister, whose work I know well, and Tony Fletcher, both discussed the use of techniques which they use in their research, and I have the impression that this kind of work although of interest, is not thought to be of much use in museums. Certainly I do not know of many museums that use either cytological or chromatographic techniques regularly.

If museums are to be seriously interested in a interpretation of their local flora and fauna I believe museum staff must adapt a critical approach to ecology and taxonomy. In this country where our natural history is relatively so well-known a general appraisal, which can be done largely as a desk study, with a gloss of local information is simply not good enough. This means curators should acquire data for their biological record centers which reflects a critical study. The information relating to the ecology and distribution of organisms should be collected, therefore, at the finest taxonomic level possible. The subtleties and interests of a particular area can then be more readily demonstrated and explained. Often morphological characters are either difficult (e.g. in Ivy, Hedera helix s.l.) or impossible (e.g. Scurvy-grass, Cochlearia officinalis s.l.) to use. Other techniques are then important.

At least two of the papers demonstrated these points and I feel that museum curators should use these 'new' techniques much more readily.

E. F. Greenwood

B.C.G. PRIZE CROSSWORD (Newsletter Vol.2 No.6)

Well, no entries were received by the closing date. Actually no entries were received at all. (Was it really too difficult?)

Anyway the tickets were already booked and it seemed a shame to let an all-expenses-paid holiday for two in the Greek Islands go to waste.

So Trisha and I had a lovely time!

Tony Irwin