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Francis W Cheetham OBE BA FMA

The Editor,
BCG Newsletter,
Sheffield City Museum,
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18th September 1984

Dear Sir,

Congratulations must go to the organisers of the BCG seminar 'Biological recording and the use of site based biological information'. The opportunity to renew friendships amid a packed programme of interesting talks is always welcome. The formal sessions and informal chat led to the passing of a resolution. Admittedly discussion about the resolution was curtailed by half an hour (trust BR to spoil the fun) and the five minutes available was used up by semantic banter, but the resolution was passed unanimously and we look forward to a report from the working party in due course.

However on my way home, it gradually dawned on me that I was missing something. My toothbrush and notebook were secure enough, but I had come away without practical advice and little prospect of it. Then the doubts set in. Was I being too unfair to suppose that the proposed Linn.Soc. think tank would be preparing a document for higher consumption? Was I being too naive to hope that improvements could be made without extra finance? Perhaps if there was a workshop to discuss Paul Harding's suggestions - format standards, taxonomic vetting, data exchange and computing - then I might be the only one to turn up!

But turn up I will, for be it at national or regional level, there must be more involvement, more exchange. The selection and interpretation of data for a planning inquiry may be our most important task, yet how often do we discuss the advantages of different ways of doing this?

The NCC is the only body with statutory responsibility for biological recording, and it has contracted BRC at Monks Wood to carry out the bulk of this work. It would seem appropriate, therefore, that BRC be asked to convene a workshop to tackle some of these practical problems which need action now. Unless I have grossly misjudged the seminar resolution, BRC need not fear that they will tread on BCG/Linn.Soc. toes. They will be walking on a higher plane.

Yours faithfully,

A. G. Irwin