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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

Title: Chairman's Report

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Source: Greenwood, E (1982). Chairman's Report. *Biology Curators Group Newsletter, Vol 3 No 2*, 67 - 68.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/1458>

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Chairman's Report

This year I propose to say very little in my annual report. Most of the work of the BCG is fully reported in the Newsletter but I can forgive members who may feel that not a great deal has happened.

In many respects this is true. Successful meetings were held at Birmingham (AGM) and Manchester (preceding the Museums Association Annual Conference) but there have been no other functions. However, members who read the Newsletter will appreciate that your committee has been very active and that the result of this work should be apparent during 1982. Perhaps I can just highlight a few of the important issues that have occupied the committee's minds during the year.

Early in the year it became apparent that the work of the various regionally based collection research units needed to be co-ordinated and formalised. This was done and FENSCORE became established and work on the documentation of collections nation-wide is proceeding with renewed vigor. More recently attention has turned to the possibility of producing a national type register and progress on this will be reported in due course.

The importance of collections and the lack of knowledge about them has led to a many pronged attack to rectify the situation. A meeting was held (jointly with GCG) with NERC which proved most rewarding and elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter a report of the meeting is published. Also on the issue of collections the Museums Association established a working party following the comments made by Geoffrey Hancock and Phil. Doughty at the Association's Annual Conference in 1980. Both the deliberations of FENSCORE and the Association's working party have identified the need to know more about collections and their care before decisions on their future curation and use can be made. In this respect collections both in universities and museums must be covered but in the light of various discussions that have been held it appears large collections of biological material are held elsewhere, e.g. in various research stations and field centres.

Whilst still on the subject of collections the BCG has, for some time, been concerned to organise a conference that would bring together the curator, researcher and administrator/policy maker to discuss the question of collections. Getting the right mix of speakers and obtaining the financial backing are both difficult issues for a small group such as the BCG but through the kindness of the Director of the National Museums of Wales, Dr. D.A. Bassett, these difficulties have been overcome. Again, the details of this conference, "A National Plan for Systematics Collections?", to be held in Cardiff on 6-9 July 1982 are included with this issue of the Newsletter. This conference should be a landmark so far as the function and scientific use of collections is concerned. However, we must remember that a full appreciation of collections will only be realised when a much wider use can be realised.

These topics have more than kept the Committee busy but many other issues have been discussed. The Wildlife and Countryside legislation and the Manual of Curatorship are two such subjects. However, perhaps I should finish on a survey that has not been discussed a great deal. In 1980, in collaboration with Paul Harding of the Biological Records Centre, members responded to a questionnaire on local record centres. Preliminary information was published early in the year and a further analysis was promised. This proved a very time consuming exercise but I hope the results will be published in this Newsletter.

Editor's Report 1981-2

Having been Assistant Editor since 1978 and responsible for getting the issue together in its entirety since Vol. 2 (6), the time has come for a change. I know this because I no longer look forward to rooting about for and pasting up all the little things which get pushed into the few pages at the back! However, getting them printed and posted is not a mind-boggling task so are there any volunteers for Editor? He or she would be responsible for producing the "camera-ready" copy and I could continue to do the rest for another year.

As a committee member I have attended several meetings on behalf of the Biology Curators' Group. The Geological Curators' Group meetings are the most enjoyable, the Museums Association Professional Consultative Committee was most instructive and the FENSCORE Type Registry working party potentially the most exciting.

E. G. Hancock,
January 1982.