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Suggested standard letter (Smith, 1982a):

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am sorry to hear of the trouble you are having and we are carefully studying the samples you have sent us. As yet we have not found any insects that could be causing your condition but it is possible that your symptoms may be arising from other causes and it is important to consult your general practitioner. It would be helpful if you could put me in touch with your doctor so that I can send him the results of our tests when these are completed.

Gerald Legg,
Keeper of Biology,
Booth Museum of Natural History,
Brighton.

Storm over seal at fish market

THE SIGHT of a dead grey seal shocked shoppers in Bolton fish market today. The seal had been drowned in a North Sea trawler's nets and was on display on a fishmongers stall.

The fishmonger, Mr Mark Hayton, was sent the seal as a "curiosity" by his supplier in Scotland.

But a spokesman for Greenpeace, the conservationist organisation, said today that it was "grotesque" to put the seal on show.

Greenpeace wildlife conservationist, Mr Mark Glover said: "On a world scale the grey seal is a rare animal. There is little we can do about them being caught in trawler nets and drowned, but it is grotesque for someone to put a dead seal on show like this."

The RSPCA visited the J. Gittins fish stall on Ashburner Street market, but RSPCA inspector, Mr Andy Foxcroft said: "They are doing nothing illegal.

"The grey seals are not in season at the moment, but this one was accidentally caught in trawler nets and there is nothing to stop them

by TONY DONELLY

putting it on their stall."

Mr Hayton, who runs the stall, said that he had donated the seal to Bolton museum.

"It has caused a lot of controversy in the market. People seem to think that there is something cruel about it and I have had to put a sticker on explaining that the seal was killed accidentally."

"I'm sorry if we have offended anybody, but I was just hoping some good could come out of it by giving it to the museum. I asked my supplier to keep an eye out for any curiosities so I could put them on the stall. But I had no idea it would shock people."

The senior keeper of natural history at Bolton museum, Mr Geoffrey Hancock, said: "We are very pleased to accept the seal as an exhibit. We don't have one at the moment."

"Bolton Evening News,

20 Nov. 1982"