



**NatSCA**

Natural Sciences Collections Association

<http://www.natsca.org>

## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

---

Title: Request for Carcasses

Author(s): Hale, J. C.

Source: Hale, J. C. (1989). Request for Carcasses. *Biology Curators Group Newsletter, Vol 5 No 1*, 5 - 6.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/867>

---

NatSCA supports open access publication as part of its mission is to promote and support natural science collections. NatSCA uses the Creative Commons Attribution License (CCAL) <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/> for all works we publish. Under CCAL authors retain ownership of the copyright for their article, but authors allow anyone to download, reuse, reprint, modify, distribute, and/or copy articles in NatSCA publications, so long as the original authors and source are cited.



## MUSEUMS & GALLERIES COMMISSION

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES COMMISSION.  
REPORT 1987-88

The above volume recently arrived in the BCG postbag. A glossy and colourful 96 page account of the good work of MGC and its agencies, including The Conservation Unit. However natural history (excluding geology) hardly features at all. The appendices provide precise details of grants, which are summarised below:

### MGC Local Museum Purchase Grants 1987-1988

Administered by the V&A Museum:	£1,149,820
Administered by the Science Museum:	£ 130,352
amount spent on Biology	£ 0
Conservation grants:	£ 179,935
amount spent on Biology	£ 0
Conservation unit grants:	£ 41,823
amount spent on Biology	£ 0
Capital Grants:	£ 220,325
amount spent on Biology	£ 5,850

These statistics are interesting to say the least. The disparity between the 'arts' and 'sciences' is more than apparent, but why so little spent on biological projects? Is it because there is nothing on the market for us to purchase? Is there a shortage of local money to match the grants? Are requests for grants being turned down? Are biologists aware of the terms of reference of these grants?

Any comments?

Derek Whiteley  
Secretary

## Letters

Dear Sir

I read Ms Pickering's criticism of First Impressions (Vol 4 No 9) with interest but was disappointed to find it ill-informed.

The objective of the exhibition was to look at early observation and recording of natural history in Australia, not to examine the social history or 'human' aspects of the settlement story. Contrary to the suggestion

that the exhibition only deals with the 'great men', over half of the original works of art displayed are by either George Raper, an able seaman, or Thomas Watling, a convict transported for forgery! These artists drew scenes of the first settlement and of native Australians, and these were included in the exhibition to give some idea of the atmosphere of the colony.

However, this aspect was not pursued any further for lack of exhibitable material; we did not wish to create a 'book on the wall' and social history is dealt with better elsewhere, eg Robert Hughes' THE FATAL SHORE. As for the Aboriginal question, contrary to the criticism, we chose deliberately to broaden the brief to acknowledge the effects of European settlement on the indigenous population; to quote from the AV 'First Impact', which summarizes and concludes the exhibition: "As so often happened greed and prejudice led to exploitation of the Aboriginal communities and a breakdown of their culture".

Yours faithfully

Dr Robert M Bloomfield  
Exhibition Content Co-ordinator  
British Museum (Natural History)

### REQUEST FOR CARCASSES

The Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge, is building up a reference collection of disarticulated skeletal material and would be grateful for whole skeletons or carcasses - male, female and juvenile, of the species listed below.

If possible the following information about the animal would be appreciated:

- 1 Total weight
- 2 Age
- 3 Sex
- 4 Where it died
- 5 When it died
- 6 Cause of death
- 7 Whether wild, domestic, or feral
- 8 Where possible height at rump and shoulder; and for small mammals total length, head and hind foot length
- 9 Any other details available.

#### Mammals

Common rat (Rattus norvegicus)  
Shrew - all species  
Voles - all species  
Mice - all species except Field and Yellow-necked mice

Bats - all species  
Rabbit (Oryctolagus cuniculus)  
Brown hare (Lepus capensis)  
Mountain (Arctic) hare (Lepus timidus)  
Fat dormouse (Glis glis)  
Hazel dormouse (Muscardinus avellanarius)  
Garden dormouse (Eliomys quercinus)  
Red squirrel (Sciurus vulgaris)

Badger (Meles meles)  
Stoat (Mustela erminea)  
Polecat (Mustela putorius)  
Ferret (Mustela putorius furo)  
European mink (Mustela lutreola)  
European pine marten (Martes martes)  
Wild cat (Felis silvestris)

Seals - all species

Fallow deer (Dama dama)  
Red deer (Cervus elaphus)  
Roe deer (Capreolus capreolus)  
Deer - any other species  
Wild goat (Capra aegragus)  
Primitive sheep eg Soay  
Primitive cattle (Bos taurus)  
- Scottish Highland cattle  
- English Park cattle

Horse (Equus caballus)  
Pony - New Forest; Dartmoor

Primitive domestic pig

Hamster (Cricetus cricetus)  
Golden hamster (Mesocricetus auratus)

Amphibians and Reptiles

All types except Common Viper

Birds

We require all species except the following:

Mute swan  
Blackbird  
Grey heron  
Domestic duck  
Rook  
Mistle thrush  
Domestic chicken (but we do require old breeds  
of domestic fowl)  
Swallow  
Starling

If you have any of these species which are  
surplus to your requirements please contact:

Jessica C Hale  
Department of Archaeology  
University of Cambridge  
Downing St  
Cambridge CB2 3DZ  
Tel: (0223) 337733 Ext 3531

#### NEW ADDRESS

The North of England Museums Service has moved  
to: House of Recovery, Bath Lane, Newcastle  
upon Tyne, NE4 5SQ; telephone: (091) 2221661.  
The name of the new building seems suitably  
uplifting!

## In the Press

In its NEWSLETTER for July 1988 (no 52) the  
BRITISH ARACHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S Secretary,  
Michael J Roberts, gives a list of current and  
new projects. Among these is the formation of  
a reference collection for loan to members as  
an aid to identification. A good idea and  
worth noting by the local CRU (presumably the  
Sheffield area) and Museum.

In September, the BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF  
THE BRITISH ISLES issued its updated list of  
Vice-county Recorders. Notice was also given  
of a meeting at Exeter University on 6th to  
9th April 1989 on 'Species-mapping and the  
Biology of Plant Distribution' which will also  
be of interest to many BCG members.

The BSBI NEWS issues 48 and 49 (April and  
September 1988) have articles on collecting  
policy by three museum botanists. John Cannon  
at the BM(NH) outlines his Department's very  
specialised interests in British herbaria,  
saying in no uncertain terms that he thinks it  
'highly appropriate that good local  
collections should find their final resting  
places in relevant local museums, where they  
should be both used and valued as essential  
archival records of the local environment'.  
He also argues that the days of the individual  
general herbarium are past, but accepts the  
need for more specialised collecting towards  
specific ends. Eric Greenwood (Liverpool) and  
Mike Taylor (Perth) follow up with well argued  
support for the maintenance and use of local  
herbaria and Mike outlines the collecting  
policy in operation at Perth.

BSBI NEWS 48 also has five short pieces on the  
'use of computers for building distributional  
databases and plotting distribution maps  
(three for IBM-compatible machines and one for  
Amstrad PCWs) and a plea for consistency in  
the choice of computer systems to be used for  
county floras. A BSBI Computer Users group  
may be formed to offer recommendations to  
members about to embark on such schemes.

MUSEUMS JOURNAL vol 88 no 1 (June 1988) has  
a brief description by Stephen Locke of the  
Moscow State University Museum of Zoology,  
Moscow: an interesting account of an 'old  
style' museum with systematic displays and  
enthusiastic visitors reflecting "... in both  
its exposition and the response of its  
visitors, the early spirit of our own  
museums. I feel we have lost something".

CURATOR vol 30 no 4 (December 1987) is an  
invaluable reference resource: it is an index  
of the first 30 volumes of CURATOR by author,  
title and subject.

CURATOR vol 31 no 1 (March 1988) has a paper  
by Marie A Lawrence on a method of conserving  
mammalian type specimens which are in poor  
repair by constructing what she terms  
'archival containers' in which to store them.  
The specimens in question were bats from the