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Natural Sciences Collections Association

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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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NAME YOUR PRICE: PRICE YOUR NAME

This short but fascinating piece by John Vidal appeared in the Guardian of 12th January 1990 under the 'Eco Soundings' by-line. No comment.

In hard times for science and museums the Natural History Museum has hit on a potential new way of raising cash. Come up with a reasonable offer or proposal which would help the museum and its work and you could have an insect named after you.

This comes out of a project which the museum has been doing with the Costa Rican government which involved American financiers Salomon Brothers co-ordinating a \$24.5 million package to buy 210,000 acres of land to be turned back into a dry forest national park. The Natural History Museum's contribution was to give technical expertise and they offered Salomons the chance to be remembered for ever by naming 13 species of recently discovered wasps after some of their directors. Salomons were so tickled that they waived the \$300,000 fee. Appositely, the wasps were parasites feeding on money spiders.

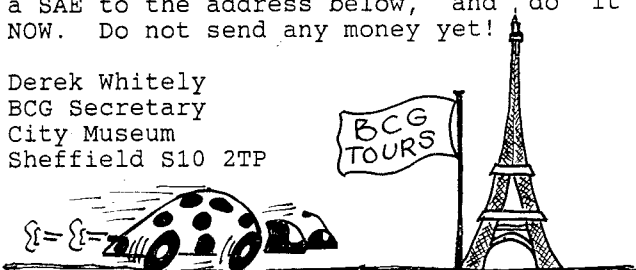
On this basis a name is worth many thousands and as thousands of new insects are discovered each year the financial possibilities are enormous. Dr Laurence Mound, chief entomologist at the museum, says he is always interested in finding ways to turn the museum's activities into cash. He's sold names before; a New Guinea sugar cane boss bought the name of a pest discovered on his land for a mere £300. Prices, he says, are negotiable.

BCG GO TO PARIS!

'Allo 'Allo! We are considering hiring a coach for a four-day study visit to Paris on 1st to 4th November 1990. The detailed itinerary is still to be worked out but it will include the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle with its new 400 million franc Zoology Gallery.

The coach will leave Sheffield, calling at Leicester and London. Members and guests are all welcome and booking will be on a first-come first-served basis. Costings are yet to be confirmed but we anticipate something in the region of £85-90 to include accommodation. If you wish to reserve a place (or places) send a SAE to the address below, and do it NOW. Do not send any money yet!

Derek Whitely
BCG Secretary
City Museum
Sheffield S10 2TP



SPNHC INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
IN MADRID, 1992

Announcing a major international Symposium of the Preservation and Conservation of Natural History Collections, organised by the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections. The symposium, backed by an international group of institutions and bodies including the Biological Curators Group is to be held at the Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, Madrid, May 10 - 15 1992.

The Symposium will focus on the concerns of the Natural History community for the status and future of anthropological, biological and geological collections in a world that is changing technologically, politically, and environmentally.

Issues, such as education and training, methodologies, research, resource utilisation for collection care, and cooperative programs will provide an attractive agenda for individuals associated with these collections.

The meeting will provide the first international forum for all the major groups invited to discuss the problems facing natural science collections. 1992 is an important year for the European Community with the establishment of free trade and the conference should see the organisation of a major umbrella group to promote better contact and exchange between European Natural Science groups.

For more information see the flyer included with this newsletter - or contact: Chris Collins, Leicestershire Museums Service, 96 New Walk, Leicester LE1 6TD.

Chris is the British representative of SPNHC and is the symposium liaison officer for BCG and GCG. If you would like to submit a paper for inclusion in the symposium, contact Chris at the earliest opportunity.

BCG SPOT THE CURATOR COMPETITION



Yes, you guessed. The curator is behind the tree!

Photo from North Devon meeting 1989.