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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

Title: Committee News

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Source: Garland, S. (1991). Committee News. *Biology Curators Group Newsletter*, Vol 5 No 8, 93 - 94.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/1006>

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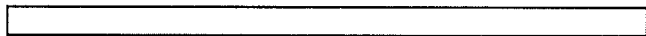
Yorkshire and Humberside, and Scotland. The work being done includes adding a new field to allow entries to be coded according to the period the collection was assembled. Each decade covered is coded, so that now one can select collections containing 'pre-1850 material', or those with specimens from 1909-1919.

In April 1991 a further MGC grant of £5000 has enabled the South West, South East, and, in part, the North of England data to be processed during the current year. The South East data gathering, including input from the BM(NH) and Kew, is almost complete; the South West CRU expect to complete data gathering by January 1992. A grant of £3000 is being requested to complete the North of England data, and to process the Midlands information; the Midlands *Register of Collections* should be available from November 1991.

As the concordance of the data for each region is completed, it is being copied back to the relevant CRU, who then become responsible for any further updating and editing. Periodically each upgraded regional database will be copied back again to the MDA, where it will replace the previous version in the national database. A security copy of the latest version of the national database will still be held at Manchester Museum.

Curators should make use of this information resource, and encourage other workers to do so as well. Search enquiries should be addressed to Kate Jeary. MDA, 347 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge CB1 4DH,

Charles Pettitt
Manchester Museum



Simon Moore moves to Hampshire

After 23 years of curating at the Natural History Museum Simon Moore has moved to a brand new laboratory at the Hampshire County Museums Service, Winchester, as Conservator of Natural Sciences. He will be available, once again, to answer questions about freeze-drying and fluid preservation of natural history specimens.



Committee News

At the AGM in Liverpool on 5th April 1991 the following Committee was elected (year of election in brackets)

Chairman Steve Garland (1987), Bolton Museum, Greater Manchester

Secretary (Acting)

Mike Graham (1991), Towneley Hall Museum, Burnley, Lancs.

Treasurer/Membership Secretary

Kathie Way (1989), Natural History Museum, London

Newsletter Editor

John Mathias (1986), Leicestershire Museums Service, Leicester

Journal and Special Publications Editor

Bill Pettitt (1991), Manchester Museum, Greater Manchester

Education Officer

Alec Coles (1990), Sunderland Museum, Tyne and Wear

Committee

Steve Judd (1990), Liverpool Museum, Merseyside

Ray Barnett (1990), Bristol Museum, Avon

Richard Sutcliffe (1989), Glasgow Museum, Strathclyde

Steve Hewitt (1990), Tullie House Museum, Carlisle, Cumbria

Mark Simmons (1991), North of England Museums Service, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Rosina Down (1991), UCL, London

Steve Maron (1991), Inverness Museum

Co-opted

Di Hawkes (GCG Rep)

Geoff Stansfield (Manual of Curatorship)

Subscriptions were raised from 1 January 1992 to £8.00 for individual membership and £15 for institutional membership. (Remember that as a museum professional you should be able to reclaim income tax on your subs.) There has been a 10% increase in membership, due totally to the hard work of Kathie Way.

A number of subjects have occupied the Committee this year.

Some museums have had worrying experiences because of the retrospective granting of wildlife import licences. Confiscated items have been

reclaimed by the illegal importers after the DoE provided licences applied for in retrospect. In one case the items had already been passed to a museum! We are pursuing this with the DoE and Worldwide Fund for Nature.

The idea of a seminar or debate to discuss collection valuation is progressing.

An attempt is being made to collate all the work being achieved as a result of the MGC Natural Science Collections Incentive money allocations. This subject should form part of the 1992 AGM in Carlisle.

The Curatorial Training Course in Sheffield was successfully run again in 1991, several junior Natural History Museum staff were in attendance.

The next issue (1990) of the Journal is going to press soon and a 1991 issue is nearing completion. We hope to catch up with ourselves in 1992!

Unfortunately, the impetus generated by the bird egg seminar at Tring has been temporarily lost due to the double blow of Peter Robinson leaving the RSPB and Clem Fisher's major commitment to her PhD studies. This project - with its ultimate aim to register all bird eggs and collections in the UK - is temporarily suspended, unless someone out there ...

Two BCG members, Peter Davis and Geoff Halfpenny have agreed to participate initially in the MDA Terminology Working Party - although, as yet, we have not heard any reports.

Derek Whiteley is relinquishing his secretarial responsibilities, but is currently looking towards another Beetle Down ... drive and maybe another printing of the beloved leaflet.

Alec Coles has prepared a revamped Sunflower Campaign leaflet. We hope to dispatch one to each member with either this or the next Newsletter. Ideal for refreshing the memories of your Committee, Trustee body, superiors etc etc.

Steve Garland
Chairman

Collections at risk

Part of BCG's remit is to monitor real or potential problems in the storage or curation of Natural Science collections and more pleasantly to record new staffing initiatives or storage developments. This work is co-

ordinated by the Committee and recent responses by the Chairman and Secretary have been influential in securing natural history posts at Oldham and in the Lancashire Museum Service.

Two North East Museum Services are unhappily under the spotlight at present. The Council of Newcastle University is considering the closure of the Hancock Museum, unless it is shown that there is sufficient support for a fund raising exercise, which will secure the future of the Museum. A further report will go to Council in November and they will consider ways that the Museum can generate additional income next financial year. Whilst at Tyne and Wear the Natural History Section might face a substantial deficit next financial year as a consequence of new funding arrangements.

If you know of any natural history collections or services that are currently neglected or under future threat and require BCG action, please forward the details in confidence to Steve Judd (address below). Good news is also particularly welcome!

Steve Judd, Curator of Entomology, Liverpool Museum, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, William Brown Street, Liverpool L3 8EN

Exhibition cases for sale

Nine display cases from the National Garden Festival Discover Exhibition are available for sale. Their external measurements are:

height 90mm
length 150mm
width 50mm

Six cabinets are 15 mm deep; three are 42 mm deep. All cabinets are made of wood, painted green and are fitted with fluorescent lighting. Cost is about £200 each although any offers will be considered.

Interested parties please contact:

Oisín MacNamara, Higher Education Support for Industry in the North, 24 Claremont Place, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU. Tel: (091) 2226068.