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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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level where there is risk of such inundation, and the requirement of personal safety and safety-approved procedure against the rapid deterioration timeclock.

Reference

SULLOWAY, F. J. 1982: *Darwin and his Finches the evolution of a legend*. Cambridge, Mass. USA.

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The Zemaljski Museum Sarajevo

The Zemaljski Museum, or Land Museum of Sarajevo is situated on the banks of the fiercely contested Miljacka River, and has suffered considerable damage from missiles since the outbreak of war in Bosnia. The museum housed wide-ranging collections started under the Austro-Hungarian regime in 1885. The courtyard housed an important collection of 14th and 15th century limestone tombstones, but both the courtyard and the building itself are now severely damaged. The famous botanical garden dating from the museum's foundation is at risk from inhabitants desperately seeking firewood, and the collections in the museum building are unprotected from the elements. Most of the natural history collections have been destroyed by the lack of controlled environment. A group of local people are trying to take what action they can to save the remaining collections and stabilize and weather-proof the building. Support in the form of funds and materials is urgently needed from the international community. For further information contact Bosnia-Herzegovina Heritage Rescue UK, 9 Canterbury Mansions, Lymington Road, London NW6 2EW, tel 071 433 1142. (This note originally appeared in *Tak Tent*, the newsletter of the Scottish Museums Council, no.7 Oct 1993).

Natural History Enquiries at Bolton

In an attempt to learn more about our enquiry service the Natural History staff decided to monitor enquiries in great detail on a random day each month. This process is ongoing, but I thought that other members might find our results of interest. They are a 'per year' total.

By type of enquiry:

	Number	Hours	Time/ Enquiry
Telephone	2110	108	3 mins
Personal visitor	2050	151	4
Letter	112	24	13
	4272	283	4 mins

Subject of enquiry:

General	759	67	5 mins
Records Centre	365	57	9
Entomology	450	29	4
Other Zoology	450	22	3
Botany	112	5	2
Geology	329	24	4
Aquarium	280	8	6
Barometer			
Readings	56	4	4
BCG Business			
(Chairman)	197	22	3
For other			
Museum sections	760	25	2
General			
Museum enquiries	515	17	2
Total	4273	280	4 mins

Three staff handle the bulk of the enquiries so the direct service occupies less than 6% of our time!

Definite value for money! We hope.

Charging for enquiries at Bolton

Pressure to generate income resulted in the Natural History Section having to charge for enquiries from commercial organisations. We have to bring in £500 per year to 'break even'; anything over that can be spent as part of our budget. This was a worrying development, but **all** of our regular users happily pay, although we probably undercharge in real terms. We hit our target the first year, narrowly exceeded it in the second and have already passed it this year. Occasional enquirers pay £15 + VAT for a 'quickie', more if it takes longer. Several regular users have been persuaded to save money by paying an annual fee, based on their level of use of the service. In addition, we recharge our Environmental Health Service. Most Environmental Health Departments get costs awarded in successful prosecutions so, rather than complicating paperwork by also claiming our costs each time, we agreed on an annual recharge. Brief advice on the phone is still free, but anything in writing becomes chargeable. We have had no complaints.

Bolton Museum now also charges for commercial hire of specimens and for schools' services for non-Bolton, private and opted-out schools. If you charge for hiring or lending specimens, remember that you must register as a Seller of Dead Birds with the DoE! This costs some money so is not worth it unless you hire regularly.

Steve Garland
Bolton Museum