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Natural Sciences Collections Association

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## NSCG Newsletter

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## View from the Chair

Dear Members,

As usual, our conference was a great success in spite of the rather inclement weather. I found watching the waves break over the promenade to be very exciting, especially as it was not my car they were breaking over. However, we conservators are a hardy breed, and neither rain, snow nor tidal waves stopped a few of us from climbing up to Scarborough Castle or going to the odd pub or five. The conference dinner was well organised, thanks Nick, and I was especially pleased to meet so many members and old friends. All three groups had an impressive list of speakers and I would like to thank the NSCG speakers especially for their time and the quality of their papers.

Joe Sage, from Dundee Museums, warned us all of the importance of being involved in the Best Value process. Many local authority museums will have to contend with "Best Value". My own museum service has just been through the best value process and it has resulted in the loss of staff and budget cuts. Best value is not "sexy" but it is important.

Our AGM went without a hitch and was finished in 30 minutes. No nominations were received for the three committee posts or the post of secretary, (its not a particularly arduous job on the committee and you do get to visit exotic locations like Birmingham).

Paul Brown and I, had approached people during the conference and eventually found three members who were willing to stand. Susan Cooke, Sue Lewis and Amanda Sutherland, were all duly elected. Paul unfortunately found himself elected for another term as secretary. I would like to welcome our three new committee members, and thank the retiring members for their help and support.

The organised trips on the last day of the conference were especially enjoyable. I went with the one group to look for dinosaur fossils on the beach near Scarborough and then on to Whitby Museum. I discovered no fossils but I did discover a gem in Whitby Museum. In these days of computer interactive displays, it was a joy to find this museum literally packed with strange, curious and interesting objects. There were no flashing lights or buttons to press but the museum is still as popular now as it was a hundred years ago. We saw the marvellous collection of marine reptiles conserved by Kate Andrew, and Adrian Doyle was good enough to talk us through the conservation process. I would like to thank Nick Gordon for liaising between the three groups and for doing most of the conference organisation.

Bob Entwistle.

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Venue: Scarborough Spa Complex, South Bay, Scarborough.  
Tuesday April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2000 12.30-1.00 pm

### 1. Introduction and consideration of agenda

The agenda was then approved by all present. Topics listed for AOB consisted of Insurance for Freelancers.

### 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies of absence were received from Kate Andrew & Maggie Reilly

### 3. Minutes of AGM on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 1999

The minutes of last years annual general meeting were presented. Nick Gordon proposed and Steve Garland seconded that they be accepted and signed. The minutes were duly signed by Bob Entwistle as being correct.

### 4. Matters arising from minutes

There were no matters arising.

### 5. Chairs report.

Bob Entwistle welcomed membership to the 7<sup>th</sup> AGM of the NSCG. He reported that committee had met fully only three times during the last year. We usually meet 4-6 times and the fewer meetings reflect the increased workloads we all have at present and the shorter period between AGMs due to the BCG/GCG share.

Those conservators who applied for Fast Track Accreditation with UKIC will know whether they have been accredited. There are probably 10 Natural Science conservators who will be accredited and these names will appear on the list to be published in May.

We continue to represent our views on the NCC-R (National Council of Conservators and Restorers, ex ABC, ex Conservation Forum) with virtually all the other conservation groups in the UK represented on the committee. The NCC-R is now responsible for administering the Conservation Register as well as promoting and running the Joint Accreditation process. NCC-R will become more important as the support given by MGC may not be as constant as MLAC (Museums, Libraries, Archives Commission). With the imminent demise of the MGC it is important that the voice of conservation is heard in the Museums and heritage world.

Many of you will have seen our new membership leaflet which has been distrib-

uted with BCG, GCG and UKIC mailings. Our membership hovers about the 100 mark but we believe that we can expand further with the aid of this leaflet. I would like to commend Kate Andrew for gaining the Group charitable status. Other organisations are having great difficulty in becoming charities and some have given up trying. The law governing charitable status has changed, being tightened up considerably and Kate has done us a great service in ensuring or successful application.

We were sorry to lose Nick Gordon from Committee this year and thank him for his work previously and for his organisation of this excellent conference. Darren J. Mann our new editor has worked hard to give The Newsletter a facelift whilst continuing with the 'house style'. Darren has also been liaising in the setting up of a Website for the NSCG, which will be on the net in the near future.

The Newsletter is only as good as the papers written for it. I appeal again to the membership to support Darren by submitting articles, book, equipment and conference notices, reviews and reports. Our series on the Ten Agents of Decay has been very well received by many in the museum world. The series had to be suspended in the last issue of The Newsletter due to lack of copy. Please don't let this worthwhile series grind to a halt.

Please remember why this group was first formed! There was no existing group specifically concerned with the promotion of and the dissemination of information about natural science conservation. This is still the case as there are very few natural science conservation courses or advocates in the universities. Without the NSCG, there would be no active promotion of natural science conservation.

#### 6. Secretary's Report.

There have been four committee meetings through the year with attendance of members as illustrated below in the attendance log:-

	25.viii.1999	24.xi.1999	24.ii.2000	2.iv.2000
Kate Andrew	✓	✓	✓	-
Paul Brown	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bob Entwistle	✓	✓	✓	✓
Simon Moore	-	✓	✓	-
Vicky Purewal	✓	✓	✓	-
Maggie Reilly	-	✓	-	-
Darren Mann	✓	✓	✓	✓
Adrian Doyle	✓	✓	-	✓
Glenys Wass	✓	-	✓	✓

#### 7. Membership Secretary Report.

In Maggie Reilly's absence, this was read by the secretary.

For the year February 1<sup>st</sup> 1999 to January 31<sup>st</sup> 2000 the Group had 103 members (plus the Newsletter is mailed out to the Legal Deposit Office of the British Library). The total figure breaks down into the following categories of membership: 76 UK personal members, 1 student member, 7 overseas personal members and 19 institutional members. 103 members is only a very modest increase of 4 members on the previous year total of 99 members. With this in mind, the committee decided to launch a membership drive in the form of distributing our newly produced leaflet via mailings in the UKIC, BCG and GCG Newsletters. This was done at the end of 1999, and how effective this measure is remains to be seen.

#### 8. Treasurer's report.

In Kate Andrew's absence, the accounts as audited by William Lindsay & Velson Horie were distributed for inspection.

#### Accounts for the year 1<sup>st</sup> February 1999 - 31<sup>st</sup> January 2000.

##### Current account - Midland Bank 1442341

	£4480.90
Balance brought forward from 1st February 1998	£4480.90
<b>Income</b>	
71 UK personal memberships @ £10.00 (+ one, one year in advance)	£ 720.00
2 UK student memberships @ £8.00	£ 16.00
5 Overseas personal memberships @ £12.00 (+ one, one year in advance)	£ 72.00
24 Institutional memberships @ £25.00	£ 600.00
Bank Interest	£ 28.70
Sale of back issues Newsletter	£ 18.00
<b>Conference</b>	
7 x member - single day @ £10.00	£ 70.00
26 x member - two days @ £20.00	£ 520.00
2 x non member -single day @ £15.00	£ 30.00
Trade fair stands	
2 x 2 days @ £70.00	£ 140.00
1 x 1 day @ £30.00	£ 30.00
sub total	£2244.70
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£6725.60</b>

## Expenditure

Newsletter production	£ 97.15
Design & printing of leaflet	£ 989.85
Conservation Forum subscription	£ 200.00
Committee expenses	£ 41.39
Conference expenses	£ 528.04

**Total expenditure** £1856.43

**Balance at 31.01.2000** £4869.17

Debtor	
One conference trade fair fee	£ 70.00

## Petty cash funds

### Income

Balance 31.2.1999 £ 16.01

### Expenditure

nil £000.00

Balance at 31.01.2000 £ 16.01

## Notes

1. The guidelines from the Charities Commission on the preparation of annual accounts state (p. 4) that for charities with 'neither income or expenditure over £10,000 that accounts must be prepared but may be on a receipts and payments basis'. We comply with this.
2. The accounts were sent to Velson Horie and William Lindsay who kindly acted as auditors and deemed the accounts to be in order. There is no requirement for us to do this but it seems good practice and so is worth continuing.

These accounts and the minutes of the AGM will be sent to the Charities Commission a.s.a.p.

## 9. Proposal to accept the accounts

Darren Mann proposed that the accounts be accepted which was seconded by Jenny Bryant. The meeting accepted the proposal nem. con.

## 10. Editor's Report

Two issues (12-13) of the Newsletter have been produced in the last year, consisting of sixty-eight pages. Part 8 of *The Ten Agents of Deterioration* has also been produced, the subject being pollution. However, due to lack of articles for the last Newsletter, publication was held back until the end of March, this issue should be waiting at home or in your pigeon holes, there are reference copies here for those who cannot wait that long. I apologise for this delay, but in my defence, I would like to say that without articles from the members, it is impossible to produce the Newsletter. I would like to reiterate what has been said before and will no doubt be said again, please, send us material for inclusion.

The next issue of the Newsletter is due out in May, which will include the papers presented at this meeting. Part nine of *The Ten Agents of Deterioration* is to be **Physical Forces**.

The NSCG Website is still being worked upon, we hope to be able to have all back issues of the Newsletter, as well as the usual array of pretty pictures and links to other sites of interest. If there are any other items that members feel should be present, please contact me.

I would like to thank all those members who have contributed to the newsletter, and look forward to their continuing support. I would like to express my special thanks to Juliet Hay, who has helped in the production of the newsletter.

## 11. Election to the Committee

Five posts have become vacant and four names put forward prior to the AGM.

There were no nominations for the post of Secretary, so as stated in the Constitution under item 6 Terms of Office, 6.3 "Competent trustees can in exceptional circumstances be re-appointed after their term of office has ceased but may only be re-appointed if the membership deems them capable of fulfilling their duties". Paul Brown was nominated by Robert Entwistle and seconded by Adrian Doyle.

Four ordinary member posts were available vacated by Simon Moore, Glenys Wass (co-opt) and two posts not filled from last year.

Simon Moore, nominated by Glenys Wass and seconded by Darren J. Mann.  
Sue Lewis, nominated by Vicky Purewal and seconded by Mike Fitton.  
Susan Cooke, nominated by Bob Entwistle and seconded by Joy Irving.  
Amanda Sutherland, nominated by Caroline Buttler and seconded by Julian Carter.

As no election was required, the Secretary proposed and Jo Hatton seconded that, the names put forward are accepted en block for election to the committee. The candidates were duly elected nem. con.

#### 12. Election of Auditors

Bob Entwistle nominated Velson Horie and William Lindsey to continue as auditors. Passed nem.con.

#### 13. Insurance for Natural Science Conservators

Simon Moore made another approach to the membership for freelancers to make use of the competitive insurance cover available from Crowley Colosso for both Public Liability and Professional Indemnity. He reported that a price of £250 for both was quoted by this company, and is a very competitive price being at least half that of other quotes. This would be an important saving for our freelance membership and such a chance should not be allowed to pass. Anyone who is interested should contact Simon. He has been approached by other non-natural science conservators to be included but this is not possible. He cannot benefit from this deal unless we have 10 or more people who are interested.

#### 14. AOB.

Simon Moore reported that UKIC would like us to re-join the UKIC. A member asked whether we would be allowed to keep our low membership fee under the UKIC umbrella. This would be negotiable. Bob Entwistle thought that we might lose the voice we already have on the NCC-R (National Council of Conservators & Restorers). Simon invited the membership to discuss this matter in print in the Newsletter [Likewise similar discussion on the possible alternative step of merging with BCG & GCG].

Possibilities for the next AGM are Cambridge or Oxford, date to be arranged.

Close of Meeting 1pm.

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### ***The Ten Agents of Deterioration: Physical Forces.***

Part nine of the Ten Agents will be published as soon as we have enough articles to make it worth while.

Please send any items for inclusion to the Editor.



## ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS NSCG / BCG / GCG CONFERENCE

Conference in Scarborough, Yorkshire Monday April 3<sup>rd</sup> - Tuesday April 4<sup>th</sup>

After battling through the elements of a northerly gale, torrential rain, snow, delayed trains, car breakdowns and police problems, the healthy number of 80+ delegates gathered for registration at the Spar conference Centre overlooking the stormy south bay. The conference was opened by Harry Dickton, Mayor of Scarborough who reflected a healthy regard for the museum community, which bodes well for the future of Scarborough Museums. The morning session was then chaired by Rob Huxley of the Natural History Museum, London, and Biology Curators Group.

Simon Knell of Museum Studies Department of Leicester University gave the first presentation on *Access - Physical & Intellectual*. How do we communicate the museum message, and what media do we use to reach our audiences? We need to continue to build from our museum resources and popularise our natural sciences by developing popular exhibitions, discovery centres, web sites, exportable collection databases and public interaction in the field (e.g. fungus forays etc.) He introduced the concepts of inclusion and exclusion to museums and how social, political and racial changes need to be addressed. In the 19th century museums were the preserves of the middle classes, the product of exclusive societies (much like today's middle class golf clubs). Natural History collections became immensely popular as the population became emancipated and came to 'own' their museums. One needs to increase audience diversity. Many who do not visit museums are disenfranchised, such as ethnic minorities and the disabled who can be the victims of tokenism (e.g. wheelchair ramps and stuffed rabbits to stroke), special provision highlighting that they are different. How do we allow our Community access to the museum experience? Different communities see things differently with their own valid paradigms with their own views on postmodernism, constructivism, post-colonialism, multiculturalism, fashion, finance and politics. Are our views on access to our collections too scientific and what do different communities consider important? Do we try to too hard to illustrate processes