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NSCG Newsletter

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The Natural Sciences Conservation Group promotes: research and exchange of ideas; advances in technical and ethical standards; the public profile of the conservation and preservation of natural science collections and objects; training; and publications.

Membership

The Group is keen to open its membership to all those involved in the care and conservation of natural science objects and encourages their active participation.

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Newsletter

The Newsletter is a forum for articles, views and opinions on the care, conservation and curation of natural history and associated material. The Newsletter is produced three times per annum (January, May and September) and is free to all members.

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Instructions for Authors

Material should be type-written and double-spaced in A4 format and if possible accompanied by a text file or Word document on disk (Dos-formatted). The pages should be numbered and the position of any tables and/or figures should be indicated on the hard copy. The names of animal and plant species should be underlined and the authority name given in full for the first time used, thereafter they may be omitted. All references should be given in full. Articles and other items for inclusion should be submitted to the Editor at least three weeks before the publication date.

Opinions expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those shared by the NSCG Committee, the Editor or the membership at large.

Editorial

"Give me a museum and I'll fill it." Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)

Welcome to Issue 16 of our Newsletter.

What a great start to the year, I've been suffering from foot in mouth disease, which although does not deny access to the countryside, does lead to embarrassing statements, somewhat in common with the those of our government. Unfortunately, some museums are suffering due to the foot and mouth crisis, especially those in rural areas or those which are open air with livestock. However, with countryside off-limits we may well see an increase in visitors numbers to those museums fortunate enough to be in foot and mouth free zones.

I was recently at the National Museum and Galleries of Wales, Cardiff, outside the front of the building were large signs stating that the museum was now offering free admission, this being part of the governments' new initiative for "universal access", in return those museums which join the scheme will be given VAT refunds on their purchases. It will be interesting to see how many museums take up this offer and what effect it will have on both visitor numbers and money available for collections.

The BCG meeting "Digital Learning" held in January was very well attended and extremely interesting. Although rather internet biased there were very instructive talks and useful ideas. However, we must ensure that our directors, administrators and others involved in the funding and the day-to-day running of our museums remember that the computer and the internet are tools to make our collections more accessible and manageable and not a replacement for them.

The upcoming two day conference "The Future of Collecting: Collections of the Future" to be held in Oxford should stimulate some interesting debate. I have found that there are many camps as to what collections exist for: some see them as merely a resource for display, whilst others see them as a purely scientific research tool. There are a good range of talks and the usual tours, and of course the conference meal, where we should enjoy a novel way of dining and some karaoke.

Cheers, D.