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The Biology Curator

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Author(s): Palmer, M.

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Paris, GCG Study Visit**October 1999**

Contact: Steve McLean, The Hancock Museum, Barras
 Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT Tel. 0191 222
 6765 e-mail. s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk

Leiden, BCG Study Trip**November 1999**

Contact: Kathie Way, Mollusca Section, NHM, Cromwell
 Road, London, SW7 5BD
 Tel. 0171 938 8892 Fax. 0171 938 8754 e-mail
 kmw@nhm.ac.uk

**Why Museums Matter : Avian Archives in an Age of
 Extinction and Workshop on Increased Co-operation
 between Museums****12-14 November and 14-15 November 1999**

Joint BOU/BOC/NHM/Birdline Conference at Green Park,
 Aston Clinton near Tring and the Natural History
 Museum, Tring. (See note inside)

Conference Contact : BOU Office, c/o The Natural History
 Museum, Akeman St., Tring, Herts, HP23 6AP. tele.
 01442 890080 e-mail : bou@bou.org.uk

Workshop Contact : Robert Prys-Jones, same address as
 above, tele : 01442 824181 e-mail : rpp@nhm.ac.uk

GCG AGM and Seminar**3-5 December 1999**

Trinity College, Dublin

Contact: Patrick Wyse Jackson, Dept. of Geology, Trinity
 College, Dublin 2, Ireland

Tel +353 1 608 1477 Fax. +353 1 671 1199 e-mail
 wysjcknp@tcd.ie

February 2000

?Botany meeting, details to be announced

AGM and meeting, details to be announced**April 2000**

?Scarborough

?October 2000

St Petersburg, BCG Study Trip, details to be announced

Collections Monitoring Cell

Having left Liverpool Museum last year the current point
 of contact for Collections at Risk is as follows:-

e-mail: [HYPERLINK mailto:mpl Laurel@aol.com](mailto:HYPERLINKmailto:mpl Laurel@aol.com)**Post: Mike Palmer, 16 Laurel Way, Totteridge, London
 N20 8HP**

The telephone number given in the last issue of The
 Biology Curator is also current but I would suggest that this
 is only used for urgent cases as it is a home number. It is
 also worth considering that if notification of a new collection
 at risk is so urgent as to require a phone call then there may
 be little we can do in such a limited time span. To put it

another way – PLEASE LET US KNOW AS SOON AS
 YOU THINK A COLLECTION MAY BE AT RISK,
 RATHER THAN WHEN IT IS ACTUALLY AT RISK. If the
 threat blows over, then there is nothing lost but if the threat
 becomes a reality then we will be far better prepared to deal
 with it.

If, for any reason, you have trouble contacting me please
 remember the Secretary or Chair contacts (as given on the
 back page of this newsletter) can be used as a second option,
 but do try me first.

In the past responsibility for monitoring collections at risk
 has generally fallen on my shoulders. As the number of cases
 have built up this has proved to be unsatisfactory with many
 cases not receiving the full attention they require. While
 delegation amongst Cell members has taken place we are
 now looking to make more full use of the Group's
 membership so that any (consenting) member with relevant
 experience of the particular problem in hand may be called
 on to assist. If all this sounds as if we are increasing the
 number of people involved in collections at risk then that's
 because we are – making full use of the Group's knowledge
 and experience for the future well being of natural history
 collections.

My role in all of this is to:

Receive notification of collections at risk.

Delegate monitoring responsibility.

Collect case reports and compile them for Committee.

Advise the Chair of any action to be taken.

Highlight wider issues arising from individual cases for
 discussion at Committee with a view to further action as
 required.

The Wider Picture

Individual cases of Collections at Risk often point out
 wider issues likely to affect other natural history collections
 around the UK e.g. local authority reorganisation, best value,
 trust status, misconceptions regarding the use of mounted
 mammals and birds, etc. It is important that the Group picks
 up on these as early as possible in order to develop strategies
 which may pre-empt future collections becoming at risk. In
 order for this to happen effectively it is vital that the Cell is
 kept informed of all developments affecting individual
 natural history collections. So in addition to early warnings
 of threats I would also like to hear how situations have been
 resolved (for better or worse). All communications are kept
 on file so that any experience gained from one case can be
 drawn upon to assist in future cases.

News, Views and Suggestions.

In addition to news of collections at risk I would also like
 to hear of any ideas or suggestions you may have for
 improving the work of the Collections Monitoring Cell. Are
 the Action Packs useful? Should we add anything to them?
 Should we be developing any further campaigns to help
 ensure the future well being of natural history collections?
 All suggestion etc. welcome.

Mike Palmer (Collections Monitoring Officer)