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enquiring about some exotic birds. An elderly lady, who was the daughter of an old boy of the school, has enquired after a collection of exotic birds her father loaned to the school in 1916/17. There were four cases measuring 6' x 6'. The school were unable to locate them but thought that in the 1970's a Headmaster had donated them to a local museum. The collection was not donated to Leicester Museums and has not turned up at any other museums in the area. If you have any information regarding these cased birds could you please contact:

Miss SA Buxton, Bursar, Uppingham School, Uppingham, Rutland, LE15 9QB.
Tel: 01572 822216 ex 4006

Erratum

In issue 21 of The Biology Curator Kim Goodger's paper on Conservation of Birdwing Butterflies was unfortunately truncated. This was due to the acting editor getting to grips with some new software being used to produce The Biology Curator so my humble apologies to Kim. The missing section is reproduced here.

Conservation of Flood Damaged Birdwing Butterflies.

Kim Goodger.
Dept of Entomology, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Rd, London. SW7 5BD

Materials used.

Glassine envelopes - BioQuip Products, Inc.
17803 LaSalle Ave, Gardena, CA 90248
USA.

Seccotine(tm) liquid glue - Distributed by
Primrose Repair Services, Dunstable Road,
Dagnall, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire HP4
1RQ

Stainless steel entomological pins with nylon
head, 'continental' length size 5 - Watkins
& Doncaster, PO Box 5, Cranbrook, Kent.
TN18 SE2

L2S lens tissue; machine made (Manila hemp,
jute ash, woodfree), white, wove 9 gsm -
Falkiner Fine Papers 76, Southampton Row
London WC1B 4AR

Acknowledgements

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References

- d'Abrera, B. 1990. Butterflies of the Australian Region. Third, revised edition. Hill House.
Dickson, R. 1976. A Lepidopterist's Handbook. The Amateur Entomologists' Society.
Florian, M.L. 1997. Heritage Eaters. Insect & Fungi in Heritage Collections. James & James, London.

Regional Museums Task Force Report

The Regional Museums Task Force report, *Renaissance in the Regions: a new vision for England's Museums*, is now out.

The 9 strong task force consulted over 400 people, including BCG, throughout the museums sector. The report identifies a number of problems being faced by museums including:

- Fragmentation of effort between a large number of institutions
- Under-funding
- Staff shortages and low morale
- Decline in scholarship
- Weak leadership

The report recommends that a major museum service, a 'hub', linked to a number of partners, should be formed in each of the 9 English regions. The hub would be selected based on a number of criteria including collections, status, location, infrastructure and evidence of achieving good practice. The hubs would provide leadership and support for other museums in the region.

A framework to be implemented over a 5 year period has been costed at £267.2 million. The majority of this would come from central government and be used to:

- Increases staffing levels by 25%
- Develop access, outreach and education programmes
- Develop temporary exhibitions

- Develop IT resources

The report is not a consultative document and it stands or falls as it is. A preliminary response is being submitted to DCMS by the end of the year and many services are already actively engaged in developing partnerships to bid for regional hub status.

It is strongly recommended that BCG members are aware of this report and the huge potential changes across the sector that may result with its implementation.

Copies of the report were sent to all registered museums. The full report and a summary report can be downloaded as a pdf file from www.resource.gov.uk

Hard copies of the report are available from Nick Morton on 020 7273 1458.

Renaissance in the Regions? A response to the Regional Museums Task Force Report

Steve Thompson

This is a personal response on the part of the Secretary of the Biology Curators Group (BCG). The views expressed are personal ones should not be taken to be those of the BCG.

Introduction

It should be said at the outset that there is a great deal to be welcomed in "Renaissance in the Regions", the recent Regional Museums Task Force (RMTF) report. The Museums Association has already discussed the welcome aspects of the report, and there is no need to repeat what they have said here. However, the proposals and recommendations could give serious cause for concern amongst those working in smaller museums. (By smaller museum, we mean here all medium-sized and smaller museum services, roughly 1840, or 98.9% of the non-national museums community). This report could be seen as a Beeching Report for museums, and parallels with the evolution of the railway system since that report would be easy to draw.

Before going any further, it should be pointed out that there has been a certain misrepresentation of the curators themselves. We do not feel ourselves to be demoralised.

We certainly have the will, the imagination and the ability to do all that is being asked of us. However, we are chronically under-resourced and grossly overstretched, and so feel very frustrated. The findings of this report give the potential for doing much to change that situation, but the proposals and recommendations seem more likely to aggravate it. Furthermore, there is an enormous wealth of talent, experience and expertise outside of the national and large regional museums that has simply not been acknowledged.

Biases

I will look at the two principal areas of concern only. The first, and somewhat smaller, concern is the subject bias that the RMTF has placed on the report, in concentrating on art and social history, and on the preservation and interpretation the past. This is a gross distortion of the true range of museums interests and activities. Of the 21 projects cited as exemplars, 18 are art or history projects. Of the remaining three, only one is a project that directly concerns the collections themselves. Otherwise there is no reference to technology/industry museums, and no reference at all to science, natural history or archaeology, even though many of the most innovative schemes have been developed within these sectors. Not only is this a misrepresentation of the museum community itself, but also of the user community.

To get an idea of where public interest lies one may look at the most popular "cultural" pastime of all, watching TV. Of those subjects of direct concern to the museum community, a count of programmes over four recent, consecutive weeks shows that there were just 9 arts programmes (not counting "pop culture", which museums generally choose to ignore), as opposed to 20 science programmes, 43 archaeology / history programmes (they overlap too much to separate out) and 66 natural history programmes. It is disturbing, therefore, to see a major report showing such a strong bias, (though understandable when one looks at the make up of the task force).

Furthermore, museums also look at the present