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demonstrated excellence in keeping with the vision of ROM 2000.

Ms Emma Watson see *Professor Stephen Blackmore*

A COMPARISON OF METHODOLOGIES FOR ECONOMIC VALUATION OF COLLECTIONS.

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It was recognised that the market value of most natural science collections does not provide a true reflection of their economic value. Exploratory research was carried out by the Canadian Museum of Nature to develop a methodology to estimate replacement costs of collection holdings. In addition, further research was initiated on developing a capitalized value of collections through the analysis of operational and capital costs, and through an analysis of benefits. The methodologies were applied to the fish collection of the Canadian Museum of Nature. The replacement cost approach required the scientists involved to look at three collecting scenarios (local, accessible by road and isolated locations) to estimate the costs and numbers of specimens collected and extrapolate this across the current collection to arrive at a replacement cost estimate. The capitalized cost approach used historical operational cost data to estimate a capitalized total collection value by treating annual costs as carrying costs of a larger investment. Replacement cost methodology produced a result of approximately $9 million, while the capitalized cost approach gave a result of approximately $14 million. The analysis of benefits did not produce useful quantitative results. None of the methodologies provide a true economic valuation of the collection, but the cost approaches do provide a base value from which collections management decisions can be made.

Professor P W Wolnitzer see *Professor G D Carnegie*

Mrs C M Yang see *Kevin K P Lim*

ABSTRACTS OF PROPOSED POSTER PRESENTATIONS.

COST OF NATURAL SCIENCE SPECIMEN CONSERVATION VERSUS VALUE OF COLLECTIONS

Ms Katherine J. Andrew, Geological Conservator and Collection Care Consultant, 59 The Common, Abberley, Worcs WR6 6AY

A natural science specimen requiring conservation, such as a small broken fossil, will take a minimum of fifteen minutes to conserve where conservation comprises photography, documentation and minimal treatment. Fifteen minutes of work is the bare minimum; most specimens take several hours, even months or years to conserve. The cost of materials, specialised equipment and laboratory facilities have also to be included in the equation. Conservation of a 15 minute specimen is unlikely to come to less than £5 at current prices.

Occasionally, the £5 figure is viewed with horror and said to be too much, but exactly how much is the specimen worth, or put another way, how much has been spent on it already?

Where is it stored at the moment? Presumably in some kind of container in some kind of cupboard, how much did these cost? Where is the specimen stored? City centre rents are high, heating and lighting and climate control are not included in rent and are on-going costs. How much time did the specimen take to document and pack? Finally, how much did the specimen cost to collect in the first place, or how much would it cost to replace if conservation were not carried out?

These calculations will be expanded and examples given. A common ammonite with good data might have cost four times as much as the cost of conservation to collect, curate and pack with on-going costs every year. The cost of conservation in these terms does not seem excessive, but is only worthwhile if the specimen is properly documented and all preventative conservation measures including proper storage are taken to prevent further damage.

Dr T. Backeljau see *Dr Jackie L. van Goethem.*

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LISBON.

Jose M. Brandao, Museu Nacional de Historia Natural, R. da Escola Politecnica, 58 1294 Lisboa codex, Portugal.

The Natural History Museum was formally created in 1919, assembling the three museums (Mineralogical, Botanical and Zoological) which belonged to the Polytechnic School, precursor of the contemporary Faculty of Sciences.

Almost completely destroyed in March 1978 by a tremendous fire, the N.H.M. has started gradually acquiring new collections, by purchase of specimens in the national and international markets, donations and sponsoring research projects on Master's and Ph.D's Thesis.

Sixteen years after the fire, the building is not yet completely restored. There are no conditions to prepare a new permanent exhibition, involving the three branches of Natural History. So, the most significant parts of the collections are available only for researchers and only a small part of the different items have been displayed in several temporary exhibitions.

Vera Lucia M. Callegaro see *Dr Maria Helena M. Galileo*

COSTING AND TARGETING COLLECTION CARE IN NORTH WEST ENGLAND - THE NORTH WEST (OF ENGLAND) COLLECTIONS RESEARCH UNIT (NWCRU) SURVEY 1990-1993.

Dr Gary Cleland1, Velson Horie[2] and Dr Ian Wallace[1]
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The cost of physical care and documentation is a value to be attached to natural history collections. The North West Collections Research Unit (NWCRU) survey set about