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should be included if at all possible but again, this depends on members sending them in.

Finally, I have enjoyed the last four year's (and it don't seem a day too much!) editorial duties very much thanks to those of you who helped to make the editors life easy (comparatively!). Particular thanks must go to Bill Pettitt who has edited the more academic papers on behalf of the Group since the days of the *Journal of Biological Curation* and Kathie Way who completed the often thankless but essential task of producing an index to the last volumes of *BCG Newsletter*. Northern Whig, our printers in Belfast, have also greatly contributed to easing the production of each issue with an efficient and, above all, friendly service - thanks George.

So, the very best of luck to the new editorial team at Bolton and to all of you real workers out there so long and thanks for all the fish!

*Mike Taylor, Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Scotland*

## DOCUMENTATION CELL REPORT

I am pleased to be taking on the role of "nucleus" of the Documentation Cell. Documentation is something that all curators, regardless of their subject speciality, have to be aware of; some even do it. Many aspects are universal, but some are unique to the life sciences. There are a number of initiatives underway that are looking at the specific documentation needs of different types of collections. My aim is to ensure that BCG, and therefore its membership, can contribute to and benefit from these initiatives, and take on other projects of value to natural science curators.

Over the next year the Documentation Cell will look at three projects:

- defining the core information that is needed to describe and manage natural sciences collections
- clarification of conditions on entry forms specific to natural science material, particularly in respect of existing legislation
- developing guidelines on the documentation of natural sciences collections for MGC Registration.

It is important that the end results are relevant and usable. So it is essential that as many people as possible contribute to the process. All volunteers to help with the Documentation Cell are welcome. The work will not be arduous: it may involve as little as a few phone calls. Please contact me, if you would like to help.

The results of the cell's work will be published in *The Biology Curator*, when there is something to say, and reported at next year's AGM.

Thank you.  
Nick Goff

## A Natural Sciences Touring Exhibitions Network:

### A discussion document.

This proposal began as an idea based on a number of factors. A number of institutions already design exhibitions for touring, but they tend to suffer from the problem that they are too big and/or too expensive for places such as Scunthorpe Museum, with the severely limited budgets and temporary exhibition space. Our need is for exhibitions that have immediate appeal (and should therefore be quite glossily presented), cost only a few hundred pounds at most, and take up no more than 100 square metres. These requirements would seem to be mutually contradictory, and it must be remembered that many small museums are able to take only exhibitions that are effectively free and occupy only a few square metres.

Although there is a touring exhibitions group, I see no reason why a network dedicated to natural history should not be feasible, indeed desirable, given that there is a conspicuous lack of small travelling natural history exhibitions. It may be easier to run such a group independently rather than as part of a wider touring exhibitions group.

The suggestion is that a group of around a dozen museums, from all over the country, preferably at least one from each region would contribute both a representative and money, say between £100 and £500, to such a network, generating several thousand pounds for the project. This could then be used to generate further funding. The groups purpose would be solely to generate one travelling exhibition each year, on a topic to be decided by the committee, to tour five or six museums per year for two to three years, or as seems most appropriate. Features of design would include immediate and marketable appeal, ease of transport and ability to scale the exhibition up or down to fit venues of varying sizes. Two useful suggestions have been made in the course of informal discussions about this idea. Firstly, after design, the 2-D parts of the exhibition be produced by the group, with the 3-D material, such as mounted specimens, be taken from the host museums collections or borrowed from a nearby service. This would make it much easier to transport, as well as promoting the use of more collections and cooperation among neighbouring services. The second idea is that both a small and a larger version of the exhibitions be produced, allowing it to travel more quickly and be more adaptable to different display areas.

It is suggested that the museums within the network take it in turns to act as the coordinating centre for the design, production an use of an exhibition. This will spread the workload, and also the benefits, both locally and nationally, of being seen to be an active participant in the scheme.

Another suggestion is that to keep costs down, the group could consider the use of college design departments in creating exhibitions, something recently done successfully at Scunthorpe. Such departments would jump at the chance of significant projects such as this for post-A level students, whose output is regularly of an very high standard. Furthermore, contacts with such institutions can be very