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## The Biology Curator

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The group organised three meetings in 1996/7, including last year's AGM meeting, which was jointly held with GCG in Newcastle, on training issues. The Paris meeting was very successful, a good time was had by all, and we even visited a museum. The meeting in Nottingham was organised at very short notice by Graham Whalley, but was well attended, very interesting and promoted a lively debate. There should be a write up in a future TBC.

In addition to these, BCG also worked on the Cambridge international conference, another very successful event. I would like to record here our thanks for the enormous amount of work put in by Chris Collins and his team.

We also put together, again at very short notice, a session at the MA conference, on the issues of orphan collections and collections at risk. This was very successful in that it attracted a large proportion of non-natural scientists and generated a very lively discussion, amply demonstrating the interest on the part of the wider museum community in these issues. We will be hoping for an even better response for this year's session, which will look at the future of the specialist curator, and is being organised jointly with GCG and SMA.

We are in the process of putting together another European trip, to Vienna, at the end of this year, and are hoping to do the early year meeting in 1998 on entomology, the venue yet to be decided. Details of these and other meetings will be available in future issues of The Biology Curator.

And I will finish with the usual request to you to let committee know of any issues you think we should be covering, and your feedback on the things we do. Thank you.

Steve Thompson.

### Treasurer's Report

#### DETAILS OF EXPENDITURE AND INCOME FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 1996 - 31 MARCH 1997

#### INCOME

Study trip to Paris	£6,931.00
Subscriptions	2,943.75
Interest on bank account	91.25
Sale of publications/advertising	73.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£10,039.00</b>

#### EXPENDITURE

Study trip to Paris	6,928.61
1996 AGM Newcastle	205.12
Cambridge SPNHC meeting bursaries	500.00
Postal costs	73.88
Refund of postage to J. Morgan (back issues of Newsletter)	13.15
Bank charges	3.00
Gift for Rosina Down	30.25
Book for use by M. Palmer	10.00
Biology Curator 6	977.81
Biology Curator 7	998.75

**Total expenditure** £9,740.57

**Income over expenditure** £298.43

**Total at bank 24 March 1996** £8,863.24

**Total at bank 1 April 1997** £9,191.67

#### MEMBERSHIP

Personal members	219
Institutional members (UK)	67
Overseas members	41
Exchanges	9
Total membership	336
Total annual income from subscriptions	£3,372.00

Kathie Way  
March 31 1997

**Members who have not paid Subscriptions for 1996 or 1997 will be deleted from the Membership List.**

## Minutes of the BCG Annual General Meeting

**Held on 16 April 1997 at the National Museum of Wales**

1. Apologies for absence:  
Shona Allen, Helen Burchmore, John Edmondson, Simon Heyhow, Chris Norris, Paul Richards, Ian Wallace, Kathie Way, Derek Whiteley.
2. Minutes of the last AGM:  
The minutes of the 1996 AGM were accepted as an accurate record.
3. Matters arising:  
There were no matters arising.
- 4-7 Officer's reports:
8. Any other business:

Ray Barnett thanked BCG for their support over the situation at Bristol Museum. He also wanted to bring attention to the fact that there was a discrepancy between the need expressed for natural science and what was actually happening.

Steve Garland gave a short report on the Millennium Fund bid for biological recording, and requested information on the Wildlife Trust's new bid, about which conflicting reports had been received. Dave Mellor reported that his experience from his involvement in the situation had been most unsatisfactory. SG will follow up on his comments. Howard Mendel suggested that BCG set up an initiative to represent museum-based record centres. Dave Mellor proposed that BCG hold a special meeting to look at the issues related to biological recording. It was resolved that an emergency action meeting would be organised to do this.

Jenny Moore wanted BCG to address the problems facing specialist curators. Rob Huxley recommended promoting the increased representation of natural sciences on MA Council.

There were two committee posts vacant at this time, and one candidate had been nominated by committee, Sam Hallett, proposed Jane Pickering, seconded Steve Thompson.

9. The date and venue of the 1998 AGM had yet to be decided.

## BCG Documentation Cell

Report to AGM, 16 April 1997

And now to one of the more interesting aspects of being a biology curator: documentation. The aim of the Documentation Cell is to produce guidelines and assistance to BCG members, and others, especially those without a background in natural sciences, on the effective documentation of natural science collections.

The Cell has been looking at the essential core information that is needed to record natural science objects, in addition to the minimum required for MGC Registration. The results of our deliberations will be printed in The Biology Curator, with an invitation for comments. There is the possibility that MDA may then take them up as a factsheet. This is the first stage in developing wider guidelines on the documentation of natural science collections for MGC Registration.

The Cell has also ensured that the needs of natural science collections are included in the development of national standards for documentation. Both Jane Pickering and I have been part of MDA's SPECTRUM Natural Sciences Guidelines Working Group. Its work is tied up with a second edition of SPECTRUM and subject-specific applications.

As there is growing concern at present about collections at risk, the need to know what is in our museums is greater than ever, to ensure that they do not disappear. The Documentation Cell will continue to work on producing resources to make it easier to cope with the essential, but dangerously neglected, recording of natural science collections.

You can help by joining the Documentation Cell; it won't involve more than a few phone calls. All offers of help will be gratefully received.

Nick Goff

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