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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

Title: Museums Association: Working Party on Museums in Education

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Dear Mr. Addison,

It is extremely difficult, at this notice, to give detailed comments on your letter, and you must appreciate that the views I express can in no way reflect the feelings of the Biology Curators Group. I am sure, in any case, that you will already have written to a number of individuals and museums with particular experience of biological education.

There is, of course, a fairly extensive literature on the efforts of biologists in the educational field, particularly with regard to conservation of the environment. Geoff Stansfield, a member of BCG committee, has compiled a comprehensive bibliography on this subject, which I am sure will be available to your Working Party.

The BCG is well aware of the problems of improving educational activities in museums, and I would draw your attention to the article by Stephen Horne of Merseyside Museums in the last BCG Newsletter. However I think it would not be unfair to say that the priority for most biology curators is to care for their collections, and that they will only be made available for education purposes if and when money and staff allow. (This may explain the trend in some museums to move away from education based on objects, which I believe is to be regretted). Until these additional resources are made available I am afraid that education services will continue to receive second class material from biology departments and help only 'on demand' from biology curators.

If you require any further information, or feel that the Group could usefully hold a meeting on this topic to provide you with a wider spectrum of views, please contact me so the subject can be discussed at our next committee meeting.

Stephen Flood,
Chairman,
Biology Curators Group