Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BIOLOGY CURATORS GROUP HELD AT MANCHESTER MUSEUM, 1st DECEMBER 1978.

Despite freezing fog and sub zero temperatures, BCG members struggled to the comparative warmth of Manchester Museum on December 1st.

The meeting was divided into two sessions, the first an explanation of the computerisation work being undertaken at Manchester Museum by Bill Pettitt, the second a discussion of several points raised by Graham Walley at the last AGM (see BCG Newsletter No. 8 p.30) covering a number of topics. The following is an account of the meeting prepared from the Editors hurried notes of the sessions.

THE WONDERFUL THING ABOUT COMPUTERS IS........

Bill Pettitt explained the progress made to date on the computerisation of the Spence Collection at Manchester, and the pilot projects on collections of birds, spiders, aphids, archaeology and data collected by the North West Collection Research Unit. Favourable comments were directed at GOS, which had been revealed to all at an M.D.A. Seminar at Duxford in October.

Implementation of GOS outside Cambridge is to take place at Manchester in the near future, with financial assistance from the North West Area Museums Service being used to employ a person to supervise the implementation of GOS and the language BCPL.

The composition of UMRCC was explained, and the feasibility of establishing links between other computer centres and Manchester described. In this way GOS can be made available to other museums in Great Britain.

The stages in computing data were explained, with particular reference to the Manchester experience and man hours involved. This is summarised below (time (hours) indicated per batch of 50 records)

Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3
Code data onto sheet	Punch	Input Listfile Call check Edit		Test index Errors, Vocab Edit Repeat
8.00	0.05	0.05		0.05
		0.05		0.5
		4.00		0.25
		1.00		0.20