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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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Author(s): Flood, S.

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The normal function of a secretary's report is to review the activities of the Committee, but, as the Chairman has pointed out, deliberations of that body are minuted in full in the Newsletter (more out of laziness than democracy). The opportunity is therefore afforded for me to reflect a little upon my own function as a 'representative' of the B. C. G. The quote marks are deliberate - not even the Committee is representative of all types of museum, region or discipline, although we do our best, and it sometimes seems that my only specialism is attending committee meetings; but I suppose that is yet another of the penalties of living near London. But as I understand it the group never expected to be able to speak with one voice. Indeed it is precisely because of the babel of biology that the group was formed - to communicate rather than unite (hence the importance and contribution of the Newsletter).

Over the past few years the Professional Groups Committee of the Museums Association has developed as a very useful forum for groups such as B. C. G. and G. C. G. to air their views and we have had a certain amount of influence on Association policy, although the Committee itself has a rather anomalous status. At last we have managed to persuade the Association to deal with collections at Conference (see my note elsewhere) and this is a real opportunity to deal with the fundamental problems, common to us all, in the presence of the purse-holders (i. e. directors and members).

At the same time I have been asked, on various occasions, to give the B. C. G.'s opinions on matters ranging from museum education to (most recently) wildlife legislation. My attitude is that, whilst members should be kept informed on all matters relating to biology in museums, it would be folly for me, or the committee, to make definitive pronouncements. It is in these situations that the members must react according to their own needs; there are enormous advantages in highlighting the diversity of museum biology to the politicians before policies are made which suit no-one. I realise that this involves members in having to do their own campaigning but I do not regard the B. C. G. as a union to represent and prop-up its members; surely it is a co-operative society - work together, use it and it is bound to pay dividends!

Stephen Flood