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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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# Reports

## Chairman's Report for 1983

During the course of the year two meetings have been held and both were poorly attended. The Annual General Meeting was held in March at the Hancock Museum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. For those that attended a most interesting and rewarding meeting was held and I am sure that all of us were most impressed with the work carried out by this Museum. In July another fascinating meeting was held at the Harrison Zoological Museum and Reserve, Sevenoaks. Clearly it is not worth the committee and meeting organisers bothering to arrange a meeting if the membership does not respond by attending them. This year a major meeting will be held at Leicester on biological recording. Please ensure that this is well attended by making your booking in good time. (For details, see elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter).

The committee continues to have full agendas and its work is fully reported in the Newsletter. This has been published regularly and has contained some most interesting articles. The Newsletter is a most valuable part of the Group's work and I am sure you will keep the editors supplied with copy. The Group is also active in continuing its series of B.C.G. Reports and No. 2 on the Wildlife and Countryside Act was published during the year. It is hoped that a third, comprising a bibliography of zoological techniques by Reg. Harris will be published in 1984.

The committee continues to have concern over the future of natural history in museums and particularly in respect of collections. It was therefore most rewarding to learn during the year that the Museums Association's applications for grant in aid to support a years research work on the state and status of biological collections had been successful. In September, Dr. Bernice Williams took up her appointment at Cardiff and was soon enthusiastically pursuing her project. I am sure you will all give her every support she needs to complete her work and hopefully by the time you read this report you will have completed and returned the bulky questionnaire. During 1984 her work should be finalised so that in the light of her report a further conference may be convened in Cardiff in 1985. However, it would have been helpful if the report of the conference held in 1982 had been published quickly as originally intended. Perhaps better late than never!

However, late in the year the Government's proposals for the abolition of the Metropolitan County Councils and the Greater London Council contained in the White Paper streamlining the Cities gave the committee many worries. Accordingly, a small working party was established jointly with the G.C.G. and comments were submitted by the two Groups in December to the Minister for the Arts and the Office of Arts and Libraries. A great deal of work was involved in preparing the comments and new information was provided on the importance of the collections and services provided by the museums affected. Taken together with other issues affecting local government and universities the problems facing institutions holding biological collections, whether or not they call themselves museums, are immense. Time will tell if we are making progress.

During 1984 many difficult issues are, I am sure, going to come forward but I hope that this will not deflect the Group's activities in helping members to just get on with the job.

E.F. Greenwood  
January, 1984.