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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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Badger (Meles meles)  
Stoat (Mustela erminea)  
Polecat (Mustela putorius)  
Ferret (Mustela putorius furo)  
European mink (Mustela lutreola)  
European pine marten (Martes martes)  
Wild cat (Felis silvestris)

Seals - all species

Fallow deer (Dama dama)  
Red deer (Cervus elaphus)  
Roe deer (Capreolus capreolus)  
Deer - any other species  
Wild goat (Capra aegragus)  
Primitive sheep eg Soay  
Primitive cattle (Bos taurus)  
- Scottish Highland cattle  
- English Park cattle

Horse (Equus caballus)  
Pony - New Forest; Dartmoor

Primitive domestic pig

Hamster (Cricetus cricetus)  
Golden hamster (Mesocricetus auratus)

Amphibians and Reptiles

All types except Common Viper

Birds

We require all species except the following:

Mute swan  
Blackbird  
Grey heron  
Domestic duck  
Rook  
Mistle thrush  
Domestic chicken (but we do require old breeds  
of domestic fowl)  
Swallow  
Starling

If you have any of these species which are  
surplus to your requirements please contact:

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#### NEW ADDRESS

The North of England Museums Service has moved  
to: House of Recovery, Bath Lane, Newcastle  
upon Tyne, NE4 5SQ; telephone: (091) 2221661.  
The name of the new building seems suitably  
uplifting!

## In the Press

In its NEWSLETTER for July 1988 (no 52) the  
BRITISH ARACHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S Secretary,  
Michael J Roberts, gives a list of current and  
new projects. Among these is the formation of  
a reference collection for loan to members as  
an aid to identification. A good idea and  
worth noting by the local CRU (presumably the  
Sheffield area) and Museum.

In September, the BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF  
THE BRITISH ISLES issued its updated list of  
Vice-county Recorders. Notice was also given  
of a meeting at Exeter University on 6th to  
9th April 1989 on 'Species-mapping and the  
Biology of Plant Distribution' which will also  
be of interest to many BCG members.

The BSBI NEWS issues 48 and 49 (April and  
September 1988) have articles on collecting  
policy by three museum botanists. John Cannon  
at the BM(NH) outlines his Department's very  
specialised interests in British herbaria,  
saying in no uncertain terms that he thinks it  
'highly appropriate that good local  
collections should find their final resting  
places in relevant local museums, where they  
should be both used and valued as essential  
archival records of the local environment'.  
He also argues that the days of the individual  
general herbarium are past, but accepts the  
need for more specialised collecting towards  
specific ends. Eric Greenwood (Liverpool) and  
Mike Taylor (Perth) follow up with well argued  
support for the maintenance and use of local  
herbaria and Mike outlines the collecting  
policy in operation at Perth.

BSBI NEWS 48 also has five short pieces on the  
'use of computers for building distributional  
databases and plotting distribution maps  
(three for IBM-compatible machines and one for  
Amstrad PCWs) and a plea for consistency in  
the choice of computer systems to be used for  
county floras. A BSBI Computer Users group  
may be formed to offer recommendations to  
members about to embark on such schemes.

MUSEUMS JOURNAL vol 88 no 1 (June 1988) has  
a brief description by Stephen Locke of the  
Moscow State University Museum of Zoology,  
Moscow: an interesting account of an 'old  
style' museum with systematic displays and  
enthusiastic visitors reflecting "... in both  
its exposition and the response of its  
visitors, the early spirit of our own  
museums. I feel we have lost something".

CURATOR vol 30 no 4 (December 1987) is an  
invaluable reference resource: it is an index  
of the first 30 volumes of CURATOR by author,  
title and subject.

CURATOR vol 31 no 1 (March 1988) has a paper  
by Marie A Lawrence on a method of conserving  
mammalian type specimens which are in poor  
repair by constructing what she terms  
'archival containers' in which to store them.  
The specimens in question were bats from the

Wied-Neuwied collection purchased by the American Museum of Natural History in 1869, two of which were extensively damaged. The author gives full details of the construction of the sealed, transparent and biochemically inert boxes in which the specimens were secured and the wrappers which enclosed the boxes for protection and to keep out the light. Names and addresses of suppliers of materials are included.

Two publications which I have not seen but which will be relevant to most readers: MUSEUM COLLECTIONS: THEIR ROLES AND FUTURE IN BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH edited by E H Miller in the series of occasional papers of the British Columbia Provincial Museum (no 25); MAMMAL COLLECTION MANAGEMENT edited by H Genoways, C Jones and O L Rossolimo for Texas Tech University Press. If any BCG member has access to either of these publications perhaps he or she could submit a brief review for a future Newsletter.

The CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INTERPRETATION at Manchester Poly has recently produced a leaflet on its very impressive list of courses offered in 1988 and 1989. Most are relevant to museum-based biologists and include: Working with the News Media; Interpretation and Education on Nature Reserves; Video in Interpretation; Design and Graphics for Interpretation; Communications for the Countryside, plus many more. The leaflet is available from CEI, Manchester Polytechnic, Bellhouse Building, Lower Ormond Street, Manchester M15 6BX.

I recently came across the published preprints for the UKIC 30th anniversary conference: CONSERVATION TODAY (10th to 14th October 1988) which contains an excellent review article by Robert C Child (Senior Conservation Officer at the Welsh Folk Museum) called FUMIGATION: A NEW DIRECTION? As well as reviewing the use of currently available fumigants it gives an independent assessment of the new RENTOKIL fumigation bubble which many readers will by now have heard about or used. Particular emphasis is placed on the use of CO<sub>2</sub> as a fumigant in the bubble and this should interest all of us who have to arrange regular fumigations with, say, methyl bromide but do so in the knowledge that we may be further damaging those items we wish to preserve. The preprints are available from UKIC, 37 Upper Addison Gardens, Holland Park, London W14 8AJ.

The NATURAL HISTORY BOOK SERVICE of Totnes is now the agency for a series of natural history videos from the National Geographical Society and World of Survival. They have over 50 titles at £11.99 each. The BBC is also marketing a new range of BIO VIDEOS ostensibly for use by teachers but looking most appropriate for gallery or schoolroom use in museums. The subjects are: Locomotion and Photosynthesis (no 1); Sexual Reproduction in Animals and Animal Senses (no 2); The Evidence for Evolution and Invertebrates (no 3). Each comes with user's guide, script, word list and worksheets. They cost £49.00 plus p&p each.

The SCOTTISH SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION continues to disperse a broad spectrum of information through its BULLETIN and NEWSLETTER. BULLETIN no 10 (1988) is given over to geological collections - their conservation, curation and interpretation, with obvious emphasis on the Scottish scene. It's time we organised a similar thrust on behalf of biological collections! Any offers to organise one?

The CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER no 104 (March 1988) has a short note by Nora McMillan on that scourge of old shell collections and MA Diploma practical examinees: Byne's disease. She covers its recognition and, in some detail, gives the remedy which has kept in good condition some shells she treated in 1955.

STUDIES IN CONSERVATION vol 33 no 2 (May 1988) has a paper by Patricia Cox Crews on the effectiveness of clear versus yellow ultra violet filters in reducing fading of selected dyes. The results show that clear filters offered no protection against fading for some natural dyes. Yellow or amber filters proved much more effective, but of course these can be objectionable in a display setting because they distort the colour of the objects being viewed. The answer seems to be to keep illumination levels down to 50 lux. The clear UV filters were still effective in reducing deterioration caused by UV radiation, so they still have some value, but they did not protect fully from fading.

The JOURNAL OF BIOLOGICAL EDUCATION almost always has articles and papers of interest to museum biologists. The Autumn 1988 (vol 22 no 3) issue has an analysis of the biology content of GCSE science syllabuses by Sheila Martin and Sheila Turner. The science syllabuses for five examining groups were combed for biological subjects with particular reference to the four themes outlined in the National Criteria for Biology: diversity of organisms; relationship between organisms and their environment; organisation and maintenance of the individual; development of organisms and the continuity of life. The analysis is of value to all of us trying to make our service provisions more relevant to GCSE requirements.

In the same issue there is a fascinating study by Bryan Turner on using domestic pests for ecological studies in schools. Pests in a domestic environment represent an easily available alternative to the more complex systems usually studied: ponds, streams, woodlands, fields are examples. Dr Turner uses the booklouse *Liposcelis bostrychophilus* as the chief example, but most of the pests we take in regularly as enquiries are also featured. We could find ourselves advising on their ecology rather than extermination soon!

A new, revised edition of THE PREPARATION AND CURATION OF INSECTS by Annette K Walker and Trevor K Crosby has just been published by the Entomology Division of the Department of