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SERVING YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Bernard Walker, Curator of Natural History and Geology, Scunthorpe

Early this year the Scunthorpe Borough Museum and Art Gallery opened its new extension to the public. This consists of a small Geology Gallery and Curator's Office for Natural History and Geology on the ground floor, and on the floor above a picture store, a de-humidified archaeology store and the Museum Curator's office. The extension sounds quite small in scope but the visual effect created within the building is unique and offers exciting possibilities for the public and for display. The extension now encloses within the gallery a fine example of an Ironstone Workers cottage, the living room of a Victorian Vicarage, and gives an excellent panoramic view out to the Vicarage Gardens and the first view ever into the Museum for the passing public, from a busy road.

In effect the extension has been wrapped around the southern end of a modern Art Gallery at first floor level to enclose the re-erected cottage and part of St. Lawrence's Vicarage, thus creating a most unusual collection of highly fossiliferous ironstone facies within a new Geology Gallery as well as a very pleasing Ironstone and matching brick exterior, blending beautifully with the existing architecture. The measure of the architect's success was very evident when the builder's screens were finally removed and one regular passer-by was heard to say "Fancy putting all those boards up just to put a new window in!" She had not even noticed the extension!

For the official opening of these revitalised galleries it seemed appropriate to the occasion to produce for the visiting public and Schools using the Museum's facilities, as well as the Councillors, a brochure saying very clearly what the functions of this modern Museum Department are in 1975, covering Museum Work, Education, Conservation and Leisure in the Countryside. The Department does not employ any special technicians or display staff but relies upon part time and voluntary workers to help with its projects. This paper is therefore presented as a contribution to the first Newsletter of the Biological Curators Group in the hope that similar papers will follow from other museums showing how they are adapting to the needs of the local community and therefore making the best use of their special skills and the unique possibilities and facilities available to them.

Request for Information

The Scunthorpe Museum collections are certainly enriched by the fine specimens donated by Adeline L. Sich. The collection includes over 500 fossils and minerals. It is part of a much larger collection which includes many seashells. The fossils are chiefly Jurassic (Cotswold and Yorkshire) and Cretaceous. Some minerals and polished specimens were donated by the collector in February 1940.

Bernard Walker at the Borough Museum and Art Gallery, Oswald Road, Scunthorpe, South Humberside would be glad to receive information concerning the whereabouts of other material or data relating to this collector.

Wanted

Mrs Anne Frankish at Scunthorpe Museum (address above) would like to hear from anyone who has copies of Parts 1 and V11 of the Drawings of British Plants by Stella Ross-Craig published by G. Bell and Sons for disposal.