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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Following the first General Meeting in London, December 1975, the Group has had one other meeting for members during the year, that being at Cardiff when the subject of Collecting Policies was aired and discussed.

The committee has been active in having two meetings, one in February, at which the Cardiff meeting was arranged and the Newsletter content and frequency for the coming year was established. The other was at Leicester in the beginning of November when the details of the A.G.M. were finalised and proposals for the A.G.M. were worked out for approval at the meeting. Two members have also attended meetings with representatives from the Systematics Association which resulted in a programme being prepared for the 1977 Symposium on The Function of Local Collections. These were Eric Greenwood and the Chairman.

A supposed privilege of a Chairman is to dwell upon thoughts for the future. As we have not yet considered or approved a constitution these thoughts are not at the moment formal proposals for action, but may subsequently be put forward as such:

My first and foremost thought since working in provincial museums has been that we have a basic duty to 'science' which has been consistently unfulfilled for many years. This is the curation and even recognition of type material. Having also recently embarked upon 'IRGMARisation' of my own collections and aired the matter with Andrew Roberts, it has become, to me anyway, obviously possible to have a national catalogue of types in provincial museums. Everything that this implies is a practical possibility now, from computer time down to individual curators researching their collections. I would like to see this become a viable project, distinct from collection and archival national indices.

With reference to collections, it has been said that our Newsletter is falling between two stools. One of these is that there is already adequate provision for notes on collections elsewhere or that collections are adequately known (questionable) and so our format need not be as the G.C.G. Newsletter, and the other is that there are not enough topical notes on recent developments in techniques, etc. Obviously the plea goes out to the membership. Do you want one or the other, neither or both? Whatever is decided the Editor ultimately relies on you sending in notes or continuing the series of 'Notes on Collections' which I started.

There is also great scope for collection-based research in provincial museums, many aspects of which will be scrutinised at the September 1977 meeting. However, in the meantime, most curators should be able to devote some time to their own little research topic and grants are available in these hard times to help in travel, equipment, books, etc. I myself have obtained one to work in the BM(NH) for a week from the

Professor Hering Memorial Research Fund which is awarded for certain aspects of entomological work. A Local Authority is only too quick to allow time off if it does not involve any expenditure. The essence of research work, though, is the publication of results, and it is useless to attempt the former unless the latter is achieved.

I have long been of the opinion that the technical staff of museums have been without an opportunity to either hear about the many aspects of their work or actually be able to demonstrate their skills and they must not be forgotten when 'curators' groups meet. The topic of 'Living Collections in Museums' covers a wide range of activities which require a technical skill and knowledge. This is one of the reasons for selecting such a topic for the Bolton meeting.

EGH.

New Members to December 1st 1976

Ms H. C. G. Ross	Ulster Museum, Belfast
Mr Sverre Bakkevig	Arkeologisk Museum, Stavanger
Dr P. F. Lingwood	Merseyside County Museums, Liverpool
Mr C. N. G. Scotter	Leicestershire Museums
Dr P. Wheatcroft	Coventry Museum
Mr D. Whiteley	Sheffield Museum
Mr C. J. T. Copp	Bristol Museum
Mr M. D. Murphy	Merseyside County Museums