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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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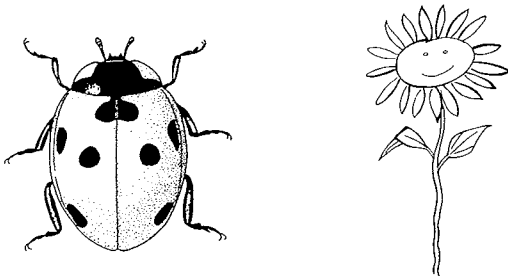
BEETLE-DOWN CAMPAIGN

The Campaign is going well. Many museums organised events last autumn, and requests are being received for another co-ordinated week in 1990.

Urgent. The official BCG file is now being circulated widely. Derek Whiteley requires more photos, handbills, posters, press cuttings and slides of Beetle-Down events. Do it now please! An illustrated progress report will be given at the Manx AGM.

Additional leaflets are available. Please send £4 in postage stamps, to save BCG mney. The leaflets are free.

T-shirts are still available in adult M size at £3.50. If there is a known demand we will consider reprinting sweat-shirts (cost about £7) and T-shirts in children's sizes for resale.



SUNFLOWER CAMPAIGN: GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

The National launch went very well, and the timing was perfect - a few days before the prestigious Museums Association Centenary Conference in York in September.

- * THE TIMES ran a good length article by Simon Tait
- * The new MUSEUMS JOURNAL ran a news feature 'Biologists Bite Back' in the September (Conference) issue
- * Jean Rooke interviewed Derek Whiteley on Radio 2
- * A BCG flying squad presented both our campaigns to the MA Conference in York
- * Delegates at York were heavily lobbied and leafleted
- * A leaflet has been formally sent to the Rt Hon Richard Luce MP, Minister for the Arts

Perhaps one of the most encouraging signs of recognition was the mention of our campaign in the Museums Association Centenary Presidential Address by Patrick Boylan.

The Campaign is going well too! The sunflower leaflet is proving to be a lifeline for some museums. Leaflets are much in demand, natural history societies are asking for batches, many directors and councillors have been lobbied; and the feedback so far is good.

We must keep the pressure on! The next few months are crucial.

Have you sent a leaflet to the Chair of your governing committee, using the BCG cover note?

HOW TO OBTAIN COPIES OF THE SUNFLOWER CAMPAIGN LEAFLET

- 1 Call at Sheffield Museum. The leaflets are FREE. 5000 have been printed.
- 2 Send a suitable SAE for an appropriate weight to: BCG Secretary. Derek Whiteley, City Museum, Sheffield S10 2TP.
- 3 Photocopy the leaflet as many times as you wish.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

- * Contact your local press/media. Tell them about the campaign, Sunflower Day, and your own problems (BCG will contact the National Press)
- * Ask your local society/individual naturalists/users of museum collections/national societies to write to MGC supporting the campaign, and expressing concern over the future and well-being of collections
- * Presuming that some money and/or staff will be forthcoming, prepare a list of small-scale and large-scale requirements

Derek Whiteley
BCG Secretary
Sheffield City Museum

CALL FOR PAPERS

THE USE, CURATION AND GROWTH OF INSECT COLLECTIONS IN PROVINCIAL MUSEUMS

Sheffield City Museum, 16 October 1990
BCG/Royal Entomological Society of London joint meeting

Speakers are invited to give short talks or papers on relevant subjects. Museum curators and users of collections are equally welcome. Ethics, collecting policies and 'disposal' of collections will also be covered.

USES OF BIOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS

One of the sessions at the forthcoming Isle of Man AGM on 4-5 May 1990 will cover the vital issues involving all uses of biological collections - a topic which needs a good airing and full discussion, if the Group is to justify its campaign for additional resources.

A special invitation goes out to members and friends in Ulster and the Republic of Ireland, who we hope will meet us half-way. The Committee would particularly welcome speakers, visitors and news from both areas.

Please contact BCG Secretary with offers and suggestions for both of these meetings:

Derek Whiteley
Sheffield Museum, S10 2TP

NEW TREASURER

Adam Wright has resigned as BCG Treasurer in mid-term owing to pressure of work at Coventry Museum. On behalf of BCG, Committee moved a vote of thanks to Adam for his hard work over many years. We are pleased that he wishes to remain on Committee.

Kathie Way (address on the back page) is Acting Treasurer and all subscriptions and payments should now be forwarded to her.

BCG WATCHDOG



BIOLOGY POSTS LOST AND CREATED

These are the losses and gains which have come to the attention of the Committee during the past two years.

Posts lost

Gilbert White Museum - curator post lost
Tyne and Wear - two posts deleted (see below)
Liverpool - one trainee post lost (in Vertebrate Zoology) (see below)
Middlesbrough - one post apparently not re-appointed
BM(NH) - Bat specialist lost (ex-Bat News)
Sheffield - two Ecology Unit posts threatened, then rerieved
Passmore Edwards Museum - Principal Assistant Curator (Natural Sciences) frozen
Passmore Edwards Museum - Biology Technician post frozen

Posts created

Leicestershire - Assistant Keeper (Botany) unfrozen after eight years
- Assistant County Ecologist
- Ecological Assistant
Chester - Natural History Assistant (re-appointed after delay)
Ipswich - Assistant Curator (Biological Records)
Liverpool - two 'Curator G' posts
Kirkleatham - one natural history post
North Devon - Assistant Curator
Horniman - Museum Assistant (Natural History) unfrozen
RMS - New taxidermy post
Tyne and Wear - Museums Officer (Natural Sciences) re-established
Buckinghamshire - Environmental Records Assistant
Dorchester - Biologist has replaced geologist

Compiled by Derek Whiteley from Committee minutes.

BEWARE!

A Dr Nicholls has been contacting some museums in the UK offering to buy herbarium sheets from the collections, particularly items or collections of British origin dated before 1920.

Members should be aware that BCG fully endorses the Museums Association code of conduct for the disposal of museum artefacts, and would not normally condone the sale of public material to private collectors. Should the situation arise, BCG will intervene on behalf of any member, collection or museum if pressure is applied from any source for disposal to private collectors.

John Mathias (on behalf of the Committee)

NEW SOURCE FOR SKELETAL PREPS AND MUSEUM MOUNTS

Griffin and George are closing down their Biological Production Unit at East Preston in Sussex and will cease to supply real animal (as opposed to plastic) skeletal preps and museum mounts. J R Dunlop, the production manager at Griffin and George who specialises in these items, intends to carry on with that part of the business himself. He has been involved in this field for 25 years and will be producing top quality specimens.

All enquiries should be addressed to:
J R Dunlop, 12 Tideway, Littlehampton,
West Sussex, BN17 6QT. Tel 0903 724983.