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## The Biology Curator

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Title: Collections Monitoring Cell

Author(s): Palmer, M.

Source: Palmer, M. (1999). Collections Monitoring Cell. *The Biology Curator*, Issue 14, 2.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/428>

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## Paris, GCG Study Visit

October 1999

Contact: Steve McLean, The Hancock Museum, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4PT Tel. 0191 222 6765 e-mail. s.g.mclean@ncl.ac.uk

## Leiden, BCG Study Trip

November 1999

Contact: Kathie Way, Mollusca Section, NHM, Cromwell Road, London, SW7 5BD

Tel. 0171 938 8892 Fax. 0171 938 8754 e-mail kmw@nhm.ac.uk

## Why Museums Matter : Avian Archives in an Age of Extinction and Workshop on Increased Co-operation between Museums

12-14 November and 14-15 November 1999

Joint BOU/BOC/NHM/Birdline Conference at Green Park, Aston Clinton near Tring and the Natural History Museum, Tring. (See note inside)

Conference Contact : BOU Office, c/o The Natural History Museum, Akeman St., Tring, Herts, HP23 6AP. tele. 01442 890080 e-mail : bou@bou.org.uk

Workshop Contact : Robert Prys-Jones, same address as above, tele : 01442 824181 e-mail : rpp@nhm.ac.uk

## GCG AGM and Seminar

3-5 December 1999

Trinity College, Dublin

Contact: Patrick Wyse Jackson, Dept. of Geology, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland

Tel +353 1 608 1477 Fax. +353 1 671 1199 e-mail wysjcknp@tcd.ie

February 2000

?Botany meeting, details to be announced

AGM and meeting, details to be announced

April 2000

?Scarborough

?October 2000

St Petersburg, BCG Study Trip, details to be announced

## Collections Monitoring Cell

Having left Liverpool Museum last year the current point of contact for Collections at Risk is as follows:-

**e-mail: [HYPERLINK mailto:mpl Laurel@aol.com](mailto:HYPERLINKmailto:mpl Laurel@aol.com)**

**Post: Mike Palmer, 16 Laurel Way, Totteridge, London N20 8HP**

The telephone number given in the last issue of The Biology Curator is also current but I would suggest that this is only used for urgent cases as it is a home number. It is also worth considering that if notification of a new collection at risk is so urgent as to require a phone call then there may be little we can do in such a limited time span. To put it

another way – PLEASE LET US KNOW AS SOON AS YOU THINK A COLLECTION MAY BE AT RISK, RATHER THAN WHEN IT IS ACTUALLY AT RISK. If the threat blows over, then there is nothing lost but if the threat becomes a reality then we will be far better prepared to deal with it.

If, for any reason, you have trouble contacting me please remember the Secretary or Chair contacts (as given on the back page of this newsletter) can be used as a second option, but do try me first.

In the past responsibility for monitoring collections at risk has generally fallen on my shoulders. As the number of cases have built up this has proved to be unsatisfactory with many cases not receiving the full attention they require. While delegation amongst Cell members has taken place we are now looking to make more full use of the Group's membership so that any (consenting) member with relevant experience of the particular problem in hand may be called on to assist. If all this sounds as if we are increasing the number of people involved in collections at risk then that's because we are – making full use of the Group's knowledge and experience for the future well being of natural history collections.

My role in all of this is to:

Receive notification of collections at risk.

Delegate monitoring responsibility.

Collect case reports and compile them for Committee.

Advise the Chair of any action to be taken.

Highlight wider issues arising from individual cases for discussion at Committee with a view to further action as required.

## The Wider Picture

Individual cases of Collections at Risk often point out wider issues likely to affect other natural history collections around the UK e.g. local authority reorganisation, best value, trust status, misconceptions regarding the use of mounted mammals and birds, etc. It is important that the Group picks up on these as early as possible in order to develop strategies which may pre-empt future collections becoming at risk. In order for this to happen effectively it is vital that the Cell is kept informed of all developments affecting individual natural history collections. So in addition to early warnings of threats I would also like to hear how situations have been resolved (for better or worse). All communications are kept on file so that any experience gained from one case can be drawn upon to assist in future cases.

## News, Views and Suggestions.

In addition to news of collections at risk I would also like to hear of any ideas or suggestions you may have for improving the work of the Collections Monitoring Cell. Are the Action Packs useful? Should we add anything to them? Should we be developing any further campaigns to help ensure the future well being of natural history collections? All suggestion etc. welcome.

Mike Palmer (Collections Monitoring Officer)