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9. The date and venue of the 1998 AGM had yet to be decided.

BCG Documentation Cell

Report to AGM, 16 April 1997

And now to one of the more interesting aspects of being a biology curator: documentation. The aim of the Documentation Cell is to produce guidelines and assistance to BCG members, and others, especially those without a background in natural sciences, on the effective documentation of natural science collections.

The Cell has been looking at the essential core information that is needed to record natural science objects, in addition to the minimum required for MGC Registration. The results of our deliberations will be printed in The Biology Curator, with an invitation for comments. There is the possibility that MDA may then take them up as a factsheet. This is the first stage in developing wider guidelines on the documentation of natural science collections for MGC Registration.

The Cell has also ensured that the needs of natural science collections are included in the development of national standards for documentation. Both Jane Pickering and I have been part of MDA's SPECTRUM Natural Sciences Guidelines Working Group. Its work is tied up with a second edition of SPECTRUM and subject-specific applications.

As there is growing concern at present about collections at risk, the need to know what is in our museums is greater than ever, to ensure that they do not disappear. The Documentation Cell will continue to work on producing resources to make it easier to cope with the essential, but dangerously neglected, recording of natural science collections.

You can help by joining the Documentation Cell; it won't involve more than a few phone calls. All offers of help will be gratefully received.

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