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## **NSCG Newsletter**

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## View from the Chair.

Dear members,

This the last "View" I shall be writing as chair of the NSCG. My term of office comes to an end at the next AGM. You may be interested to know that I am the only chairperson to have actually served the full term of office of three years.

Other occupants of this exalted position have had exciting things happen to them such as new jobs, promotion, leaving the country or having babies, which has meant they have had to resign before their term of office came to an end. However, an exciting professional and personal life is not for me, and I have been able to devote three years of my time to the NSCG, whether you have wanted me to or not.

During my three years I am happy to say that our membership has grown, and the group has gained certainly a national, if not an international, following. We are not a big group when compared with other curatorial and conservation organisations, but we are certainly a well known and active group. I became vice-chair of the National Council of Conservator-Restorers, NCC-R, late last year and it will soon be the NSCG's turn to take over the chair of this organisation. The NCC-R being the umbrella organisation for all the conservation groups in Britain, means it is in an enormously influential position, and to have a member of the NSCG as vice-chair and chair will enhance our reputation and ensure that issues affecting natural sciences conservation are heard.

On a less than happy note I have to report the closure of the North West Area Museum Service, with the loss of natural science conservation posts. We are seeing a change in how conservation is viewed by government and senior managers in the museum world, (see the article Death by a Thousand Cuts in this issue). Conservators have been happy to remain in the background diligently going about their business, whilst others grab the headlines and publicity. This has led to a worrying trend in job losses in conservation and "outsourcing". Conservators must be more pro-active in publicising themselves and the profession to our employers and the public. If people are ignorant of what we do and the importance of what we do,

we cannot be so surprised if we are not valued. Stand up and tell your local council, members of the public and the local media about conservation. Waste no opportunity to publicise yourself and the profession!

The group has run two seminars this year. A *Best Value* seminar in Stoke, and a *Pyrite Decay* seminar at the Natural History Museum, London. I would like to see such informal seminars become a regular part of our diary. Both were well received by those who attended, and there was much positive feedback. We hope to run another on the conservation of spirit collections in late October/ November. But this will be the decision of the next chair.

I will end with a call to all you clever and dynamic people out there to give a lot of thought to serving on the committee. We are losing Adrian Doyle and Vicky Purewal from the committee this year. My thanks to them for their help and support over the years. These people need to be replaced, and we also need a secretary.

I am anxious that the committee not become just the same faces every year. If you are interested in serving on the committee let one of us know before the AGM.

And talking of the AGM I hope to see you all in Oxford for our two day joint conference where you can tell me what a splendid chair I've been and buy me a drink. Please make every effort to attend, I definitely need the drink!

See you in Oxford.

*Bob Entwistle.*