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Natural Sciences Collections Association

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NSCG Newsletter

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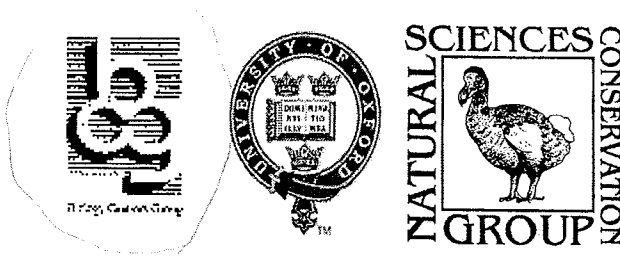
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Annual General Meeting: Minutes

Venue: Oxford University Museum of Natural History.



12.45 pm, Thursday April 19th, 2001

1. Introduction and consideration of agenda

The agenda was then approved by all present. A topic listed for AOB consisted of Possibility of closer links with BCG and or GCG.

2. Apologies for absence.

Apologies of absence were received from William Lindsay and Maggie Reilly

3. Minutes of AGM on April 4th, 2000.

The minutes of last year's annual general meeting were presented. Darren Mann proposed and Amanda Sutherland seconded that they be accepted and signed. The minutes were duly signed by Bob Entwistle as being correct.

4. Matters arising from minutes.

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairs report.

Welcome to our 8th independent AGM, which will be my last as chairman. The only chairman I may add who has managed to last the full three-year term of office, which may indicate what a sad life I lead. We are also losing Adrian Doyle and Vicky Purewal. Next year we need a new editor as Darren stands down after his three year term of office. Can I appeal to the

membership to serve the group by becoming a committee member in whatever capacity. We all have an ever-increasing work-load but I personally look forward to my trips to Birmingham and London and other venues of our committee meetings. Over the last three years I have seen the membership grow which is partly due to a successful leafletting campaign.

We have started a programme of one-day seminars (two per year) on subjects with direct relevance to the membership. The first on Best Value may not have a direct relationship to Natural Science Conservation and was not as well attended as I would have expected, but is all too relevant to many of our members' recent work experiences. The second, organised by Adrian Doyle on Pyrite Decay, had a better attendance. It is hoped to keep these seminars informal and for them to be a combination of talks and practical sessions. Our next seminar will be on Fluid Preservation 'Do we really understand it' organised by Simon Moore which will occur in October-November. I want NSCG to do more than just have a conference once a year and publish The Newsletter.

On a more serious note, this year we have seen the closure of the North-West Museums Service with the loss of Conservator posts. According to the powers that be, the Service is to take a more 'strategic' approach whatever that may mean. In practice it means a lot of Conservators, including Natural Science Conservators, have lost the jobs and very little has been gained in return. These redundancies have not been the first as, over the last ten years, we have seen the loss of many conservation posts and a great erosion of the natural sciences skill base. Some of you may remember the closure of the South-East Museums Service natural Science Conservation Unit, 6-7 years ago. However the worrying thing is that not only have these people lost their jobs, but they have not been replaced and the posts have been deleted. Chris Collins ran a conservation course at Cambridge University until he recently emigrated to the USA. The course is not being continued and the labs have been closed pending a change of use. In 1993, seven natural sciences conservators travelled to Canada and the USA to study new development in the profession there and to bring their knowledge back to the UK. At a recent committee meeting, we realised that only two out of the seven award winners are currently employed in conservation.

A recent meeting of the UKIC Archaeology Section addressed the problems of job losses in conservation as a whole. The write up of the meeting is in the current issue of your Newsletter, and the general opinion of the speakers, was that conservation needs to publicise itself more. We need to get out among the public and tell them what it is we actually do. Archaeologists have done this with Time Team, but when did you last see a conservator on TV?

I was asked to become vice-chair of the National Council for Conservation and Restoration late last year, and I have put these issues before them at recent meetings. They are aware of the need to publicise the profession more, but it is also up to you as individuals to do your bit as well. If you are doing anything that might be interesting, then contact your local newspaper and try and get a slot on local radio or TV. The people who run these are usually crying out for stories. Let your employers and local councillors know what you are doing and make your name known. Unfortunately these days we must all play the political game even if we find it distasteful.

The NSCG will be asked, in the next two years, to take over the chair of the NCCR. The NCCR for all its faults, has become the national Voice of conservation in the UK. It is composed of representatives of virtually all conservation groups in the UK and Ireland and has become more influential since the demise of the Museums & Galleries Commission. It is pleasing to note that a small group like the NSCG is playing an active part in the conservation world at the highest levels, and that natural sciences issues are being heard at the highest level.

I would like to close by thanking everyone on the committee who I have worked with over the last three years as chair and before that as Secretary for all their support and hard work.

6. Secretary's Report.

There has been four committee meetings through the year with attendance of members as illustrated below in the attendance log. Lack of attendance is no reflection of lack of work done for NSCG! :-

	Voted	8.vi.00	19.x.00	24.ii.01	24.iv.01
Kate Andrew (Treasurer)	1999	-		-	-
Paul Brown (Secretary)	2000	-	-	-	-
Sue Cooke	2000	-			
Adrian Doyle	1999		-	-	-
Rob Entwistle (Chair)	1998	-	-	-	-
Simon Moore	2000	-	-	-	-
Sue Lewis	2000	-		-	-
Vicky Purewal	1999		-	-	
Maggie Reilly (Members.)	1999		-	-	
Darren Mann (Editor)	1999		-		
Gabriela MacKinnon	Ex.off.			-	-
Amanda Sutherland	2000	-			

7. Membership Secretary Report.

The year February 2000 to January 2001 closed with a total of 127 members. Our 127 members fall into the following categories:

96 UK personal members of which 6 are students

11 Overseas personal members

13 UK Institutional members

7 Overseas Institutional members

Compared with the 1999 where the Group had 103 members, there is a significant increase of 24 members in 2000. The bulk of the increase is in the UK personal members category. The NSCG leaflet was widely distributed last year so perhaps this increase reflects better advertising. We still have difficulty in recruiting and keeping overseas personal members and we believe that this is in the most part attributable to the problems in payment of subs. We cannot afford to underwrite the costs of foreign currency transactions so we ask to be paid in GBP. This has substantial costs for the subscriber. This situation remains without an obvious solution. We looked into paying subs using Visa but our turnover is too small for this to be viable.

8. Treasurer's report.

Kate Andrew presented the accounts. William Lindsay had studied and signed the accounts & Velson Horie had not yet seen them due to postal problems. We are not legally required to audit our accounts but it is good practice to do so. The accounts were read out.

**Natural Sciences Conservation Group -
Accounts for the year 1.2.00 to 31.1.01**

Current Account - Midland Bank 1442341

Balance 31.1.99 £ 4869.17

Income

86 UK personal memberships @ £10.00	£860.00
7 UK student memberships @ £8.00	£56.00
8 Overseas personal @ £12.00	£96.00
(one overseas membership in advance)	£12.00
24 institutional membership @ £25.00	£600.00
Overpaid overseas sub	£3.00
Bank interest	£70.72
Sale of back issues of newsletter	£12.00
Overpaid bill	£16.00

Meeting income

Debtor from previous year's trade fair	£70.00
9 Best value attendances	£175.00

Sub Total	£1970.72
Total income	£6839.89

Expenditure

Newsletter production	£39.69
Leaflet distribution & inserts into Grapevine	£204.69
NCCR (formerly Conservation Forum) subscription	£100.00
Committee expenses	£209.00
Conference expenses	£476.43
Sub total	£1029.81

Balance at 31.01.00 £5810.08

Debtors

2 best value meeting places	£35.00
Petty cash funds transferred into bank account	£14.01

Creditors

Tea and coffee at Best Value meeting	£60.00
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Petty cash funds

Income

Balance 31.1.99	£16.01
Best Value meeting 2 places paid in cash	£40.00

Expenditure

Conference expenses	£42.00
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Balance at 31.01.01 £14.01

This will be paid into the main account as there is little call for petty cash.

1 February 2001, K.J. Andrew, Treasurer

Sent to W.Lindsay & V. Horie

9. Proposal to accept the accounts

Darren Mann proposed to accept the accounts seconded by Jo Hatton.

10 Editor's Report

The late January Issue is in the post, those members here can pick up their copy at the registration desk.

In the last twelve months three issues consisting of 96 pages have been published. I would like to thank all those who have contributed and reiterate the call for more input from the membership. I ask for the membership to contribute to the last chapters, 9: Physical Forces and 10: Custodial Neglect

Due to work commitments I have been unable to complete the much needed website, any member who feels that would like to get involved in groups website development, please come forward.

As I step down at the next AGM, we shall be in need of a new Editor. Any members that feel they would like to fulfil their birthright as an editor, please make yourselves known to a member of the committee.

11. Election to the Committee

Five posts have become vacant and five our names put forward prior to the AGM.

Nominations for Chair (vacated by Bob Entwistle):-

1. Paul A Brown

Proposed by :- Darren Mann

Seconded by:- Julian Carter

Nomination for Secretary (vacated by Paul Brown):-

1. Amanda Sutherland

Proposed by :- Paul Brown

Seconded by:- Adrian Doyle

Nomination for ordinary members:-

1. Louise Cant

Proposed by :- Gabriela MacKinnon

Seconded by:- Paul A. Brown

2. Rob Entwistle

Proposed by :- Kate Andrew

Seconded by:- Adrian Doyle

3. Maggie Reilly

Proposed by :- Kate Andrew

Seconded by:- Paul A Brown

As no election was required the Secretary proposed and Jo Hatton seconded that the names put forward be accepted en block for election to the committee. The candidates were duly elected nem. con.

12. Election of Auditors

Kate Andrew nominated Velson Horie and William Lindsey to continue as auditors. This was agreed by the membership nem.con.

13. AOB.

Paul Brown brought to the attention of the membership that at the BCG AGM a proposal had been made to look into the possibility of closer associations or merger with BCG and GCG. The out come of the BCG AGM was to at least create a working group containing members from each group to discuss the possibility.

He described that there are two sorts of members: Professional conservator-restorers and the Hybrid conservators / curators / collections managers / researchers. This could generate potential problems with membership of NCCR. Paul Brown asked the floor ‘do we want to be part of a SPNHC type organization and would this give us a bigger voice?’ He drew a diagram to illustrate that NSCG has professional relationships with NCCR and UKIC and that GCG has relationship with the Geological Society, but that BCG has no other organization to have a relationship with. It was a concern that as the NSCG already has a national voice through NCCR we should think carefully about a merger as this could affect our status with NCCR. Amanda Sutherland pointed out this is especially a consideration as NSCG are to provide the next chair of NCCR. Simon Moore is about to become chair of the Professional Standards Board of NCCR and has agreed to find out if our status would be affected. Bob Entwistle suggested that we should first find out if the members want to merge. The NSCG membership be canvassed for working group members and/or ideas (perhaps via the newsletter or a separate mailing). It was then pointed out that only a discussion group has been suggested so far. Paul Brown suggested that we form a discussion group with BCG and find out if our status would be effected with NCCR. Steve Thompson, secretary of BCG, offered to set up a working party committee to discuss this issue. He called for volunteers from each group to form this committee and suggests a first meeting in June or July. Adrian Doyle asked what the current situation is

with UKIC. Bob Entwistle replied by saying they had approached us again recently to have closer ties. Amanda Sutherland said that UKIC members need to be accredited conservators. Kate Andrew said that there are only eight within NSCG. NSCG has no accreditation, so those which need to be accredited have gone via UKIC and that this need not be a problem in having closer ties with BCG.

Donna Young suggested that not only committee members are on the committee to discuss the future association with BCG and GCG. Bob Entwistle suggested we send something out with a newsletter to members asking if they want to be on the committee to discuss this. Donna Hughes and Simon Moore said they did. Amanda Sutherland proposed that we vote to seek volunteers for this committee by July and to give ourselves a one-year deadline so as not to call an extraordinary AGM. Steve Thompson said that there seemed to be a lot of enthusiasm to the idea and a working party wouldn't commit anyone to anything so was it necessary to take so long. Sue Cooke from the floor said that the GCG AGM was in December so we could contact them then about this. Members of GCG committee have shown less interest in having closer ties than has BCG. Howard Mendel proposed that we leave it to the chairman of each group to work out a timetable. Bob Entwistle proposed that the Chairs and secretary from each group get together to work out a discussion group and timetable. Kate Andrew said that the chairs and secretaries to ask for volunteers and then report to the next AGM. Nick Gordon and Helen Fothergill also contributed to the discussion. There was then some confusion as to voting on proposals that had been suggested. Howard Mendel proposed that a joint Working Group be established to consider the ramifications of an NSCG/BCG merger – such a group to include the Chairmen and Secretaries and to report back to the NSCG Membership at the NSCG AGM 2001. This was seconded by Helen Fothergill. There was a large majority for the proposal, 2 against and 1 abstention.

Close of Meeting. 1.30 pm

Paul A Brown

