



NatSCA

Natural Sciences Collections Association

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NSCG Newsletter

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View From The Chair

Welcome to the 20th NSCG Newsletter and the second Newsletter edited by Editor Vicki Noble.

Recent committee news is that Gabriela MacKinnon has volunteered to be Secretary. We thank Louise Cant who has had to relinquish the job due to extra responsibilities at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.

We have plenty of news on the Merger front. We (David Carter, Howard Mendel, Nick Gordon and Steve Thompson of BCG and myself, Kate Andrew, Simon Moore and Donna Young for NSCG) have just completed our third meeting successfully and there are bullet pointed notes from the first meeting published below. Our new name will be the 'Natural Sciences Collections Association (NatSCA)'.

I read with interest David Leigh's 'from the Director' article in *Conservation News* 80:2 who mentions NSCG's interest in merging with non-conservators (ie BCG). As with the Society of Archivists who have non-conservator members, he sees such hybrid memberships as a "challenge to our (NCCR's) ingenuity" with the implication that this need not be an insurmountable problem in relation to plans to draw the separate conservation bodies into one new association. I would envisage and hope that accredited and non-accredited natural science conservators will continue to have an influence and will officially represent our new association (NatSCA) within this proposed new NCCR group.

I cannot help but look towards the Society for the Protection of Natural History Collections in North America as a model for our future Association in which even (beyond our present remit) ethnography and archaeology have voices! I note in Rob Huxley's Presidential Report in the *SPNHC Newsletter* 16(2):15, that he mentions the possibility of co-hosting their future UK meeting with BCG and GCG but that he fails to mention NSCG as being similarly involved, a minor point as we will hopefully be NatSCA with BCG by then. He does mention having closer ties with 'The Natural Sciences Collections Alliance', which is a small North American group of museum and collections managers, but this does not preclude us using our new NatSCA name. We look forward to working with (but not being assimilated by) SPNHC in the future.

Look out for information on next year's AGM which will probably take place in Manchester, possibly Monday 7th – Tuesday 8th April 2003.

Paul A. Brown, 17th September 2002

2002 AGM at the Castle Museum, Norwich

12.15 pm, Tuesday April 16th, 2002

Meeting concluded at 1.20 pm.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Amanda Sutherland, Louise Cant, Donna Young and Julian Carter.

2. Consideration for the Agenda

Item 13 was interchanged with Item 16.

3. Minutes of last AGM

Minutes of the 2001 AGM had been distributed and read. They were duly signed as being correct record of the proceedings. Proposed by Adrian Doyle, and seconded by Bill Curtis.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not already on the Agenda.

5. Chairs report

(included in last issue)

6. Secretary's report

Since Louise Cant unfortunately could not be present, the report was given by Paul Brown.

Attendance log of members 2001-2002 6 committee meetings during the year

	23.v.01	26.ix.01	14.xi.01	9 . i . 0 2
6.iii.02				
15.iv.02				
Kate Andrew (1999)	x	x	x	x
Paul A Brown (2001)		x	x	x
Louise Cant (2001)	x	x	x	x
Susan Cooke (2000)		x	x	x

Rob Entwistle (2001)			x		x	x
Sue Lewis (2000 retired)	x					
Gabriela MacKinnon (ex off.)	x	x		x	x	x
Darren Mann (1999)			x			x
Simon Moore (2000)	x	x	x	x	x	
Maggie Reilly (2001)	x			x	x	x
Amanda Sutherland (2001 retired)		x				

7. Membership Secretary's report

We are ending the year with 115 members plus a mailing to the Copyright Library. The 115 breakdown by category thus:

UK personal	87 (including 2 students)
UK Institutional	17
Overseas personal	7
Overseas institutional	4

The membership figures are down on the 2000 year end by 12: then a total membership of 127 broke down as follows:

UK personal members of which 6 are students	96
UK Institutional members	13
Overseas personal members	11
Overseas Institutional members	7

It can be seen that we are down across all categories but particularly in UK personal members though some personal members transferred to institutional subs at the beginning of this membership year. The leafleting campaign probably raised our membership in 2001. Renewal notices were sent to all members at the beginning of the year.

As NSCG holds a members database, we have to comply with the Data Protection Act. The group and Ms Reilly must register as data controllers. The committee needs to inform members that data is held and how it is to be used. The membership will be asked for their explicit permission to use the data in this way. In advance of the DPA registration we can assure members that personal details of members such as addresses, are never given out to third parties.

8. Treasurers report

Kate Andrew noted that petty cash had been rarely used over the last 12 months

and this was to be curtailed.

KA said she was going to close our account with the Midland and open one with COIF. This was agreed.

The accounts were audited by William Lindsay and Velson Horie who agreed that they were a fair representation of the group's financial position.

Howard Mendel queried the fact that our auditors were connected with the group, and questioned as to whether this was legal. KA answered that since there was no legal requirement to have our accounts audited since we had less than £10,000 funds, *and that we did this as 'good practice'*.

9. Proposal to accept the accounts

Steve Thompson proposed to accept the accounts, and Sue Cooke seconded.

10. Editors Report

Darren Mann said that he was coming to the end of his term as editor and did not wish to stand again. The group needs a new editor.

He had produced 134 pages of copy over the last 12 months and thanked all those who had contributed.

He stated that he had been supported by Oxford University in producing the Newsletter. Paul Brown is to send a letter of thanks to Oxford University thanking them for their assistance.

11. Election to the Committee

(included in last issue)

12. Election of Auditors

Velson Horie and William Lindsay were proposed by Kate Andrew and seconded by Robert Entwistle. This was passed with one abstention.

13. NCCR Report

Simon Moore reported back on NCCR business. He noted that there had been no natural science conservators through the Accreditation process since Fast Track. He offered his help to any PACR's having trouble with their CPD forms.

14. Adoption of new MA code of Ethics

Kate Andrew explained the new code to the members. There was general discussion about the code and members had reservations over parts of it. Members decided they could not adopt the code without considering it further.

It was decided that members would consider the code with a view to adopting it in 2003.

Members in favour 25, against 0, abstentions 4.

15. Response to Renaissance in the Regions

NSCG broadly welcomes the Renaissance in the Regions report with its proposal for funding the English museums. We hope that the monies identified for the nine Regional hubs and partnerships represent new money for the sector rather than a redistribution of existing funding.

Kate Andrew proposed that we should respond as a group to the report, and offered an up beat and positive response:

NSCG has expressed concern in the past about the loss of specialist conservation posts as the Area Museum Services changed their roles from providers to enablers. With the closure of the conservation facilities, staff have left the sector, skills are lost, internships are no longer possible, career prospects are reduced and training courses therefore cease to offer training in these disciplines, thereby creating a chicken and egg situation. Through our links with BCG and GCG we have also noted a gradual decline in natural history curation posts and a rise in the number of "orphaned" collections. Initiatives such as the Peripatetic Geological and Biological Curator posts and the BCG Sunflower campaign were successful in addressing problems on a regional level, but have now ceased.

The proposal for regional hubs and partnerships offering facilities and services to the museums in their regions in our view offers a chance to address these problems.

NSCG would like to see in each region:

- Funding to create and resource a spacious, properly equipped and easily accessible conservation facility employing some specialist staff and able to offer space for free-lance staff. All types of collections from the region can then be worked on in appropriate climatic conditions, in safety and comfort and without compromise to the collections.
- Funding for specialist conservators to monitor regional collections regularly and long term to improve storage conditions for collections.

- A facility in each region to "fumigate" organic collections, accessible to all museums in the region.
- A disaster response unit
- Facilities for the preparation of post-mortem biological material and geological specimens.
- Specialist curation staff to cover all disciplines of the natural sciences held by regional museums. The full extent of natural science collections in the UK has been determined by the FENSCORE project, so an analysis of need would be straightforward.

Whether or not proposals for regional super stores are pursued, proper curation and conservation of regional natural science collections is crucial for the national agendas of lifelong learning and access to be fulfilled in museums. NSCG suggests that the proposals set out above would enable this to be achieved and maintained.

It was proposed that this response be accepted and sent to Resource and AMC's in the Groups name.

Proposed by Darren Mann and seconded by Simon Moore.

Members in Favour 28, against 0, abstentions 1.

16. Merger of NSCG with BCG

(included in last issue)

17. AOB

Jenny Bryant commented that she hoped that the membership would be fully informed about the changes agreed to by the joint committee for merger, to be reported in The Newsletter before the next AGM, to allow for membership's scrutiny and comments.
