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## **NSCG Newsletter**

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## View from the Chair

Hello Readers! This is the bit that everyone skips and goes on to read something more interesting. So I presume that you will have read most everything else by now and have begun this a week or two later.

By the time you read this our AGM and conference will be over. The food I have no doubt will have been superb and the wine will have been drunk. You will also have voted in a new Chairman/woman, and hopefully, a new constitution.

The new constitution, required by the charity commission, will allow us to unlock funds previously held in trust by UKIC. We have earmarked part of this sum to produce and distribute a publicity leaflet in a campaign to gain more members and raise our profile.

A larger membership is important if we wish our voice to be heard. Before people can join us they need to be aware that we exist. Our membership covers a wide variety of specialisms and disciplines, which is both a strength and a weakness. A strength in that we are able to call on a wide variety of expertise and knowledge, and a weakness in that we are not as cohesive as a single interest group.

If we are to survive we must grow.

Another blot on the landscape is the dreaded ACCREDITATION. Those of you who have not heard of this before are lucky and those of you who have will either be moved to anger or complete apathy.

Accreditation is the conservation world's method of raising standards, and hopefully wages, by acknowledging conservation as a profession. For us to be a professional body members will need to either pass some sort of exam or have their work assessed.


Many conservation groups are looking into setting up some form of accreditation system for their members, but if we propose to do the same there will be difficulties. Being such a diverse group covering different

disciplines we have set up a working party to investigate what other groups are doing, and we have a member on the Conservation Forum, (Now known as 'ABC': Association of British and Irish Conservators) where the issue is being discussed.

However, DON'T PANIC. There is no compulsion to become "accredited", and we have no intention of alienating our membership. Initially this will only concern those with the word "conservation" in their job title. However one of the implications of this may be that museums may have to use accredited conservators if they wish for grant aid. If we have to set up a system it is best that we do it and not someone else. We will keep you posted.

*Bob Entwistle (Acting Chair)*

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## Chairs report, as presented at AGM 1998

Looking back through my files, I find that this is the third annual report that I have written as chair of NSCG. During these three years, we have become fully independent from UKIC, have organised an important seminar at the MA conference and have held two very successful meetings and AGMs. The most recent being held as a two day event jointly with BCG, admirably organised by Julian Carter and his team and generously hosted by the National Museum and Gallery of Wales with a key-note lecture given by May Cassar. I would like to thank all those institutions and individuals involved for a superb event. I'm sure this year's meeting will be just as successful. I hope I shall be there to enjoy it, but the rigors of parenthood might prevent it.

Following discussions at the AGM last year as to the future direction of the group and links to other organisations, the committee set up a working party and requested members thoughts and suggestions. The working

party reported that the group was felt to be a strong and viable organisation, able to support itself and, at least for the time being, wishing to remain autonomous; yet to co-operate with other groups where interests overlapped. In order to achieve this, we continue to have a GCG and BCG committee member at meetings, to exchange minutes and hold joint meetings. We also have links with SPNHC via shared committee members.

One area of co-operation with BCG has been over posts at risk, two of your committee members are also in this BCG cell. This year, our AGM was to have been held at Buckinghamshire County Museum, however, the uncertainty over Nick Gordon's post as we started to organise the event meant that Nick had to withdraw his offer. We hope that Nick's job is now secure and that the future of this well run and award winning museum service can be safeguarded.

We continue to be part of the recently renamed Conservation Forum, a combination of Paul Brown, Bob Entwistle and Kirsten Walker have been representing us at meetings. MGC grant money continues to be available to our members to attend training events such as this AGM and training courses organised by other member groups. Applications need to be made to the NSCG committee on an application form available from the Secretary. Please do apply, the money will cease to be allocated if not taken up.

The Conservation Forum has recently been concentrating on conservator accreditation. This in turn has caused the committee to look again at training and to re-instate the training working party. A standard lecture and slide set are being prepared.

With the desk-top publishing and other IT resources available to Donna Hughes, our new editor, the newsletter has gone from strength to strength. The "Risk Assessment" sections have been very well received and have led to several enquiries for library subscriptions and requests to publish. Once we have covered all ten agents of deterioration, we hope to put together all of the sections with additional material into a booklet for publication. So, if an agent of deterioration has recently posed a risk to

your collection, it's not too late to write it up.

The major project for this year has been the work on charitable status for the group. Maggie Reilly started the ball rolling and handed over to me in the autumn. Tracey Seddon has also helped out. The committee approved a draft new constitution shortly after Christmas with a few amendments after initial discussions with the Charity Commission. After some correspondence, we now await their decision. Hopefully, this will come before the AGM to allow you the membership to vote on the new constitution, if not, we may have to call a special meeting.

With parenthood visited upon me, Bob Entwistle has kindly taken over in my last few months as chair and I would like to thank him for filling the breach. Your committee has formed a coherent and active group following the retirement last year of several long standing members. Those whose terms of office are up this year are myself, Simon Moore and Wendy Simkiss. I would like to thank Simon for his sterling work as editor from the very start of the group and Wendy for acting as our link with GCG. I would also like to thank you the membership for electing me as chair, it's been an enjoyable, if at times complex, job.

*Kate Andrew (on maternity leave until mid November 1998)*

