FOSSILS

Lizzie not out of the woods

London

A SURPRISE donation of £10,050 will aid the appeal by the National Museums of Scotland (NMS) to keep 'Lizzie', the 340-million-year-old fossil of the earliest-known reptile, in Scotland where she was discovered. The grant comes from the Geologists' Association (GA), and brings the total amount raised to £120,780. The GA have welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the appeal to secure what its press spokesman Eric Robinson of University College, London, calls "one of the most significant fossil finds of all time" in Edinburgh.

The target is £207,000, which must be raised by the end of July to prevent Lizzie's sale by her discoverer, professional collector Stan Wood, to the Museum für Naturkunde in Stuttgart. Apart from £104,000 pledged by the NMS (see *Nature* 343, 398; 1 February 1990), the GA grant is the biggest single donation to the appeal fund.

NMS curator Ian Rolfe says that many people have expressed a wish to contribute, ranging from individuals to large corporations: potential benefactors should get in touch with him at the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh.

Most of the GA membership is English, and the decision to help secure Lizzie for Scotland may well raise some eyebrows. Robinson dismisses this: Lizzie was alive

long before England or Scotland were invented, he says. Wood found the fossil in the Carboniferous limestones at East Kirkton, along with a rich haul of fossil flora and fauna. The purpose of the grant is to keep Lizzie as the centrepiece of this important collection, not because she happens to be Scottish.

A precedent for the GA's action exists: it gave financial aid to Bristol Museum to help curator Peter Crowther buy an ichthyosaur fossil that became the focus of an exhibition on marine reptiles last year (see *Nature* 338, 381; 1989). The GA stepped in to prevent the specimen, offered for sale by a private collector, from being sold to a buyer in Japan.

The deliberations over Lizzie's fate have raised wider issues of the export of geological specimens (see *Nature* 343, 106; 11 January 1990). Tam Dalyell, Member of Parliament for Linlithgow — the area of Scotland that includes the East Kirkton limestones — demanded of Richard Luce, the Minister for the Arts, what measures the government planned to aid the rescue of what he described as "my constituent, Lizzie" (*Hansard*, 13 March 1990, page 170). In reply, Luce had recommended that the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art should consider how its criteria might be amended to encompass geological specimens in future.

Henry Gee

SCIENTIFIC ETHICS

Harvard legislates on conflict

Boston

AFTER a year of study and a month of vigorous debate, the Harvard Medical School last week set out its new conflict-of-interest rules for faculty and researchers.

Under pressure from researchers at some of the school's fourteen affiliated hospitals, measures that would have made illegal a number of practices, as recommended in the earlier controversial proposal, have been omitted (*Nature* 344, 97; 1990). But, pending approval next month by the affiliated hospitals' governing body, a committee will be established to oversee industry-university relations at institutions affiliated with the medical school.

Under the new rules, royalties on published work and honoraria will be routinely allowed as before, but a category of links between researchers and industry will now be "allowable only after disclosure, approval review, and oversight". Activities requiring oversight will include consulting for a company while simultaneously evaluating one of its products in a clinical trial, holding equity in a company providing research support and presenting research results without dis-

closing financial interests in a company whose product is the subject of research.

The new guidelines also delineate activities that will be specifically permissible provided they are fully disclosed. These include conducting or participating in a clinical trial of a technology invented by the researcher or serving on the board of directors of a business from which the faculty member receives research support.

Daniel C. Tosteson, dean of the medical school, terms the guidelines a "significant change" and emphasizes their necessity if university faculty members are to retain their "credibility as seekers after truth". He says the new guidelines will "promote technology transfer" while keeping researchers "from slipping into an inappropriate relationship with industry".

Barbara J. McNeil, head of the school's department of health care policy and chair of the committee that initially developed the conflict-of-interest rules, says she is "extremely pleased" with the school's adoption of the new measures. But how the oversight committee will work, she acknowledged, "remains to be seen".

Seth Shulman

PRIZE NEWS

Tyler award for chemical messengers

THIS year's \$150,000 Tyler prize for environmental achievement is to be shared by Thomas Eisner and Jerrold Meinwald of Cornell University for their studies of chemical ecology — the science of how organisms interact chemically using 'messenger substances' to attract, defend or reproduce. In a collaboration that has spanned more than 30 years, Eisner, a biologist, has shown how insects communicate, while Meinwald, an organic

Eisner (left) and Meinwald.

chemist, has defined this 'communication' in chemical terms. Their chemical discoveries have led to the characterization of an array of compounds, some of which have led to advances in pest control and the development of drugs to treat human diseases.

Eisner has championed the cause of conservation, calling species extinction the "silent calamity of our time". In 1970, Meinwald co-founded the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology in Nairobi, Kenya, to study ways to control the spread of disease to humans and livestock by ticks and tsetse flies. D. G.

Immunology and development

THE Fifth Louis Jeantet Prize for Medicine has been awarded to developmental

biologist Nicole le Douarin, from Nogent-sur-Marne in France, and immunologists Harald von Boehmer and Gottfried Schatz, whose research centres on

Douarin (top), Schatz (left) and Von Boehmer.

cell organelles. Von Boehmer and Schatz are based in Basle, Switzerland. The laureates share 2.1 million Swiss Francs, to be presented on 6 April. Schatz will use the money to employ a young researcher, the other prizewinners concentrating on new research equipment. P.A.