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Author(s): Mann, D. J.

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Insect Pests in Museums NHM External Course

A review of the two day course at the Natural History Museum 14th-15th March 2000 taught by David Pinniger, Consultant Entomologist

Darren J. Mann, Hope Entomology Collections, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Parks Road Oxford, OX1 3PW

Most people who work in museums will have heard of David Pinniger, his name being synonymous with museum pest control, so it was with high expectations that I attended the two day course at the Natural History Museum. The course was well structured, the speaker was clear and precise and the slides presented were relevant and of good quality, there was also a strong practical orientation. The course included sessions on:

- Pests and Damage
- Insect Identification (inc. practical session)
- Pest Environments
- Pest Monitoring and Control Options
- Pest Monitoring: Results
- Practical observation session
- Health and Safety, Risk Assessments, COSHH

As an entomologist, I found the first day sessions on pest life histories and identification a little basic, and with a few strange omissions. In particular, some pest species were not mentioned, e.g. the recent outbreak of the new pest beetle in Scotland (this issue) and some of the available literature not mentioned either. However, other members of the group I spoke to found this level pitched perfectly as they had little or no experience of identification. The pest identification was brought to a close with a small practical exercise. With samples of insects placed out we set about to try and name a dozen or so pests, with our notes and experts at close hand (3 in all), this proved a successful and very useful exercise.

The pest monitoring session gave us an idea of the type of traps available and where to place them, this was helped with real-life examples and results. The pest management and control options went into detail of the ways and means of getting rid of pest problems. The use of Integrated Pest management was advocated and explained concisely. This was a real delight as the chemical barrage we are able to use is disappearing fast, and

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