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## Book Review: Integrated Pest Management for Cultural Heritage (2015)



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### Book Review

*Integrated Pest Management for Cultural Heritage* by David Pinniger. Illustrated by Annette Townsend. 156 pp. 92 colour illustrations. Published by Archetype Books from May 5, 2015. ISBN : 978-1909492226 Available to pre-order £35.00

<http://www.archetype.co.uk/publication-details.php?id=222>

If I am counting correctly, this is David Pinniger's fourth book on the subject of heritage pest management. His book *Pest Management in Museums, Archives and Historic Houses* (2001) has long been the favourite Integrated Pest Management (IPM) tool for many. Since his first book, *Insect Pests in Museums*, was published in 1989, the field has greatly advanced and been extensively researched. This book is an update on this previous work, and now includes images printed in colour. This is a long due update, as there are excellent identification resources available online now (many are included in the reference section of this book). Townsend's illustrations are also a huge asset. They provide a clear image of insect anatomy and detailed markings, and include an 'actual size' version. Paired with the photographs, they make a very effective identification tool. I was slightly disappointed that the image size was not standardised, as I felt that some were printed a little too small.

In reviewing the book I read it cover to cover, but in reality that isn't how it is designed to be used. Pinniger writes in the preface that the book is "intended to be a working guide". As a conservator I have trained in pest monitoring, identifying and treatment. I am not an expert and I use many resources to support this work, but I understand the theories behind the practices. Some chapters are more relevant to the IPM novice, and others to those more familiar with the subject. With that in mind, I decided to review this book from two perspectives: as a conservator using it as a guide, and as a novice learning about the subject. As a conservator, I valued the specifics and details provided. *Chapter 2 - Insect pests* included a section on insect structure that I will return to when I next have the opportunity to look at an insect under the microscope. This chapter divides the pests into the food/material groups that they attack. Initially I liked this format. However, as I read through, I found it to be flawed. Firstly, if you are identifying from a trap then you won't be searching by material type. In addition, many pests will move between material groups. As a material specialist I turned straight to the section on 'wool, fur, feathers and textiles', and assumed everything relevant would be here. But in the 'fur and feather' section it was also noted that there had been an outbreak of Berlin Beetle in a herbarium, and in the section on herbaria and dried food it was noted that Biscuit Beetle also attack freeze-dried specimens. This information could be easily missed.

I was very pleased to see updated information on the Berlin Beetle and Museum Nuisance/American Wasp Beetle, which I had previously very little knowledge of. Also included was Dermestes, which many institutions willingly bring in to use in bone preparation. Pinniger writes that colonies should "always be kept in a building separate from the main museum site", but from experience I know this is rarely the case (or a realistic possibility). I thought this raised an interesting conundrum.

I found *Chapter 5 - Control of insects* to be one of the more engaging chapters. It featured control methods I hadn't come across before, including Exosex CLM tab, and biological control using predators and parasitoids. The book contains an extensive reference list, which prompted me to read up on the methods. This chapter would be particularly valuable to those whose work is invested in pest management activities.

*Chapter 6 - Rodents and birds* is written by Adrian Meyer. This chapter would be particularly useful to share with your buildings manager as it contains information on excluding pests that you are unlikely to be able to implement without them on side. The table on reproductive potential of female rodents is scary enough to bring the message home if you are having problems getting your stakeholders to take pest issues seriously!

For a novice, the introduction is an essential read in understanding the importance of IPM, but the information is repeated through later chapters. Similarly *Chapter 3 - Insect detection and monitoring* is especially relevant for someone new to the subject. Unfortunately, important information is hidden within large blocks of texts. It would be good to see the primary messages identified and communicated in a clearer style. While the information is useful and relevant, in this format it may be overwhelming for a novice audience.

Thinking as a novice, I found *Chapter 2 - Insect Pests* to be a particularly arduous read for the same reasons listed above in my conservator mind. It was poorly laid out and difficult to follow. For example, a section titled 'Environment, temperature, moisture and food' is confusingly placed under 'Insect Structure'. The index at the back is exclusively for pests, so unless you read through whole chapters, you might miss out on these hidden paragraphs of crucial information. From this view the book fails to act as a "working guide".

In contrast to the formatting, the information quality in the book is excellent. *Chapter 4 - Preventing insect problems* starts with an invaluable section on methods for excluding pests. Pinniger provides an extensive list of IPM tools, from the simple to the expensive. The final chapter, *Implementing integrated pest management*, is a vital read for students or anyone involved in developing a new IPM procedure. Most of the information is summarised in a convenient table, but the text also stresses the importance of all staff being involved and invested in IPM, having good solid procedures and policies, and making sure people are adequately trained.

Most people using this book will be looking to identify a pest or solve a problem, and unless you have read this book cover to cover I think most of the information in between is lost. The main criticism for me is in the formatting and writing style. The text is repetitive, and some chapters are confused in their structure, which is a shame as the information is of high quality. For a working guide I would still favour Pinniger's *Pest Management - A Practical Guide* (Collections Trust 2008). It is more concise, with bulleted colour-coded ID facts and large photographs. I was trying to think of what value this book has over many of the excellent identification websites, and I believe it is in the "theory" of pest management, immersing oneself in the subject. I will use this book for reference, but I think it is most useful as a tool to stress the importance of IPM to others, to get our stakeholders to take the issue seriously. David Pinniger's work is a fantastic piece of IPM advocacy.