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## The Biology Curator

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collection containers. But even if low-temperature treatment is only employed 'reactively', it should be supported by accurate documentation so that future conservators can associate any deterioration of adhesives with previous actions.

In conclusion, it is perhaps useful to re-state the basic protocol that we use with respect to insect drawers. Upon finding an infestation it should be a matter of routine that all adjacent drawers are searched. For a cabinet-wide infestation, all drawers would need to be removed and the cabinet itself vacuum-cleaned and perhaps lightly sprayed with insecticide (Constrain, a permethrin-based microemulsion is ideal, particularly developed for the museum environment). Then:-

- Infested drawers should be isolated in tightly-fitting plastic bags that are securely sealed.
- Bagged drawers placed in freezer for 72 hours at minus 30 degrees centigrade.
- Bagged drawers removed from freezer and stored at room temperature for 24 hours before seal is broken.
- Only after thawing are drawers opened and necessary remedial work undertaken.
- Keep permanent record of all actions.
- Continue to monitor the area of infestation, both visually and by means of monitoring traps.

Suppliers: Tinytag Plus™ - Meaco, Unit 8, Smithbrook Gdns, Cranleigh, Surrey, UK.

Evo-Stick™ - Evode Ltd, Common Road, Stafford, UK.

**Phil Ackery**

**Adrian Doyle**

**The Natural History Museum**

**David Pinniger**

**Independent Pest Control Consultant.**



## Books



### BOOK REVIEW

"Identifying British Insects and Arachnids - An annotated bibliography of key works", edited by Peter C. Barnard, Cambridge University Press with the Natural History Museum, 1999, ISBN 0-521-63241-2, Hardback, price £50

This is a welcome addition to the field which has been dominated previously by the various editions of Kerrich, Hawksworth and Sims 'Key Works to the Fauna and Flora of the British Isles and North-western Europe. Operating over a narrower taxonomic range than its predecessors and with double the paper, the scope for discussion and annotation is dramatically increased.

The book has a pleasing appearance, is well bound and appears to be well proofed against the ravages of a wet workbench. The introduction sets out its purpose; to ease the laborious process of getting to grips with the scattered works which are needed for the identification of any one group of British insects or arachnids. It is 'largely intended for the reader who is moving on from basic texts to more specialised ones'. Entomological journals, societies and general references are listed in this introduction.

There follows a useful chapter on 'Sources of Information' by Julie MV Harvey, enumerating the various ways in which references can be sought out and covering the full range from ink on parchment to web site. A section on understanding bibliographic references contains useful notes on sources of confusion and a guide to journal abbreviations. The pages dealing with entomological libraries are useful, although the shortest section deals with local museums thus - "Some local museums with natural history collections have developed small reference libraries, which may be available to the public" (Quoted in full). My own local museum library is used extensively by members of the public and I am sure that similar arrangements are offered by many of my BCG colleagues. Such a brief statement seems almost to dismiss the pivotal role played by local museums, with collections and expertise, in weaning and giving direction to budding entomologists as they begin to specialise. The remainder of the chapters is taken up with creating personal entomological library.

The meat of the book then appears; 323 pages with chapters on each insect order (23,500+ species) and the major arachnid orders (2420 species). Each chapter introduces an order and ends with a well annotated bibliography highlighting the most pertinent works. The orders are dealt with by individual specialists and, in addition to his own groups, the chief editor seems to have acted as 'sweeper' to deal with any 'orphaned' groups.

The treatment of each order seems to be weighted differently. For instance, the Dipper (6643 species) are allotted just over 20 pages whilst the (admittedly complex) Hymenoptera (7000+ species) have more than 120 pages dedicated to them. It is pleasing to see in the Coleoptera section, mention of clubs, societies, newsletters and recording schemes. For anyone 'moving on from the basic texts', these schemes are as essential as the literature in informing 'part time'

entomologists of developments. The section on my own first love, the Heteroptera, contains no mention of the many useful provisional keys turned out in the Heteropterists Newsletter, a part of the National Recording Scheme, without which I should have floundered at times. Distribution Atlases are also mentioned in the Coleoptera section and this too is exceptional within the volume. I should imagine that work towards such atlases gives many amateur entomologists added purpose and incentive to become proficient in particular groups. There are some odd omissions in some of the sections. For example, when I showed the book to an Arachnologist friend he was puzzled by the lack of mention of 'Big Roberts' (Harley Books -3 volumes, 1985-87) whereas 'Little Roberts', the condensed version published by Collins in 1995 is listed.

The introduction admits that in a book of this scope with over 2,000 references, there are bound to be errors and omissions, and comments and additions are invited. This is a very useful book as it stands although, given its target audience, rather beyond the means of many individuals who would be better spending their money on the works listed in the bibliography. Perhaps each local museum ought to have a copy in its

library, to be made available to emerging or diverging entomologists. Even with references up to 1997 (and a few from 1998), the book may stale fairly rapidly. It would be wonderful to give this invaluable source of information a web site where it can be upgraded on a regular basis. I would happily pay a small annual subscription for this service.

Steve Moran  
Inverness Museum and Art Gallery



**Advert**



**CATALOGUE OF THE OSTEOLOGICAL SPECIMENS IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE ZOOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF LIVERPOOL MUSEUM**

This is the first published catalogue of the approximately 3,600 vertebrate specimens in the Liverpool Museum. It includes not only specimens stored in the osteology collection, but mounted skeletons (such as Ambush II, who won the Grand National in 1900). The catalogue also lists the skulls which are stored with their cabinet skins in the main collection.

Many of the specimens are very old, and there are some important rarities, such as skulls of Tasmanian Tiger and Falkland Island Wolf. Several of the mammal skulls belong to type specimens, and there are sterna from bird types. Most of these early specimens are from the collection of the XIIIth Earl of

Derby, an important naturalist whose collections founded the Liverpool Museum in 1851, and there is an immaculate series of skulls and skeletons from Loder's Menagerie in Sussex. The collections also include an important series of mostly cave and subfossil material.

vii + 194 pages, 6 black and white illustrations; indexes to scientific names; localities, collectors and donors.

Published at £19.99. Postage & packing is: UK £2.50 per copy, non U-K £4.00 per copy.

Order from: NMGM Enterprises, P.O. Box 33,127 Dale Street, Liverpool L69 3LA, UK. Tel: 0151 478 4685 Fax: 0151 478 4024

For information only- email  
eplent@nmgme2.demomeo.uk

## Call For Papers

### BCG – Biology Collections and Information Technology

The first BCG meeting of the year will be held in late January/early February in Leicester in conjunction with Leicester University Museum Studies Department. The subject of the meeting is Biology Collections and Information Technology. The meeting will cover topics such as documentation, environmental monitoring, public access, the internet, biological recording and exhibitions and display.

Anyone wishing to present a paper, demonstration or poster should contact:

Nick Gordon, New Walk Museum, Leicester, LE1 7EA

Tel: 0116 25541000

Email: gordn001@leicester.gov.uk

### NSCG: Best Value

28<sup>th</sup> September 2000

One day seminar organised by NSCG on Best Value and how it affects museums, with particular emphasis on conservation and collections management. To be held at The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke on Trent.

Anyone wishing to present a paper should contact:

Bob Entwistle, Senior Conservation Officer, NSCG Chairman, Ipswich Museum, High Street, Ipswich, IP1 3QH