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Fenscore II: *the awakening*

Dear BCG colleagues...

We want to put an HLF bid together to update, extend and promote FENSCORE, all the things we've wanted but never done – because of the day job!

We are hoping to get a bid in during spring 2002 but we need a fast consultation **now** over what the priorities are – **so we want your help** if you have an interest in promoting knowledge and information about natural history collections.

In case you've forgotten the UK Natural History Collection Database based at Manchester, and soon, Nottingham, can be viewed at www.man.ac.uk/fenscore. ...; if you want to be kept informed of progress then you can subscribe to the FENSCORE mailing list from the website.

This database points to the vast majority of the UK natural science holding outside the national museums - we estimate some 100 Million specimens, more than held at the Natural History Museum in London!

Some ideas

We wish to develop this database as both a research and life-long learning tool, by:

1. updating and expanding the range of data
2. linking the national database to local databases held locally, adding personal points of contact and expertise
3. improve the data structure to make searching more effective
4. create a front end that can be used by school students and mature students alike, that they want to use, by adding images and current information and links
5. promoting interest in detailed knowledge of natural history, especially UK natural history, by increasing the use of local collections by local people, developing local research and data validation projects and identification

6. expertise.
identify orphan collections that need immediate rescue, and the new collections being made by active living naturalists that could be potential museum collections of the future.
7. Promoting the use of the FENSCORE data, seeking links with like websites etc
8. Identifying value-added products, e.g. specialist summaries of the national holdings of taxonomic groups.
9. Identifying the means of long-term maintenance of the FENSCORE data to protect and promote the national resource with local collections.

We have had initial discussions with the National Biodiversity Network who recognize the importance of local collections and we will want to facilitate the use of collections within the NBN as a priority. We shall be having further discussions with them early in 2002.

How you can help

We'd be grateful for any comments and ideas. This is an important attempt at improving access to your collections from a national database so please send your comments and ideas to the email addresses below or the FENSCORE mailing list above. We want to get our initial ideas together by Christmas so contact by **24th December 2001** would be the most helpful, especially about local community connections and use of your collections.

thanks

Graham Walley (Chair)
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and grahamw@notmusbhy.demon.co.uk

Charles Pettitt (Data Manager)
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Request for Information

The Natural Sciences section at Leicester City Museums were recently approached by the Bursar of Uppingham School, Rutland

enquiring about some exotic birds.

An elderly lady, who was the daughter of an old boy of the school, has enquired after a collection of exotic birds her father loaned to the school in 1916/17. There were four cases measuring 6' x 6'. The school were unable to locate them but thought that in the 1970's a Headmaster had donated them to a local museum. The collection was not donated to Leicester Museums and has not turned up at any other museums in the area.

If you have any information regarding these cased birds could you please contact:

Miss SA Buxton, Bursar, Uppingham School,
Uppingham, Rutland, LE15 9QB.
Tel: 01572 822216 ex 4006

Erratum

In issue 21 of The Biology Curator Kim Goodger's paper on Conservation of Birdwing Butterflies was unfortunately truncated. This was due to the acting editor getting to grips with some new software being used to produce The Biology Curator so my humble apologies to Kim. The missing section is reproduced here.

Conservation of Flood Damaged Birdwing Butterflies.

Kim Goodger.
Dept of Entomology, The Natural History
Museum, Cromwell Rd, London. SW7 5BD

Materials used.

Glassine envelopes - BioQuip Products, Inc.
17803 LaSalle Ave, Gardena, CA 90248
USA.

Seccotine(tm) liquid glue - Distributed by
Primrose Repair Services, Dunstable Road,
Dagnall, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire HP4
1RQ

Stainless steel entomological pins with nylon
head, 'continental' length size 5 - Watkins
& Doncaster, PO Box 5, Cranbrook, Kent.
TN18 SE2

L2S lens tissue; machine made (Manila hemp,
jute ash, woodfree), white, wove 9 gsm -
Falkiner Fine Papers 76, Southampton Row
London WC1B 4AR

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Kate Edmondson, Conservator, Dept Library and Information Services, The Natural History Museum, for her advice on which type of paper to use, and Harrow School for allowing this report to be published.

References

- d'Abrera, B. 1990. Butterflies of the Australian Region. Third, revised edition. Hill House.
- Dickson, R. 1976. A Lepidopterist's Handbook. The Amateur Entomologists' Society.
- Florian, M.L. 1997. Heritage Eaters. Insect & Fungi in Heritage Collections. James & James, London.

Regional Museums Task Force Report

The Regional Museums Task Force report, *Renaissance in the Regions: a new vision for England's Museums*, is now out.

The 9 strong task force consulted over 400 people, including BCG, throughout the museums sector. The report identifies a number of problems being faced by museums including:

- Fragmentation of effort between a large number of institutions
- Under-funding
- Staff shortages and low morale
- Decline in scholarship
- Weak leadership

The report recommends that a major museum service, a 'hub', linked to a number of partners, should be formed in each of the 9 English regions. The hub would be selected based on a number of criteria including collections, status, location, infrastructure and evidence of achieving good practice. The hubs would provide leadership and support for other museums in the region.

A framework to be implemented over a 5 year period has been costed at £267.2 million. The majority of this would come from central government and be used to:

- Increases staffing levels by 25%
- Develop access, outreach and education programmes
- Develop temporary exhibitions