

# The Biology Curator

*The Publication of the Biology Curator's Group*

ISSUE 9

JULY 1997

## Diary Dates

### **Celebration of Bicentennaries of Charles Lyell and James Hutton**

30 July- 3 August or 5-9 August 1997, London or Edinburgh  
Contact : Lyell-Hutton Conference Office, Geological Society, Burlington House, London, W1V 0JU

### **First Biennial International Conference of the Systematics Association**

19-21 August 1997 St. Anne's College, Oxford  
Contact : Toby Pennington, Systematics 97, Royal Botanic Garden, 20A Inverleith Row, Edinburgh, EH3 5LR

### **BCG Conference Session at MA Conference - Specialist Curators : An Endangered Species ?**

17 September 1997, National Museum and Gallery, Cardiff  
(Possible discussion topics inside) Contact : Steve Thompson 01724 843533

### **Natural History and the Sea**

26-27 September 1997, Discovery Point, Dundee  
Contact : Mike Taylor, Perth Museum and Art Gallery, George St., Perth, Scotland, PH1 5LB

### **New Directions in Systematics**

15-18 October 1997, Hersonisos, Crete, Greece  
Contact : Ms. Nicola Donlon, European Science Foundation Network in Systematic Biology, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Rd., London, SW7 5BD

### **Gentlemen and Players.**

22 November 1997 : Meeting of the Malacological Society, Conchological Society and Society for the History of Natural History on the gradual professionalism of malacology during the early 20th century.  
Contact : Elizabeth Platts, Belmont, New Road, Littleton, Winchester, Hants. SO22 6QR

### **Progress on Pest Control in Collections**

2 December 1997, Natural History Museum  
Contact : Phil Ackery, Dept. of Entomology, The Natural History Museum. Tele. 0171 938 9346

### **Entomological Collections : Entomology for Non-entomologists**

24 February 1998, BCG meeting, Tullie House, Carlisle.  
Details to follow.  
Contact : Steve Hewitt, Committee Member

### **BCG AGM**

April 1998, Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh

## 1997 BCG AGM

### **Chairman's Report**

The last year, my first as Chair, has been an extremely busy one for BCG. A lot of hard work has been done so if my report sounds a little like an Oscar acceptance speech in parts please forgive me. We have moved forward on a number of fronts and in particular I am glad to report the Biology Curator, edited by Patricia Francis and Kathryn Berry at Bolton, is going from strength to strength and is looking extremely good! Many thanks to them. We have also worked hard to strengthen contacts with other organisations particularly the Systematics Forum and the MGC and Steve Blackmore and Val Bott respectively attended one of our committee meetings this year.

The biggest amount of my time and that of the Committee has been taken up by the Collections Monitoring Cell, led by Mike Palmer. It is extremely sad that this is the case but worrying developments in many museums means this is a vital part of the Group's business. We have acted, either by letters or reviewing documents, at Bristol, Leicester, Manchester, Kew Gardens and Passmore Edwards and have kept a watching brief on Nottingham, Glasgow and Eton.

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**Deadline:** All items for next publication to reach Editors by 8th September 1997.

The situation in Scotland has recently caused considerable concern. On a positive note a new post in Reading and the replacement of a natural history curator in Bedford (Rosemary Brind having been moved upstairs, so to speak) show that it is not all doom and gloom. However we need, even more, to try to get the message across to councillors, trustees and managers that biology collections are both important to, and popular with, the general public. Mike feels strongly that a letter from your Chair (often after the event) is not a terribly effective response and, to that end, is writing an Action Pack as part of a new BCG initiative which will be launched later on this year. He also is intending to set up a network of regional reporters to feed back any worrying signs or developments to the Cell. We have made good contacts with the *Museums Journal* to try and keep the profile of biology collections high. Mike would be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to become involved in the work of this Cell.

The Millennium bid for the National Biodiversity Network has also been an important issue this year. Steve Garland, head of our Biological Recording Cell, will talk about the details of his report but I would reiterate BCG's concern over this issue. We will endeavour to keep you informed of new developments, as the first bid has now failed, and to represent our members' views. We have had a number of successful meetings (including a hastily arranged one in Nottingham on Biological Recording — thanks Graham!) which Steve Thompson will talk about in his report. Many thanks to all those involved in organising them including of course Julian Carter, who has put together this splendid meeting here in Cardiff! Nick Goff (who will give his own report) has been keeping us up-to-date with documentation issues whilst Nick Gordon has been our contact with NSCG and also has started work on new BCG display panels to increase our publicity at meetings. David Carter has continued to act as liaison between BCG and the specialist curatorial groups set up by the Systematics Forum.

To conclude I would like to thank all the members of the Committee who have all been working extremely hard for BCG. I also would like to thank our Secretary, Steve Thompson, and Treasurer, Kathie Way, for all their work to keep the Group running. Also to Helen Burchmore for ably taking the Minutes! Finally I would like to thank Mike Graham and Steve Woolfall, who are retiring from Committee, for all their hard work. Mike, in particular, has devoted time, first as Secretary and then as Chairman, to BCG and as the incoming Chairman I should like to express my gratitude to him for all his efforts over the past years.

Jane Pickering

### Editor's Report

Production of the Newsletters has proceeded fairly smoothly and all have gone out within a reasonable time of proposed production timetables. Barring unforeseen problems we expect this to continue but it does depend on the cooperation of contributors to send their articles on or before the copydates shown on the back cover. This is particularly important for the July edition since the printers have a two week break in July making it difficult for them to send the Newsletters out on time if there are any delays.

We would like to thank all the contributors who have sent us material in the last year, as well as Northern Whig, particularly George, who has been very patient with us!

We look forward to receiving articles for the Next Newsletter, as well as photographs, comments, drawings or letters — so get your thinking caps on now, we need all the help we can get!

*Patricia Francis and Kathryn Berry*

### Secretary's Report

Committee has held three meetings this year, they being on:

- 7 May 1996, eight present out of thirteen;
- 9 September, 11 present; and
- 20 January, 1997, eight present, four absent and Steve Garland was there in spirit.

Much of what we discussed has already been covered, but some other things should be mentioned. The last meeting was attended by Steve Blackmore, chair of the Systematics Forum and Val Bott, Deputy Director of the MGC,

Steve was there to tell us about the SF. They were set up to promote communication and good practice in Natural History museums, and to develop a national strategy for systematics research. This will not be a strategy for collections, but they will obviously be a key aspect of any strategy and the SF will liaise with the specialist groups in order to get the most comprehensive and representative results.

Val was there to tell us about what the MGC were doing, particularly with respect to how it affected the natural science community. Their principal roles are in advice, standards and advocacy, and also had the task of implementing government policy, such as outlined in the recent DNH review. They have no scientists on their staff and are keen to liaise with specialist groups. There will be articles on both these topics in a future TBC.

Other items that were covered included:

The production of some display panels for the group to put up at meetings, currently being dealt with by Nick Gordon.

A review of membership and recruitment, to be on the agenda at the next meeting.

Advising on the destination of the Jourdain Society collection of birds eggs, and also liaising with Wiltshire Police over the destination of some egg collections confiscated before what turned out to be a successful prosecution.

Involvement in the Leicester University Museum Studies course.

One topic that was taken forward was the idea of what we chose to call Stage 2 meetings, which were to be more detailed meetings, following up the early year meetings that we have held on bones, botany etc. One such meeting was organised by Kathie Way, to the NHM Wandsworth store, but insufficient interest was expressed and the meeting was eventually cancelled. If there is an interest in this kind of meeting, could we have some feedback please.

The group organised three meetings in 1996/7, including last year's AGM meeting, which was jointly held with GCG in Newcastle, on training issues. The Paris meeting was very successful, a good time was had by all, and we even visited a museum. The meeting in Nottingham was organised at very short notice by Graham Whalley, but was well attended, very interesting and promoted a lively debate. There should be a write up in a future TBC.

In addition to these, BCG also worked on the Cambridge international conference, another very successful event. I would like to record here our thanks for the enormous amount of work put in by Chris Collins and his team.

We also put together, again at very short notice, a session at the MA conference, on the issues of orphan collections and collections at risk. This was very successful in that it attracted a large proportion of non-natural scientists and generated a very lively discussion, amply demonstrating the interest on the part of the wider museum community in these issues. We will be hoping for an even better response for this year's session, which will look at the future of the specialist curator, and is being organised jointly with GCG and SMA.

We are in the process of putting together another European trip, to Vienna, at the end of this year, and are hoping to do the early year meeting in 1998 on entomology, the venue yet to be decided. Details of these and other meetings will be available in future issues of The Biology Curator.

And I will finish with the usual request to you to let committee know of any issues you think we should be covering, and your feedback on the things we do. Thank you.

Steve Thompson.

### Treasurer's Report

#### DETAILS OF EXPENDITURE AND INCOME FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 1996 - 31 MARCH 1997

#### INCOME

Study trip to Paris	£6,931.00
Subscriptions	2,943.75
Interest on bank account	91.25
Sale of publications/advertising	73.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£10,039.00</b>

#### EXPENDITURE

Study trip to Paris	6,928.61
1996 AGM Newcastle	205.12
Cambridge SPNHC meeting bursaries	500.00
Postal costs	73.88
Refund of postage to J. Morgan (back issues of Newsletter)	13.15
Bank charges	3.00
Gift for Rosina Down	30.25
Book for use by M. Palmer	10.00
Biology Curator 6	977.81
Biology Curator 7	998.75

**Total expenditure** £9,740.57

**Income over expenditure** £298.43

**Total at bank 24 March 1996** £8,863.24

**Total at bank 1 April 1997** £9,191.67

#### MEMBERSHIP

Personal members	219
Institutional members (UK)	67
Overseas members	41
Exchanges	9
<b>Total membership</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>Total annual income from subscriptions</b>	<b>£3,372.00</b>

Kathie Way

March 31 1997

**Members who have not paid Subscriptions for 1996 or 1997 will be deleted from the Membership List.**

## Minutes of the BCG Annual General Meeting

**Held on 16 April 1997 at the National Museum of Wales**

1. Apologies for absence:  
Shona Allen, Helen Burchmore, John Edmondson, Simon Heyhow, Chris Norris, Paul Richards, Ian Wallace, Kathie Way, Derek Whiteley.

2. Minutes of the last AGM:  
The minutes of the 1996 AGM were accepted as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising:  
There were no matters arising.

4-7 Officer's reports:

8. Any other business:

Ray Barnett thanked BCG for their support over the situation at Bristol Museum. He also wanted to bring attention to the fact that there was a discrepancy between the need expressed for natural science and what was actually happening.

Steve Garland gave a short report on the Millennium Fund bid for biological recording, and requested information on the Wildlife Trust's new bid, about which conflicting reports had been received. Dave Mellor reported that his experience from his involvement in the situation had been most unsatisfactory. SG will follow up on his comments. Howard Mendel suggested that BCG set up an initiative to represent museum-based record centres. Dave Mellor proposed that BCG hold a special meeting to look at the issues related to biological recording. It was resolved that an emergency action meeting would be organised to do this.

Jenny Moore wanted BCG to address the problems facing specialist curators. Rob Huxley recommended promoting the increased representation of natural sciences on MA Council.

There were two committee posts vacant at this time, and one candidate had been nominated by committee, Sam Hallett, proposed Jane Pickering, seconded Steve Thompson.

9. The date and venue of the 1998 AGM had yet to be decided.

## BCG Documentation Cell

Report to AGM, 16 April 1997

And now to one of the more interesting aspects of being a biology curator: documentation. The aim of the Documentation Cell is to produce guidelines and assistance to BCG members, and others, especially those without a background in natural sciences, on the effective documentation of natural science collections.

The Cell has been looking at the essential core information that is needed to record natural science objects, in addition to the minimum required for MGC Registration. The results of our deliberations will be printed in The Biology Curator, with an invitation for comments. There is the possibility that MDA may then take them up as a factsheet. This is the first stage in developing wider guidelines on the documentation of natural science collections for MGC Registration.

The Cell has also ensured that the needs of natural science collections are included in the development of national standards for documentation. Both Jane Pickering and I have been part of MDA's SPECTRUM Natural Sciences Guidelines Working Group. Its work is tied up with a second edition of SPECTRUM and subject-specific applications.

As there is growing concern at present about collections at risk, the need to know what is in our museums is greater than ever, to ensure that they do not disappear. The Documentation Cell will continue to work on producing resources to make it easier to cope with the essential, but dangerously neglected, recording of natural science collections.

You can help by joining the Documentation Cell; it won't involve more than a few phone calls. All offers of help will be gratefully received.

Nick Goff

## BCG Committee: Address List

### Chairman: Jane Pickering

Address: The University Museum, Parks Road, Oxford,  
OX1 3PW.

Tel: 01865 272962

Fax: 01365 272970

e-mail: Jane.pickering@oum.ox.ac.uk

### Secretary: Steve Thompson

Address: Scunthorpe Museum, Oswald Road,  
Scunthorpe, S. Humberside, DN15 7BD.

Tel: 01724 843533

Fax: 01724 270474

### Treasurer / Membership Secretary: Kathie Way

Address: Zoology Dept, Natural History Museum,  
Cromwell Road, London, SW7 5BD.

Tel: 0171 938 8892

Fax: 0171 938 8754

e-mail: kmw@nhm.ac.uk

### Steve Garland (Biological Recording Cell)

Address: Bolton Museum, Le Mans Crescent, Bolton,  
BL1 1SE.

Tel: 01204 522311 ex 2211

Fax: 01204 391352

e-mail: bolmg@gn.apc.org

### Mike Palmer (Collections at Risk Cell)

Address: The Natural History Centre, Liverpool  
Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EN  
Tel: 0151 478 4281 (4377 = Botany (Mondays)) (4291  
= NHC)

Fax: 0151 478 4390

### Nick Gordon (Conservation Cell)

Address: Saffron Walden Museum, Museum Street,  
Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1JL.

Tel: 01799 510333

Fax: 01799 510550

### Julian Carter (Research Cell)

Address: National Museum of Wales, Cathays Park,  
Cardiff, CF1 3NP.

Tel: 01222 397951

Fax: 01222 239009

### Nick Goff (Documentation Cell)

Address: Woodspring Museum, Burlington Street,  
Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, BS23 1PR.

Tel: 01934 621028

Fax: 01934 6125

### David Carter

Address: Dept. of Entomology, Natural History  
Museum, Cromwell Road, London, SW7 5BD

Tel: 0171 938 9452

Fax: 0171 938 8937

e-mail: d.carter@nhm.ac.uk

### Maggie Reilly

Address: Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow,  
Glasgow, G12 8QQ

Tel: 0141 339 8855

Fax: 0141 307 8059

### Sam Hallett

Address: Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Queens Road,  
Bristol, BS8 1RL

Tel: 0117 922 3571

Fax: 0117 922 2047

### John Harrison

Address: Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex Park,  
Birchington, Kent, CT7 0BH

Tel: 01843 842168

Fax: 01843 846661

### Helen Burchmore

Address: Plymouth City Museum, Drake Circus,  
Plymouth, PL4 8AJ

Tel: 01752 264878

Fax: 01752 264959

## LEEDS CITY MUSEUM - its Natural History Collections

### Part 3 The Botanical Collections

Adrian Norris

Assistant Curator Natural History, Leeds City Museums,  
Calverly St., LS1 3AA

#### ABSTRACT

This paper covering the botanical collections held at the Leeds City Museum, is the third in a series of papers on the museums natural history collections, (Norris, 1993 & 1995). Although the Leeds City Museum has had a long tradition in the fields of Zoology, Entomology and Malacology, its collecting tradition in the field of Botany, and related subjects, was far less active. Some material entered the museum in the early years but by far the bulk of the botanical collections are of much more recent origin.

#### COLLECTIONS - LOST AND FOUND

The museum holds a number of very early botanical collections some dating back over 200 years, and yet very little of the pre-war collections seem to have survived. The collections of John Atkinson, F.J.S.Foljambe (MP), Miss Purvis, Prof Rutherford and F.H.Woods all appear to have been lost. The loss of these collections seems to have been as a result of the aftermath of the bombing of the museum in March 1941. All the evidence suggests that the botanical collections were removed from the damaged building and placed in an outlying store. Some of this material eventually found its way to a cupboard at Farnley Hall, Old Farnley, Leeds which became the museums main outstore. The hall, now the headquarters of the Yorkshire and Humberside Museums Council, was at that period unheated, damp, the roof leaked and it was generally in a very poor condition. The inevitable happened, and the roof sprung a leak directly above the cupboard. When this was eventually noticed, as far as we can tell several years later, it was too late to salvage the collections. A lesson in not storing vulnerable material in places which are rarely visited by curatorial staff. Not all the botanical collections however, found their way into this cupboard as subsequent events proved.

In the late 1950s Miss Kit Robb, one of Yorkshire's leading botanists at the time, undertook to work on what remained of the museums collections. Miss Robb did very little delving into the museums records, and the Keeper of Biology, Mr John Armitage had little interest in the subject, and even less time or inclination to look into the records. This resulted in collections being mis-attributed, causing ongoing problems for all concerned. The project behind Kit Robb's task was to check the identification of the plants and amalgamate the collections into one. This she did using the Flora of the British Isles by Clapham, Tutin and Warburg (1952), as the order in which to store the collection. The amalgamation of collections without first listing, or marking them, resulted in several small collections vanishing. Recent investigations into the collection has identified specific collections of material in which it is now no longer possible to identify how the collection entered the museum, for example; a small collection of plants by William West must

have entered the museum as part of some other collection, this cannot now be identified specifically, although it probably came in as part of the William Kirby Collection in 1917/18.

The main problem resulting from the mis-attribution of the collections relate to the entries in British Herbaria (Kent, 1957). This publication lists Leeds Museum as housing the collections of R.B.Jowitt, J.F.Pickard, J.Woods and an unknown collector. Of these four entries only that for R.B.Jowitt appears to be correct. We have now been able to identify some 587 sheets as belonging to the collection of F.R.Benson-Jowitt. J.Woods appears to refer to the collection of the Rev. William Wood (1745-1808), however the labels on the boxes in Kit Robbs, handwriting suggests that she attributed this collection to (? Dr Smith), another slight confusion to the story. The reference to the collection of J.F.Pickard is a total mystery.

#### BOTANICAL COLLECTIONS

The Leeds City Museum's botanical collections number in excess of 55,000 specimens, divided up as follows: 35,000 vascular plants; 4,000 mosses and liverworts; 7,000 lichens; 8,000 fungi and over 1,000 miscellaneous items such as microscope slides and marine algae. The museum also holds a large number of photographic slides of flowering plants and fungi.

#### Vascular Plants

In recent years the vascular plant collections have been rehoused in new acid-free solander type boxes. These boxes were designed by the author and built by Westwinds to the highest standard, and are available from them under the name "Norris Royal Special" Solander Boxes. The process of rehousing the collection was an expensive exercise which could only have been undertaken with the help of grants from the Yorkshire and Humberside Museums Council. All the British material rehoused in these boxes have also been indexed onto M.D.A. record cards, and in many cases collection catalogues produced.

The botanical collections in general contain some very early material, often mounted on hand made paper, unfortunately much of this early material has no information with the specimens.

Several members of the Leeds Naturalists' Club and Scientific Association worked on the flora of the Leeds district and built up botanical collections as a direct result of these surveys. Several of these collections have been donated to the museum with the result that we have material from some parts of the city going back to the time of the Rev. William Wood some 300 years past, and in some cases the plants have been collected many times over from the same sites.

The number of individual collections held in Leeds City Museum are far too many to be able to discuss every one fully. I have, therefore, selected a few of the more interesting collections as examples.

## Rev. William Wood (1745-1808)

The Rev. William Wood (1745-1808), was a nonconformist minister who on the 30th of May 1773 succeeded Joseph Priestley at the Mill Hill Chapel in Leeds a post he held till his death in 1808. A keen botanist he built and maintained a botanical collection which remained in the Wood's family until 1948. Miss D. Wood a great granddaughter of Rev Wood wrote to the Linnean Society in 1948 offering the collection to them. It seems that the collection had been passed on to his son on his death in 1808 and had remained in the same house in Yorkshire until just prior to the 2nd war when it was transferred to Miss Wood's home in Dorking. The collection was in the Linnean Society Rooms being examined when a botanist, with Leeds connections, saw the collection, and stated that it should go to the Leeds City Museum, which in due course it did.

Originally bound in volumes, these were dismantled by Kit Robb and part of the collection, mainly material with locality data, was incorporated into the main collection, a fact that has only just come to light. In the mid 1980s Nigel Hepper of the Royal Botanic Gardens Herbarium at Kew did some work on this collection, and it was thought at that time that none of the material had been incorporated into the general herbarium. This resulted in some 37 plants being omitted, mostly ferns and their allies, from his paper, 'William Wood — an eighteenth-century Leeds botanist' (Hepper, 1988).

## James Abbott (1831-1889)

The first survey of the Leeds area was undertaken by James Abbott. Educated at Leeds Grammar School, he served as an apprentice to a Leeds Pharmacist. He then went to London to work for Corbyn, Story and Co., Chemists in High Holborn, returning to Leeds in the late 1850s to set up his own business. He thus opened a chemists shop at 145, Woodhouse Lane in Leeds. He studied botany under Prof. Huxley at South Kensington, and later took on an important role in the teaching of natural history, and later acted as a demonstrator in biology at the Yorkshire College (later Leeds University), under Prof. Miall. In 1872 he presented a manuscript list of 400 plants which he had recorded from the Adel and Meanwood Valley area of Leeds to the Leeds Naturalists' Club. After he died in 1889 his collection was taken over by the society and eventually passed over to the care of Leeds City Museum in 1976.

## Thomas Cockerline (1891-1979)

Born in Leeds he was the son of a wheelwright, his father having moved to Leeds from Roos a small village a few miles from Withernsea in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Thomas developed an early interest in natural history and botany in particular as a result of spending several of his school holidays with his grand-parents in the village of Roos. He started collecting and pressing plants at an early age and kept up this interest throughout his life. Most of his working life he spent in clerical jobs, but he was a very keen gardener and on his retirement he took a job as a gardener with a brewery, tending gardens at their public houses. He married Hilda Cecilia Brooks in 1924, but did not raise a family, Cissie died in 1956. His extensive botanical

collections were left to the Leeds City Museums in his last will and testament.

## Dr George Arthur Nelson (1903-1989)

Born in Pocklington in East Yorkshire, he obtained a scholarship to Durham Cathedral Choir School in 1911. In 1917 he left the Choir and completed his education at Pocklington High School. He served as an apprentice with a Pocklington Chemist before coming to Leeds to study at the Yorkshire College of Pharmacy, graduating in 1924. In 1933 he is recorded as having set up in business as a chemist at No.1, Caledonian Road, Leeds. In 1946 he joined the Leeds University staff as a lecturer in Pharmacy and Pharmacology [part-time], becoming a full time member of staff in 1950 after he sold his shop. One of his main interest as a botanist was poisonous plants and how the toxins affected people and animals, he published several papers on this subject and undertook forensic work on behalf of the local hospitals and the police. He always claimed that his botanical collection was an accident. The bulk of the collection came into being as a result of his interest in botanical painting. He was a recorder for the Leeds Naturalists' Club for many years. His collection came to the Leeds City Museums soon after his death in 1989.

## Ernest Charles Horrell (d.c.1943)

This extensive collection of flowering plants was originally left by Horrell to Dr W.A.Sledge who subsequently deposited the collection with Leeds University. The collection was transferred into the care of the Leeds City Museums from Leeds University by G.A.Shaw and Prof. Woolhouse in 1977, with the permission of Dr Sledge. The collection is well known for the large number of alien plants it contains.

## Henry Ibbotson (1814-1886)

Henry was born at Ganthorpe a small village near Castle Howard the son of John and Elizabeth Ibbotson. He developed an early interest in botany, and spent much of his youth in the company of Richard Spruce exploring the countryside around Castle Howard. Richard Spruce an eminent botanist was born in the same village in 1817. Henry became a school teacher with appointments at Mowthorpe, Dunnington and Grimthorpe. He travelled widely with Richard Spruce throughout Britain in search of plants prior to Richard leaving to collect in South America in 1849. In latter years he earned his living by collecting plants for druggists, but fell on hard times, often being unable to pay his rent. His address in York, 2 Grape Lane was known as a poor area of immigrants and had a bad reputation. He died after a short illness on the 12th of February 1886

## William Kirby (1821-1919)

Born in Leeds William was the son of William and Ann Kirby. Of poor working class and little education little is known of his life but he is recorded as being the caretaker at the Leeds School Board Offices in Great George Street, Leeds. His interest in botany was long standing and he built up a large collection of pressed plants. He corresponded with many local botanists including Henry Ibbotson. His

collection was purchased by the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society for their Museum. William died in his home at 6, Cliff Mount, Delph Lane, Woodhouse, Leeds on the 13th of January 1919.

#### **Kenneth Geoffrey Payne (1917-)**

Born in Cheam the eldest of three brothers, he was educated at Caterham School, and the Royal College of Science, graduated aged 19 with an Honours B.Sc. in Physics. After graduating he moved to York to work for a firm of Optical Instrument Makers, and remained there until he retired. He is well known as an entomologist and mycologist as well as a botanist. His extensive collection includes material from many parts of Europe, in particular several of the Mediterranean Islands.

#### **John Grimshaw Wilkinson (1856-1937)**

John Wilkinson was born in Wortley near Leeds, and was a staunch baptist. He was involved in the grocery retail trade until he became blind in 1877. Fortunately he was sufficiently well off not to have to worry about how he could earn a livelihood. His second cousin, the painter Atkinson Grimshaw, also helped to enable him to take up the study of botany. He used his lips and tongue as well as smell and touch to identify firstly trees and later most other plants. His expertise became so widely acknowledged that Leeds University honoured him with the honorary degree of Master of Science in 1915.

This collection contains many rare and extinct garden plants and varieties, mainly collected from private and public gardens in the Yorkshire area. His collection was transferred into the care of Leeds City Museum in 1982.

#### **Bankfield Museum Batley (Calderdale Museums Service)**

In 1990 the Natural History Department of Calderdale Museum Service was closed and the collections transferred to Leeds. This included a number of small but important collections most of which had originated from the Hebdon Bridge Literary and Scientific Society in 1973. Material in this transfer includes specimens from Joseph Needham and William Sutcliffe amongst others. See section on Bryophytes for details of Needham and Sutcliffe.

#### **Other Major Collections not listed above**

Akroyd, E., Alexander, P., Armstong, H.J., Barnett, F., Benson-Jowett, F.R., Coates, W., Crossley, R., Dewhurst, J., Flathow, J., Holland, Rev., Hudson-Pope, R., Middleton A., Norris, A., Walker J., West W., Wood, W.,

#### **Bryological collections**

The main part of the Bryological collections arrived in Leeds as part of the transfer of material from the Bankfield Museum in Calderdale to 1990. Prior to this the Leeds City Museum held very little material, and the little it did hold, mostly post dated 1960. The material transferred from Calderdale included the collections of James Needham (1849-1913), Harold Walsh and William Sutcliffe. Most of the collection needs its identification checked, and then repacking and rehousing to bring it up to an acceptable modern standard. Only one of these three main collections

have been examined in recent years, that of William Sutcliffe of Heptonstall, (Blockeel, 1980), when the nomenclature was checked and brought up to date. A recent addition to the collections is the collection of Fred Branson.

#### **Mycological collections**

The mycological collections are a recent addition to the museums holdings. Started in the mid 1970s by Dr Charles J.La Touche as part of the Meanwood Valley Survey, a major linear park in Leeds. The collection has been added to by some of the counties most outstanding mycologists, not least of which is the present recorder Chris Yeates. The collection has had several boosts over the years, which have added to its status and resulted in even further donations. Perhaps the most important of these were the collections from Calderdale. Bankfield Museum had the beginnings of a substantial mycological collection containing some 577 specimens. This collection was put together by Peter Earland-Bennet and Paul Stewart, and the material was intimately linked to the lichen collections in that the status of some 'lichens' is still open to debate.

The decision by Dr T.F.(Tom) Preece to donate his collection of rusts to the museum on completing his Atlas of Rust Fungi (Preece & Hick, 1990), also helped bring in material, not the least of which is the collection of micro-fungi associated with plants donated by Mr K.G.Payne. This collection contains nearly one thousand samples, every one of which has been described in detail on notes contained with the packets.

The publication of a paper by the author 'Being of Sound Mind' (Norris, 1987), on what to do, or not do, when leaving your collection to a museum, or similar institute also produced dividends. In 1989 the author was contacted by the widow of the late Mr Anthony Joseph Moore of Wakefield, who had read the paper which was amongst the documents left behind by her late husband. Amongst the mycological material collected by the late Mr Moore was a long series of specimens part of Kalman Vankey's *Ustilaginales Exciccata*. With the help of Kalman Vankey we were able to complete this exciccata and we also acquired with the aid of a Science Museum (PRISM) fund grant several other part or complete exciccata. This collection includes material from Liro, J.I., *Mycotheca Fennica* (900 samples); Rabenhorst, L., *Fungi europaei* (400 samples); Romell, L., *Fungi exsiccati praesertim scandinavici* (200 samples); Briosi, G., & Cavara, F., *funghi parassiti* (475 samples) and Eriksson, J., *Fungi parasitici Scandinavici* (50 samples) plus many several hundred other samples. These collections have helped to give the collection an historical base.

We have also recently acquired, but as yet still not sorted, a quantity of material collected by Mr Willis Bramley (1897-1992), the county recorder for Yorkshire. The result of all this activity is that the fungi collections are now well established and have good local and international elements to the collection, which we hope to be able to develop over the coming years.

#### **The Lichen Collections**

The transfer of the lichen collection from the Bankfield Museum in Halifax to Leeds nearly quadrupled the size of

## Institute of Anatomical Science

## Museum Specimen 'Rescue' Scheme — Update

At the 1992 Annual General Meeting concern was expressed about the state of Pathology Museums in the UK. It was reported that in some parts of the country as many as 70% of the museums faced closure with the resultant destruction of the collections and the loss of many potentially good teaching specimens that could be used by other establishments. Many of the museums were founded in earlier centuries; indeed some of the specimens were considered to be irreplaceable.

The meeting proposed that the treasurer should write on behalf of the institute to every Pathology Museum in the country to enquire if they intend to dispose of all or part of their collection, and if so to ask if they would be prepared to notify him. He arranged to have any available specimens (with or without documentation) collected and brought to a distribution centre in Nottingham where they could be assessed, renovated and catalogued. A list of available material would then be sent to all Medical Schools who had expressed interest and the specimens given free of charge to any bona fide Pathology or Anatomy museum to fill gaps in their own collections. In this way it was hoped that we could preserve many of the older specimens, often showing pathology that is rarely seen today, while helping those schools who still use such museum pots in their teaching.

When we commenced the "rescue scheme" it became clear that this would be a major undertaking. We considered this work to be very important and the treasurer wrote to the Wellcome Trust to see if we could gain funding to assist in running the scheme and they generously awarded a grant of over £42,500 to cover the cost of consumables for three years and the salary for a technician to be employed on the renovation of all specimens. During the period of the grant over 4,000 specimens were received which was in line with our prediction. Specimens have been received from all over the UK and the numbers of donated specimens ranged from three specimens from the Royal Air Force Forensic Museum to over 1,000 from University College Hospital Medical School. Of all the specimens received only two were judged to be beyond restoration. Most specimens arrived without any documentation and meetings were arranged where pathologists met to put macro diagnoses to them. When the specimens had been renovated they were dispatched via a carrier to bona fide establishments who had expressed interest in receiving them. In the original proposal it was expected that these would be established museums, and although several museums have been recipients much of the available material has gone to form the nucleus of five entirely new teaching museums for use by both undergraduate and post graduate students.

All of these museums will continue to receive specimens as suitable material becomes available. In the last three years we have also been able to help organisations such as Oxford University to restore their pathology museum which had suffered through lack of experienced qualified staff. Specimens continue to be donated and the rescue scheme is judged to have been such a success that we are continuing

the Leeds City Museums lichen collection. The bulk of the collection was the work of Peter Earland-Bennett with the help of Paul Stewart his assistant. The vast majority of specimens within the collection were identified and carded to M.D.A. standard. However, many thousands of specimens are still awaiting packaging and identification. The Isle of Man material which remained unidentified has been loaned back to Peter Earland-Bennett to enable him to complete his work on this material for a lichen flora of the Isle of Man. It is hoped that the other unidentified material will be worked on in the near future. In 1990 we also acquired a collection of 300 specimens in the form of an exciccata from Alan Fryday.

The lichen collections although mainly from British locations, also includes overseas material. Samples included within the collections come from as far afield as Hong Kong. Much of the identification of the overseas material, and a good deal of the British, has been undertaken by Mr Albert Henderson of Leeds University. Without who's help and encouragement, we would not have been able to cope with the collection.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who have helped and advised in the production of this paper. In particular I would like to thank my wife Barbara for reading and commenting on the manuscript and Miss Helen James who undertook much of the background research on my behalf.

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with the work which we now hope to finance ourselves or by finding other sponsors. We are currently exploring the possibility of establishing an entirely new museum in the Republic of Ireland.

If you are interested in this scheme please contact: John Ben L.I.A.S. Tel: 0115 9709076. Fax: 0115 9704852. E-Mail: John.Ben.@nott.ac.uk.

### Natural Sciences Curatorial Course

Leicester University Department of Museum Studies  
Summer 1996

*Course leader:* Simon Knell

*Tutors:* Derek Lott, Jan Dawson, John Martin, Grace Deeks

#### Outline of course

The course examined the role of the museum natural scientist in the museum environment. Those attending came from a diverse range of backgrounds ranging from full time students on Leicester University's Museum Studies Course to occasional students, from home and abroad.

The course aimed to have a practical emphasis, to be of the greatest use to those about to embark on careers in the natural science museum environment and was structured into the following six units:

- Historical and contemporary context
- Collecting and recording
- Preservation and preparation
- Identification and enquiries
- Conservation and collection management
- Systematics, taxonomy and nomenclature

A course pack for the week was provided, which contained introductions to the modules and the specific learning objectives of each, as well as a bibliography of useful texts and, where copyright permitted, specific articles of interest.

In accordance with the practical nature of the course there were very few formal lecture sessions beyond the introductory 'Historical and Contemporary Context' unit. This module explored the origin and context of natural science collections and examined current strategies for such collections and the specialist expertise needed to fulfil these roles.

The second unit looked at the role of museums in collecting natural history specimens, methods of collection and standards for recording, in line with national and local strategies. Included in this was the legal and ethical constraints of collecting.

Following on from this was an exploration of the methods of preservation for biological and zoological collections and the implications of using each technique upon the subsequent research use of the collections.

Identification of specimens and enquiries is an important component of curatorial work, so unit four was given over to this. Obviously it would take lifetime to be able to identify all the enquiries that may be brought in, however the basics

of identification of common groups of specimens was explored and there was plenty of opportunity for practice.

There are issues in collection management and conservation of collections that are specific to natural history collections. These were scrutinised and specific examples such as labelling, types of containers, mounting and hazards both to and from collections were addressed.

The course was, as previously mentioned, as practical as possible. During the week visits were undertaken to Leicestershire's Biological Records Centre, and to the various natural science departments of Leicestershire Museum Service. Field work was also conducted in some of Leicestershire's nature reserves, as well as a successful, and a somewhat less successful, batwatching trip to Foxton Locks and Barrow Upon Soar respectively. Thursday involved a terrific field visit to Dove Dale to view and identify the fabulous range of flora and, to a lesser extent, fauna of the area.

#### Personal perspective

I found the course and the supporting material extremely useful. Like the other modules that make up Leicester University's Museum Studies course, this is not intended to spoon feed those attending, but to encourage professional self-development, both during and after the course.

For me the course broadened and consolidated my image of natural science in museums. Coming from a largely geological background it gave me a valuable insight into the nuts and bolts of biological curatorship. I was surprised how much of it appears to be common sense identification and diligent recording, just as with the earth sciences. I feel the eclectic mix of participants also added a lot by providing a broad base of current experience and a lot of fun. Hopefully these contacts will continue for many years to come. Finally the course literature gave useful leads to papers and articles on the current 'best practice'. Wisely the course restricted itself to curatorial activities rather than attempting a dangerously shallow introduction to conservation, other than of a preventative nature.

I really enjoyed the course; the field sessions, bat detecting and biological surveying, were particularly outstanding, though that had much to do with the environment and weather. My only regret is that the course only lasted a week and only included one Indian meal....c'est la vie.

Matthew Stephens

## Specialist Curators: An Endangered Species

Biology Curators Group, Geology Curators Group and Society of Museum Archaeologists

With the gradual loss of the specialist curator, what is happening to the research and interpretation of collections? Should the nationals be the only source of specialist knowledge with the non-nationals acting as a collections manager of local heritage?

For further details contact Steve Thompson on 01724 843533.

## Identification Qualifications - IdQ's

Widespread and growing concern for the quality of our environment has led to a rapid expansion of legislation and associated procedures for assessing the status of habitats, and for measuring impacts and changes. One consequence of this is a heavy demand for practical field investigations and reports.

A universal feature of biological monitoring, biological impact assessments and nature conservation studies is a requirement for identifying animal and plant species. From these identifications, information on abundance, distribution, richness, change and many other aspects is then acquired. Fundamental to the entire process is accurate identification and the consistent use of the right names for the fauna and flora. The significance of subsequent analyses and interpretation is heavily dependent on this stage of the process, yet it is so often taken for granted and the identification skills required are much underrated. Without confidence in the original data, any final recommendations must be open to doubt — a concern increasingly expressed by environmentalists.

To address this problem, the Natural History Museum introduced the Identification Qualification (IdQ) scheme in 1993 with the aim of improving standards in environmental work in the UK by awarding certificates of competence in animal and plant identification to biologists and ecologists. The IdQ's external Advisory Board has a membership drawn by nomination from industry, consultancies, universities and non-governmental organisations. This is the first scheme of its kind to deal specifically with identification, and has been widely praised.

Qualification is by examination within a particular subject area, and the Natural History Museum is the awarding body. IdQs are available in a wide range of subjects, including vascular plants, freshwater algae, aquatic macrophytes, freshwater macro-invertebrates, marine meiofauna groups and freshwater fishes. They are normally held at the NHM in London and consist of an exam lasting c. 3 hours. The exam tests a knowledge of nomenclature and terminology of characters as well as the ability to identify and key out a wide range of species from the relevant plant group(s).

The vascular plant IdQ, for example, consists of a section to test the participant's understanding of nomenclature and

morphology followed by fresh samples of 50 species of vascular plants to be identified, usually to species level. Ten selected 'spot' samples must be identified without the aid of field guides or identification keys. The species are chosen to reflect a range of families and habitats, including woodland, ruderal, chalk grassland, marsh, coastal and heathland, and are collected by a group of collectors from around the UK to provide a spread of geographic location.

The Freshwater Macro-invertebrates exam consists of a practical test lasting two and a half hours and half hour written paper. The practical test includes approximately 50 specimens — larval, juvenile and adult — which have to be identified to various specified levels. A short written paper comprises questions on morphology, structure of keys and the correct use of scientific names.

Keys and other manuals may be used in most parts of the exams, but in the time available some of the material has to be identified largely 'by eye' to at least the major groups.

In addition to the full IdQ certificate for candidates who achieve the 90 per cent pass mark for the examination, the NHM also recognises an Intermediate Standard for candidates who do not reach the pass mark but who attain at least 70 per cent — intended to encourage the progressive acquisition of identification skills.

The fees range from £200-£250 for each exam. For further information please contact the Science Marketing Office, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Rd, London, SW7 5BD, Tel: 0171 938 9261, Fax: 0171 938 9189, or e-mail: [rjl@nhm.ac.uk](mailto:rjl@nhm.ac.uk).

## Wanted

H.M. Customs and Excise  
Building 302, Cargo Centre  
Manchester Airport M90 5XX  
Tel: 0161 912 6943  
Fax: 0161 912 6898

Dear BCG

Could you please ask your members for any mammal skins/furs for my talks in regard to endangered species to schools and other interested groups. If there are any available for donation or loan I would be extremely grateful. I am particularly interested in big cat skins but would be grateful for anything.

Mr. Geoff Conner  
CITES Officer

## It's All About Clean Air

The Institute of Anatomical Sciences

Autumn Scientific Meeting

University of Wales, Cardiff, Friday 20th September 1996

### THE FORMALDEHYDE FIGHT

#### THE TEAM

#### 1. The Technology. (Type 50C and Type 100C Electric Air Cleaners)

*Mr. T. E. Marshall, Clean Air (Formaldehyde) Ltd., Glasgow*

#### Abstract

Explanation of the patented technology, the filters and the high voltage granular media enhancement system. The benefits of re-circulating air as opposed to external ventilation. The importance of optimising filtered air change rates to reduce airborne concentration of formaldehyde in a room/laboratory. Thereafter to maintain concentration on a continuous basis at less than 2ppm during the working day.

#### Personal details — T. E. Marshall

Mr. Marshall is a director of Clean Air (Formaldehyde) Ltd., Glasgow. His career spans some 30 years primarily in the electrical and mechanical engineering services and manufacturing industries. Chartered Engineer and Fellow of

the Institution of Electrical Engineers, 1977. Previous employment as a director of Balfour Kilpatrick Ltd. and Haden Young — both major multi-service engineering companies.

#### 2. Characterisation of Solids for Formaldehyde Removal

*Dr. P. J. Hall, Department of Chemistry, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow*

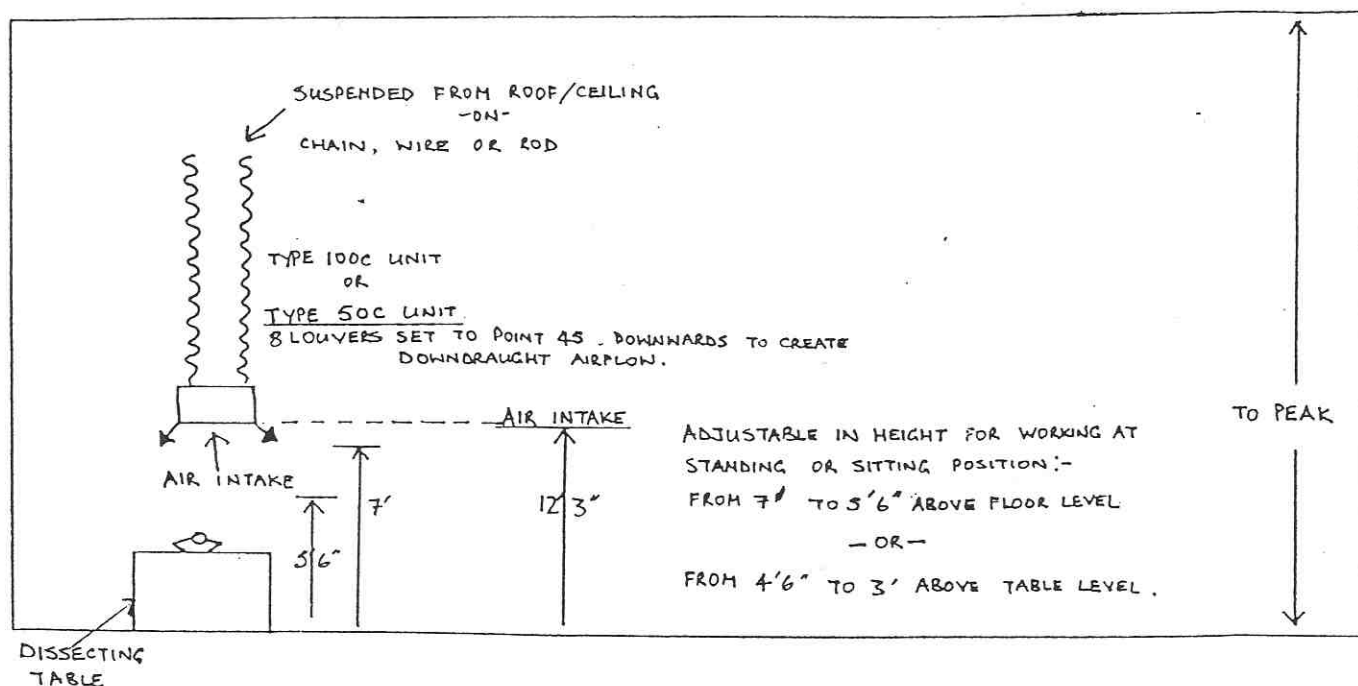
#### Abstract

Activated carbons are the most popular method for the removal of formaldehyde vapour from contaminated air. They are limited because of slow mass transfer into micropores and difficulties producing identical pore systems. This makes prediction of filter lifetime unreliable. Porous polymers offer a more reproducible system with diffusion into the polymer pore system followed by diffusion and trapping in bulk material. Methods for characterising their performance are discussed.

#### Personal details — Dr. P. J. Hall

Dr. Hall is a senior lecturer in chemical technology, Department of Chemistry, University of Strathclyde. Over 50 publications in referred journals in the areas of materials characterisation and fuels science. PhD in Physical Chemistry, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1987. Previous employment: British Antarctic Survey, Exxon Corporate Research, US.

#### Dissecting room



Notes: 1 Optimum juxtapositioning of the number of units proposed would have to be agreed.

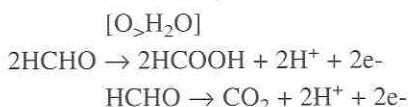
2 A series of tests on the removal of airborne 5% and 7½% formaldehyde were conducted with the air intake at 12'3" above floor level.

## 3. Fuel Cell Sensors (The Formaldemeter)

*Dr. W. J. Criddle, Consultant, School of Pure and Applied Biology, University of Wales, Cardiff*

### Abstract

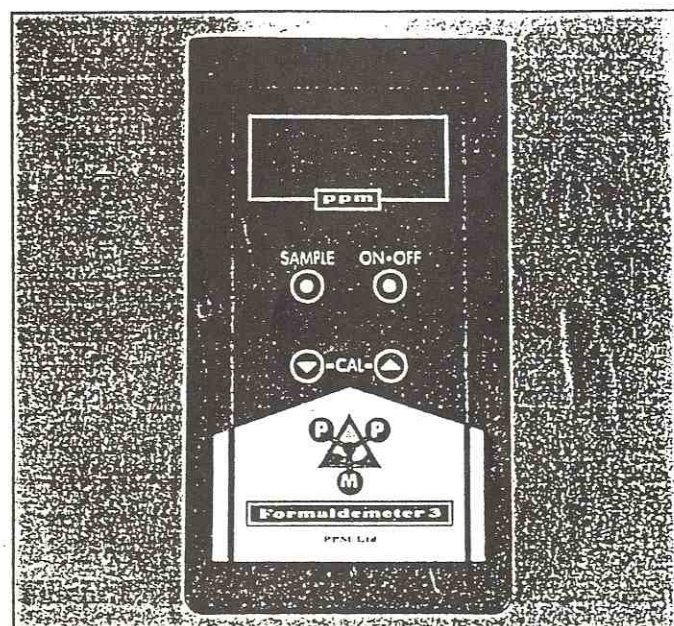
Fuel cell sensors are electrochemical cells in which a substance is catalytically oxidised giving rise to an electric potential which results in a flow of current in an external circuit. Fuels are commonly readily oxidisable organic substances, formaldehyde being one example and catalysts are usually highly surface active platinum based types. The detailed mechanism is complex and is not completely understood, but the overall system may be represented simply (in the case of formaldehyde) as



Fuel cells are extensively used in ethanol (drink driving) monitoring equipment, but can, in theory, be used for any oxidisable species, including inorganic species such as sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide. Most of the current research into fuel cells is not directed towards sensors, but towards their use as power sources, especially in the automotive industry.

### Personal details — Dr. W. J. Criddle

Dr. Criddle has until recently been Senior Lecturer in Analytical Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry, University of Wales, Cardiff. During this time, he has published about 70 papers in the general area of analytical chemistry, and particularly in the area of fuel cell sensors. He is presently Consultant in Analytical Chemistry to the School of Pure and Applied Biology, University of Wales, Cardiff, and to several companies associated with analytical chemistry, including PPM Ltd., manufacturers of a range of formaldehyde monitoring equipment. PhD in Chemistry University of Wales, Cardiff 1960.



## FORMALDEMETER™ 3

The NEW easy-to-use Formaldemeter™ 3 from PPM Ltd. gives a rapid indication of whether the formaldehyde level is below the Maximum Exposure Limit.

- Uses the well proven Lion electrochemical fuel cell sensor
- Has improved selectivity
- Stores time to peak readings
- Stores the peak readings

Research has shown that with the Lion fuel cell, the measured 'time to peak' reading is a function of the gases being analysed. Alcohols, which may be present in the environment where aldehyde is measured, have approximately double the 'time to peak' of formaldehyde 'window' will indicate that an interfering substance is present. This qualitative test will therefore serve to indicate whether a more sophisticated analysis is required. With the use of a microprocessor, calibration and zero pots have been eliminated. The maximum peak reading is retained on the display until the unit is switched off.

### Applications

Formaldehyde is one of the most commonly used substances in industry, and occurs in many processes and products such as:

- Medical
- Pharmaceutical
- Particle boards
- Laminated boards
- Synthetic resins
- Paint manufacture
- Paper manufacture
- Dye stuffs
- Textile treatments
- Horticulture
- Deodorants

### COSHH

The COSHH regulations based on Maximum Exposure Limits make the Formaldemeter 3 an ideal instrument for obtaining a rapid reading, thus eliminating expensive complex and time-consuming laboratory methods.

### Principle of operation

The formaldehyde vapour when drawn across the fuel cell sensor undergoes catalytic oxidation on the platinum surface. This produces an electrical output directly proportional to the formaldehyde level in the atmosphere.

### How to use

1. Hold the instrument in the atmosphere to be analysed and switch ON.
2. Depress the sample button.
3. The formaldehyde level is displayed in approximately 8 seconds.

**Calibration**

The Formaldemeter will normally hold accurate calibration for several months. An easy-to-use formaldehyde standard is included for periodic checking and recalibration.

**Selectivity**

A high degree of selectivity has been incorporated into the fuel cell sensor. However, some substances such as ethanol, propanol and butanol can interfere. By comparing the time to peak with that of the standard it is possible to determine if interfering substances are present and whether more sophisticated analysis is required.

**Phenol filters**

Complete removal of contaminants such as phenol and resorcinol can be achieved by attaching the filters provided to the instruments sampling port. The data shown in Table 2 demonstrates this for the Formaldemeter MK II.

**Table 1. Accuracy**

FORMALDEMETETER MK II (F) versus  
The Modified NIOSH (N) Method  
(Formaldehyde Concentration (ppm))

	N	F	N	F	N	F
	0.37	0.4	1.84	1.9	5.07	4.9
	0.37	0.4	1.96	1.9	4.94	5.0
	0.31	0.3	1.93	1.7	5.07	5.1
	0.34	0.3	1.93	1.7	5.15	5.1
mean	0.35	0.35	1.91	1.80	5.05	5.03
std dev	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.10	0.10	0.09

Reference: Am. Ind. Hyg. Assoc. J. 46(10): 578-584(1985)

**Table 2. Phenol filters**

Results at 21.3°C from 0.5g formaldehyde l<sup>-1</sup> and 80g  
PHENOL l<sup>-1</sup> STANDARD  
(Formaldehyde Concentration 2.7 ppm)  
Response (ppm)

Instr. no.	67	74	97	132
without filter	53.5	42.1	43.1	37.1
with filter	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.6

Reference: BTTG Shirley Technology Centre

**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS****Sensor:**

Electrochemical Fuel Cell

**Calibration:**

In Field Formaldehyde impregnated silica gel standard

**Display:**

3 digit LCD

**Sampling rate:**

0-2 mins depending on previous reading

**Sample volume:**

10 cm<sup>3</sup> approx.

**Detection range:**

0.05-50 ppm

**Precision:**

10% at 2.0 ppm level

**Response time:**

Approximately 8 seconds from sampling formaldehyde

**Battery life:**

300 field tests approx. (PP3 size alkaline battery)

**Weight:**

Instrument: 270 g

Complete Kit: 750 g

**Dimensions:**

Instrument: 150 × 80 × 34 mm

Carrying Case: 266 × 230 × 50 mm

**Kit contents:**

1 instrument incl. battery

1 calibration standard

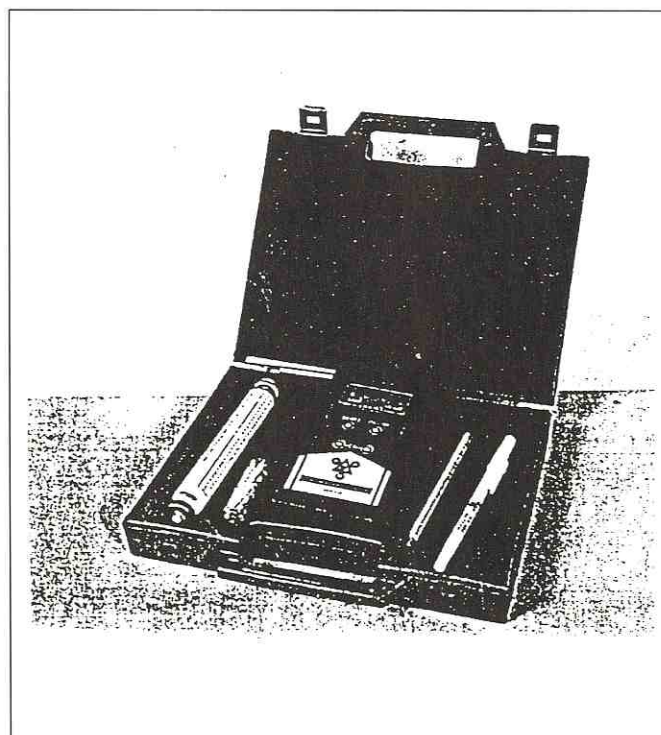
10 phenol filters

1 handbook

**Accessories:**

Calibration Standard

Phenol filters (100 pack)



## Museums Association — Call for Mentors

The response to the opening up of the routes to Associate Membership of the Museums Association (AMA) has been overwhelming, not only in terms of the numbers (over 160 in the first year), but also because of the variety of museum backgrounds represented. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has been included as a key requirement within the AMA Regulations, as it presents an opportunity for individuals to take a planned approach to both professional and personal development. It is a way of broadening knowledge, skills and experience and aims to not only enable individuals do their present job more effectively but also help them realise future aspirations relating to career development. As a direct result of the encouraging response to all new routes, the Museums Association currently needs many more Mentors from all disciplines to act as guides and helpers to potential AMAs as they undertake their CPD.

If you are enthusiastic about museums; feel you are in a position to give something back and would like to contribute to the professional development of another individual within the museum community, then the Museums Association would like to hear from you.

If you think you could help and wish to find out more, please complete the form below.

### I would like to receive details of forthcoming Introduction to Mentoring Workshops

Name .....

Address.....

.....

.....

Postcode .....

**Please return this form to:** The AMA Officer,  
Museums Association, 42 Clerkenwell Close,  
LONDON EC1R 0PA.  
Tel: 0171 250 1789. Fax. 0171 250 1929.

## THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM COLLECTIONS MANAGER ENTOMOLOGY

The Natural History Museum is one of the great museums of the world, engaged in extensive programmes of scientific research and curation alongside its well-known exhibitions and educational activities. This position is within the Collections Management Division of the Entomology Department, as one of five Collections Managers responsible to the Head of the Entomology Collections.

The Collections Management Division has 28 staff. You will lead a team of eight curators responsible for the collections of beetles, bugs and grasshoppers (comprising more than 12.5 million specimens) as well as contribute to development of curation policy in a broader context.

You should have a degree (or equivalent) in a biological science (unless you have substantial relevant Museum experience). Experience of curating large biological collections and supervision of staff and visitors is essential, along with IT skills. Expertise on one of the major groups within the area of responsibility and a record of research and publication are desirable, as is experience of databasing.

The appointment is permanent. Salary will depend on qualifications and experience, but will be in the range £20,604-£32,966 per annum. Other benefits include a non-contributory pension scheme, season ticket loan and 25 days annual leave.

Application is by CV and covering letter together with the names and addresses of three referees. For further details please write enclosing an A5 SAE to Pauline Thomas, Personnel Section, The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London, SW7 5BD. Informal enquiries can be made to Dr Mike Fitton, Head Entomology Collections, tel: 0171 938 9446 or e-mail m.fitton@nhm.ac.uk.

Closing date for receipt of applications is 8 August 1997.

The Natural History Museum is working towards Equal Opportunities.

## Launch Meeting for a proposed NATIONAL GROUP for MEDICAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

**to be held at the THACKRAY MEDICAL MUSEUM, LEEDS on THURSDAY 9  
OCTOBER 1997**

The lively, networking group for London's Museums of Health and Medicine (LMoHM) is now over five years old and has sixteen members. These range from small, specialist museums, rather on the fringe of popular awareness, to such major institutions as the Science Museum and the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine. Communication and co-operation has helped raise the Group's joint profile, putting London's medical museums on the map for anyone interested in the byways of both social and scientific history in the capital. The Group has toured a promotional exhibition round London's hospitals and other medical centres and last year ran a well publicised Medical Museums Week in the City. Joint publications include an education pack and a group publicity leaflet that has run into three successful editions.

On 9 October 1997 LMoHM will co-host a national event with the new Thackray Medical Museum in Leeds. The day is aimed at professional and other staff from the large numbers of museums nation-wide whose collections include material relating to healthcare and medicine. Its prime purpose is to discuss the potential benefits of launching a national group for medical history collections, and for the staff who curate, conserve and interpret them to a variety of specialist audiences and the general public.

Opened in March this year, the Thackray Medical Museum provides the perfect, topical venue for launching a national group. There will be plenty of time for delegates to view the galleries and to hear staff members' inside view of the museum's achievements to date, and its plans for the future.

If you are interested in the idea of a national networking group and would like a chance to discuss it further, as well as to see and hear more about the Thackray Medical Museum, do please join us on 9 October. The day will start with registration and coffee at 11.30 to be followed by presentations from the Thackray staff, lunch, a meeting with key speakers from LMoHM and other medical museums, to discuss and launch the proposal for a national group. The remainder of the afternoon will be spent on tours of the Thackray Medical Museum galleries and stores with tea and an informal round up session at 4.15-4.45. For further details contact, Helen Fryers, Curator of the Thackray Medical Museum (see below).

The cost of the day is £15 to include lunch and refreshments. A minibus will be made available to ferry delegates between the Museum and Leeds Station. To book your place please photocopy and complete and return the form below by Wednesday 1 October to :

**Helen Fryers, Thackray Medical Museum, Beckett Street, Leeds LS9 7LP Tels: 0113 244 4343**

**Fax: 0113 247 0219**

- I wish to book a place on the **National Group for Medical History Collections** launch day at the **Thackray Medical Museum on Thursday 9 October 1997**
- I cannot attend, but please keep me on the mailing list

Name.....Position.....

Institution.....

Address.....

.....Post Code.....

Telephone.....FAX.....

Vegetarian? Yes / No I will / will not need minibus transport from Leeds Station

- I enclose my cheque for **£15** made payable to **The Thackray Medical Museum Co Ltd**
- PLEASE INVOICE ME

Signed .....Date.....

## The National Biodiversity Network Lottery Bid - Latest News

The original Millennium Bid failed, as you all know, but all is not lost! A proposal from the original consortium is being considered with a view towards submission of a Heritage Lottery Bid this autumn. A meeting of the 'Local Advisory Group' was held in Peterborough on 12 June 1997 to discuss this. Nick Gordon represented BCG as I was unavailable that day. The current partners are NERC, JNCC, The Wildlife Trusts, The Natural History Museum and RSPB. RSPB has joined the consortium since the Millennium Bid. These partners are all represented on the Executive Group on which we have now been offered a place for a BCG/ NFBR/ BRISC representative. Trevor James, Chair of NFBR has offered to perform this role and, subject to almost certain confirmation at an official meeting, BCG has agreed to this, as has BRISC. We will, however, be insisting on clear lines of communication between the Executive and BCG Committee.

We gave quick approval to Trevor so that he could attend the next Executive meeting which was on 15 July 1997. The day before this, on the 14 July members of the consortium met the Heritage Lottery Fund representatives to discuss the forthcoming bid. BRISC met on 16 July to discuss the Bid and BCG met on 17 July to do the same; some of you will have been there. (I am writing this on 4 July in advance of the meetings, but you will read it afterwards!!! I apologise for any errors in tenses as I have decided to write it in the past tense where applicable!)

Much has been said before, during and after the failure of the Millennium Bid about the poor consultation with interested parties. One cannot help feeling that this played a large part in its original demise. Things are now looking brighter, so I think that the message has finally been received! There was a meeting of the Co-ordinating Commission for Biological Recording on 19 June where many of these points were made clear.

The Wildlife Trusts have received £750 000 from the Esme Fairburn Trust towards the Local Records Centre work. So far the idea is to appoint a Project Manager and three support officers; one each for Scotland, Wales and England. These posts may well be in place by the time you read this. The aim is to establish one pilot LRC in each country. An application pack will be produced for organisations and consortia to apply to be a pilot. The Support Officers will produce a shortlist of three or so from each country and then it is proposed that the 'Local Advisory Group' will choose the 'winner' from each shortlist.

Before this can happen it is obvious that certain other things must happen. These revolve around the subject areas of LRC Standards for Operation and LRC Accreditation Standards. These are being developed as a priority and are of great interest to both BCG and all existing LRCs of all types. I expect that museum-based records centres will be useful sources due to their involvement with MGC Registration and other operational standards that we aspire to.

The model for a LRC currently being proposed (but still under discussion) is for them all to be Independent Trusts funded by Government Agencies, Local Authorities and Commercial Organisations. The role played by the variety of existing organisations is still unclear and museums seem to be regarded as having a minor role! However, I must stress that these ideas are still being discussed and are not final.

By the time you have read this we will have held our consultation meeting in London and I will be able to take forward BCGs ideas with confidence. If any members have any specific views or pieces of information to add, please get in touch.

Steve Garland, BCG Biological Recording Cell  
Bolton Museum, Art Gallery & Aquarium  
Phone: 01204 522311 ex 2211  
Fax: 01204 391352  
E-mail: bolmg@gn.apc.org

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**Editors: Patricia Francis and Kathryn Berry**

Contributions should be sent to: The Editors, Biology Curator's Group, Natural History Section, Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, Le Mans Crescent, Bolton BL1 1SE. Tel: 01204 522311 Ext. 2197. Fax: 01204 391352.  
E-Mail: bolmg@gn.apc.org. *(If possible please send on disc using Word for Windows or ASCII-file with hard copy).*

**Copy Dates: 8th January, 8th May and 8th September**

**Chairman:** Jane Pickering Tel: 01865 272962

**Secretary:** Steve Thompson Tel: 01724 843533

**Treasurer/Membership Secretary:** Kathie Way Tel: 0171 938 8892

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