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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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Title: Manual of Curatorship

Author(s): Not Listed.

Source: Not Listed. (1980). Manual of Curatorship. *Biology Curators Group Newsletter, Vol 2 No 7*, 315.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/1773>

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## BOOK NOTICES

The Editor has asked me to write a short note about the special issue of the *Journal of the Biological Society of Washington*, 82 (1969); 559-762 devoted to papers presented at a Symposium in 1968 entitled "Natural History Collections. Past-Present-Future".

A full review appeared in the *Museums Journal*, 70 (1970); 34. In this review I made the point that collections of papers on the theoretical and practical aspects of maintaining natural history collections are few and far between. Although ten years old, this collection of papers is well worth reading. Most of the contributors are in fact members of staff of the Smithsonian Institution. The first paper by Ritterbush "Art and Science as Influences on the Early Development of Natural History Collections" examines the background to the early natural history collections. Other titles include "The Role of the National Parasite Collection in Veterinary Parasitology", "The National Collections as Biological Standards", "The Role of Museum Collections in Ornithological Research", "Malacological Collections - Development and Management" and "Automation in Museum Collections". An exhaustive article by Shetler on "The Herbarium" considers the economic aspects of herbarium collections. He estimates that in 1968 at least 4 million dollars was spent on herbaria in the United States including research and curation. He has figures for the estimated cost of processing specimens and for storing specimens. His argument that the large capital investment in herbarium collections warrants greater expenditure on collection maintenance can be applied to other types of collections.

Walker, A.K., and Crosby, T.K., *The preparation and curation of insects*, New Zealand Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and the Entomological Society of New Zealand, 1979. 55 pages.

This small booklet is a useful addition to the relatively sparse literature on the subject. It covers the "Initial processing of specimens", "Handling specimens", "Methods of preparing and preserving specimens", "Specimen labels", "Organisation of the collection", "Loans", "Packaging and posting specimens", "Restoration of specimens" and a number of other topics. There are useful references and a bibliography.

(*Natural History Collections* is normally stocked by the University of Leicester Bookshop although temporarily out of stock, and *The preparation and curation of insects* is on order).

G. Stansfield.

### Museums Association Diploma Bibliographies.

The BCG has been asked to up-date the bibliography on natural history museums and natural history museum practice. The Secretary would be glad to receive any offer of help and any suggestions for additions to the bibliography.

### Manual of Curatorship

The Museums Association is seeking funds for the proposed manual and is looking to the specialist groups to provide the copy for the curatorial aspects relating to their particular disciplines. Offers of help and suggestions would be welcome.