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Author(s): Hancock, E. G.

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Type and Figured Specimens Register - Pilot Study

The feasibility of attempting to produce a register of Type and Figured specimens utilising the network of Collection Research Units is the subject of this pilot study.

The North West CRU members provided information, that was readily available, from as wide a range of plants, animals and fossils as possible and from as many different institutions that were accessible in the relatively short period during which data was gathered. A total of 1358 taxa from eight institutions (botany 294; geology 267; zoology 857) were provided in varying forms of documentation. The media and format ranged from typescript, computer printout, record sheets, file cards, MDA cards, photocopies of published catalogues and original descriptions to manuscripts. Despite this it would appear to be a relatively simple job to extract the necessary information for inclusion in the register.

It is restressed, as was noted in the FENSCORE Type Specimen Register Working Party reports, that it will only be necessary in the published form of the register to include the name of the taxon, author, date; status of the specimen(s); the number and form of specimens; the holding institution and accession number. All the other information necessary to validate the status of the specimen(s) would need to be available in the holding institution, on the computerised database and for refereeing if there was any doubt about the status.

It was decided that at this stage it was not necessary to machine process the above records as they had merely been provided to illustrate the range of material and record formats likely to form the input. A sample batch will be typed out in a simulated register using examples gleaned from foreign hepatics, fossil echinoderms and coleoptera. This would be circulated before the next FENSCORE meeting together with a set of proposals for conducting a full scale attempt at a Type and Figured Specimen Register based on the findings of this pilot study.

This is a summary of the NWCRU meeting of the 17 March 1982. Full minutes (to be approved) and the analysis by discipline of the returns which formed the basis of the pilot study have been produced.

E. G. Hancock,
Chairman, NWCRU.