



NatSCA

Natural Sciences Collections Association

<http://www.natsca.org>

Biology Curators Group

Title: Book Review: Victorian Taxidermy It's History and Finest Exponents by C. C. Frost

Author(s): Hamer, P.

Source: Hamer, P. (1981). Book Review: Victorian Taxidermy It's History and Finest Exponents by C. C. Frost. *Biology Curators Group*, Vol 2 No 10, 455.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/1618>

NatSCA supports open access publication as part of its mission is to promote and support natural science collections. NatSCA uses the Creative Commons Attribution License (CCAL) <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/> for all works we publish. Under CCAL authors retain ownership of the copyright for their article, but authors allow anyone to download, reuse, reprint, modify, distribute, and/or copy articles in NatSCA publications, so long as the original authors and source are cited.

BOOK REVIEW

Victorian Taxidermy Its History And Finest Exponents
by C.C. Frost (Price £4.95)

Christopher Frost approaches this subject by firstly looking at the history of taxidermy and bird collecting in this country and supporting this with information on some of the better known Victorian collectors and taxidermists.

Sections on casing and looking after a Natural History collection are also included. The book is illustrated with eight black and white plates showing case labels, some examples of taxidermists' work, and a photograph of Henry Shaw's shop in Shrewsbury taken in 1888.

The book does not aim to give a comprehensive coverage of all the Victorian collectors and taxidermists, but attempts to cover a representative example. Perhaps predictably, names like Booth, Hancock, Potter, Spicer, Cullingford, Ward and Gunn come in for fullest treatment. In total some 20 taxidermists are given detailed biographical notes with a special emphasis on taxidermists of the Norfolk area.

The section on the history and development of taxidermy and collecting is rather brief (four pages) and relies heavily on quotes taken from Swainson's book "Taxidermy with the Biography of Zoologists and Notices of Their Work" published in 1840.

My other major criticism is the price of this publication, which is rather high even taking into account the cost of a limited print run and the eight black and white plates.

While many people in museums interested in historical taxidermy will be familiar with much of the information contained in this book it is nevertheless a commendable effort for someone to accumulate it together and publish it. I feel everyone interested in the subject will glean something new by reading this book, and newcomers to the subject will find a valuable introduction to Victorian taxidermy.

The book is privately published and is available from:-

C.C. Frost (Proprietor)
The Enchanted Aviary,
63 Hall Street
Long Melford
Suffolk CO10 9JR

(£4.95 plus 45p postage and packing)

P. HAMER -
Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery