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Biology Curators Group Newsletter

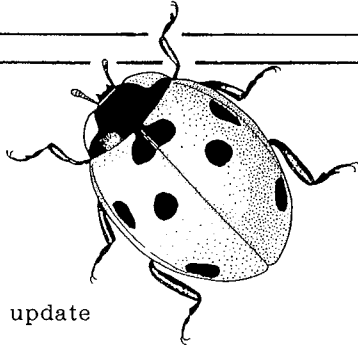
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Beetle-down update

- * 59 museums took part in the 1988 campaign by ordering packs of leaflets and stickers
- * 34,000 leaflets were distributed in 1988
- * 38,000 amended leaflets have just been printed by CEGB for 1989
- * WATCH distributed leaflets to all WATCH leaders
- * 99 museums are listed in the leaflet
- * 83 museums have 'stars' ie a resident curator of biology
- * At least 24 museums organised special events for Beetle-down week in July/August 1988
- * Several museums presented the campaign to their governing bodies and distributed leaflets to local politicians
- * The campaign and events received masses of local press and radio coverage, but the national response was poor. The 1989 campaign will initially concentrate on national media coverage.
- * Some specialist groups (eg Diptera recorders) have been directly mailed. We need contacts for others.
- * Some museums have appointed additional staff or unfrozen posts following direct action by BCG. The threat of 'removal' from the Beetle-down accredited list has been used on several occasions.
- * The campaign continues. Wherever possible we are linking Beetle-down to Museums Year '89 to gain extra publicity.
- * This summer we are concentrating on publicising the services outlined in the leaflet. The message is: NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUMS ARE GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY.

- * 30 JUNE will be B D-Day! Each museum will be asked to contact the local press to publicise the campaign and leaflets. Leaflets will be made available to the public; each museum will be urged to present copies of the leaflets to all members of their governing bodies. (If anyone has difficulty here, contact BCG in advance and we will contact the relevant chairperson directly.) The general idea is that all those in positions of influence should be made aware of what goes on in natural history museums.
- * BEETLE-DOWN WEEK this year has been planned to coincide with autumn half term in schools (October - early November). Plenty of time to plan your special events.
- * Beetle-down merchandise has been reprinted
Car stickers 30p (15p - 10 or more)
Window stickers £1 (75p - 3 or more)
T-Shirts £4 (M or XL) post free

How to obtain Beetle-down leaflets

- 1 Collect from Sheffield Museum - FREE.
- 2 By post from Sheffield Museum - you pay for post and packing only; £4 per batch.
- 3 At BCG meetings. Dundee in May and North Devon in October (and possibly MA Conference in York in September).

NOTE There is a £5 subscription fee to Beetle-down only for museums which did not subscribe in 1988. This includes your window sticker and car sticker, and a 'starter' batch of leaflets.

Extra car stickers, window stickers and T-shirts are available. All payments to 'Biology Curators Group'.

Derek Whiteley
BCG Secretary
Sheffield Museum

PAUL BELLONI DU CHAILLU (1831-1903)

Paul Belloni Du Chaillu (1831-1903), a self-trained naturalist and explorer born in Paris and raised in Gabon, was one of the most flamboyant and controversial figures of nineteenth century science. A naturalized US citizen, Du Chaillu made two major collecting expeditions in West Africa (1855-1859 and 1863-1865). These served as the basis for a series of popular lectures and books for adults and young readers, including: EXPLORATIONS AND ADVENTURES IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA (1861), A JOURNEY TO ASHANGO-LAND (1867) and THE WORLD OF THE GREAT FOREST (1900).

Many of the specimens collected on Du Chaillu's first trip are in the care of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (which helped to finance the expedition), but there are no field notes and

very little surviving manuscript material relating to Du Chaillu or his relationship with the Academy or other scientific institutions of his day.

For a comprehensive biography of Du Chaillu, Robert M Peck is requesting any information concerning the whereabouts of: letters to, from, or about Du Chaillu; contemporary press accounts of his travels or lectures; specimens; manuscripts; photographs; or memorabilia of any kind.

All letters will be gratefully acknowledged by:

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