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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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given with the maps, which makes appraisal of distribution difficult in a country with such a rapidly changing environment as ours. However this is more than compensated for by the text, which gives details of biology and ecology for each species. Information on medical importance and morphological characteristics are included where appropriate. Comprehensive lists of recorded hosts are appended for all species.

To a non specialist such as myself the variations shown by different species in their ecologies are surprising and the whole book makes interesting and informative reading. Ticks are animals which have their niche in the public consciousness and yet they are little known amongst general biologists. This publication, apart from being a distribution atlas, is a hand reference guide to this fascinating group.

Derek Lott

#### **COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT FOR MUSEUMS**

by D Andrew Roberts (Editor)

Published by Museums Documentation Association, 1988, pp 237. Price £30. ISBN 0-905963-61-X

For those who were unable to attend the INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT FOR MUSEUMS (the title given to the first Annual Conference of the Museums Documentation Association) held in Cambridge from 26-29 September 1987, this compilation of papers, expertly compiled and edited by Andrew Roberts, has to be the next best thing. A well finished, hardback volume, it is divided into sections devoted to Surveys of Collection Management Systems and Practice, System Design, Role of Professional Groups, Procedural and Policy Developments in Individual Museums, Training and Advisory Developments, Consultancy Support for Museums and Collections Management Systems. The thirty-six papers have an inevitable bias towards the experience of staff in museums and related institutions in Britain and North America, but it is pleasing to read contributions from colleagues in Australia, Denmark and the Netherlands.

To review each and every contribution is impossible here, but the highlights for me included Jane Sledge's SURVEY OF NORTH AMERICAN COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND PRACTICE, (Chapter 3) written with humour and obvious understanding of the museum condition. Her paper ('about the search for the Holy Grail of collections management, the ensuing misconceptions and expectations ...') is thought-

provoking and yet somehow reassuring in reminding us that even in North America the need for standards and compatibility has yet to be realised ('If you believe this, there is a very interesting bridge in Brooklyn that's for sale').

The antipodean papers were also refreshing, and I especially enjoyed John Hodge's COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT IN RELATION TO MUSEUM STUDIES TRAINING IN AUSTRALIA (Chapter 29) which highlighted the separateness of institutions and the dichotomy of Art Galleries and Museums in that country as factors posing particular problems for training in collections management. Training for collections management is perceived as an important need - it crops up throughout the volume and not just in the Training and Advisory Developments section. Joanne Neri's personal experience of training at the Center for Museum Studies of John F Kennedy University (Chapter 30) helps to put many student needs in focus. In her words 'Efforts to open channels of communication between students and professionals of museology have ... never been more dynamic, however, (they) have also never been more urgent'.

Reading about museum documentation is, understandably, not always entertaining. However, this volume always makes interesting reading, and provides a valuable 'state of the art' reference work, as well as a record of what must have been an excellent conference. I must try not to miss the next one.

Peter Davis

#### **THE INSECT AND SPIDER COLLECTIONS OF THE WORLD**

by R H Arnett and G A Samuelson

Published by E J Brill (Leiden) and Flora and Fauna Publications (Florida) 1986; pp220, spiral bound, thin card covers. Price Gld 41 (£14 approx). ISBN 90-04-08192-5

The bulk of this directory consists of two lists of public and private insect and spider collections arranged alphabetically by country and owner respectively. The first list is interesting because it lists all the countries of the world whether or not they have collections (even Antarctica which is not a country in this sense) and therefore includes useful negative information. In this respect it also lists those known collections but from which no return was received to the questionnaire. Obviously North